

## CHAPTER 18



# GOOD FRIDAY AND THE COPTS: GLIMPSSES INTO THE DRAMA OF THIS HOLY DAY

*Marian Robertson-Wilson*

**T**his tribute to my long-standing friend, S. Kent Brown, is written in commemoration of our first meeting, which took place in 1980 during an ARCE convention when we both participated in a special session devoted to Coptic studies. I wish you well, Kent and Gayle, my dear friends.

### Introduction

Good Friday is known among the Copts either as Sublime Friday (yūm al-gum‘ah al-‘azīmah/يوم الجمعة العظيمة) or Friday of Sorrow (yūm al-gum‘ah al-ḥazīnah/يوم الجمعة الحزينة), and for them it is the most solemn holy day of the year. Services are held from very early morning until after sundown and dramatically commemorate the events as they unfolded that fateful day. Sung almost in their entirety by the ranking officiant, his deacon, and the choir of deacons, these rituals present a vivid musical recollection of those extraordinary proceedings.<sup>1</sup> As Carolyn M. Ramzy has written, “No other

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This article describes the services of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt (al-kanīssah al-qibṭiyyah al-‘urthūdhuksiyyah/الكنيسة القبطية الأرثوذكسية), which, according to legend, was established in Egypt ca. AD 48 by Mark the Evangelist, author of the Gospel of St. Mark. It is not to be confused with the Coptic Church of Ethiopia. For a succinct,

service compares to the melancholy of reliving Christ's death . . . this pinnacle and most defining moment of Christianity."<sup>2</sup> It comes as the culmination of Holy Week, or Holy *Paskha*, which begins on Palm Sunday and continues throughout the week with special services every day. In fact, directly after the Palm Sunday liturgy, the church is draped in black, the altar is closed, and there is no more daily communion for the remainder of the week.<sup>3</sup>

### Outline of the Good Friday Services

On Good Friday, with candles burning, wax and incense perfuming the air, the choir of deacons—now wearing sashes of dark blue, purple, or black in lieu of their usual bright red,<sup>4</sup> and no longer at their customary place in front of the iconostasis<sup>5</sup>—stand facing each other on the north and south sides of the church (baḥrī/بحري and qibli/قبلي, respectively), where they may sing either together or antiphonally (alternately back and forth) as the music demands.<sup>6</sup>

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scholarly discussion of these two faiths, see Aziz S. Atiya, "Part I: Alexandrine Christianity: The Copts and Their Church," in *History of Eastern Christianity* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 11-166. I would like to thank my good friends and colleagues, Carolyn Magdy Ramzy and Nayra Atiya, themselves Copts, who graciously shared memories of their own Good Friday experiences, thereby bringing an intimate, personal perspective to this account.

1. The officiant, ranked in order of ascending importance, could be the priest, the bishop, the metropolitan (archbishop), or the Patriarch himself. See *The Rites of Holy Paskha* (Coptic: (e)Pgōm (e)nte Pipaskha ethouab/ἕντε Πηπασχα ἑθουαβ and Arabic: ṭaqs ʿusbūʿ āl-ālām/طقس أسبوع الآلام) (Cairo: The Coptic Church, 1981), 498; henceforth referred to as *Holy Paskha* (texts in Coptic and Arabic).

2. Carolyn Magdy Ramzy, letter to Marian Robertson-Wilson, Toronto, Canada, 22 September 2008, in possession of the author; henceforth referred to as "Letter No. 1."

3. Ramzy, "Letter No. 1," 1-2.

4. Ramzy, "Letter No. 1," 1.

5. The iconostasis is a partition, or screen, decorated with icons, which separates the sanctuary—that particularly sacred area around the altar—from the rest of the church.

6. *Holy Paskha*, passim; Ramzy, "Letter No. 1," 1-2; Nayra Atiya to Marian Robertson-Wilson, essay entitled "Good Friday or al-Gumʿa al-Hazeena" ("Hazeena" is an alternate transliteration of the term "ḥazīnah"), Salt Lake City, 21 April 2009, in possession of the author; henceforth referred to as "Good Friday."

Set to special *Paskha* melodies, labeled “Hymns of Sorrow” (ʿalḥān al-ḥuzn/الحنان الحزن), some passages are rendered only in Coptic while others are sung first in Coptic, then Arabic.<sup>7</sup>

While the services are performed nonstop all day long, the Copts do adhere to the order of the regular canonical hours and celebrate the Good Friday events as follows:<sup>8</sup>

Morning Prayer (ṣalāt bākīr/صلاة باكراً), very early morning: recalling Christ in Gethsemane and his trial before Pilate.

Third Hour (al-sāʿah al-thālathah/الساعة الثالثة), ca. 9:00 a.m.: Christ derided, scourged, and nailed to the cross.

Sixth Hour (al-sāʿah al-sādissah/الساعة السادسة), noon: The hour of crucifixion.

Ninth Hour (al-sāʿah al-tāsiʿah/الساعة التاسعة), ca. 3:00 p.m.: Jesus’s spirit delivered into the hands of his Father.

Eleventh Hour (al-sāʿah al-ḥādiyyah ʿashr/الساعة الحادية عشر), ca. 5:00 p.m.: A sword thrust into Christ’s side; no bones broken. “For these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. . . . They shall look on him whom they pierced” (John 19:36–37).

Twelfth Hour (al-sāʿah al-thāniyyah ʿashr/الساعة الثانية عشر), ca. 6:00 p.m.: The burial—Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus retrieve

7. Coptic is the final stage of that ancient Egyptian tongue first written in hieroglyphics, subsequently transcribed with hieratic, then demotic characters, and lastly with letters of the Greek alphabet. After the Arabs invaded Egypt (AD 642), Arabic gradually replaced Coptic as the national language. Today very few Copts know Coptic—hence the need for some Arabic in their services. In fact, for Copts long since emigrated from their homeland to various countries about the world, other languages such as French and English are now heard in their services. For more details, see Carolyn M. Ramzy, letter to Marian Robertson-Wilson, Toronto, Canada, 3 May 2009, in possession of the author.

8. The canonical hours are special prayer services performed throughout the year by lay people in the city churches and by monks in the monasteries. For more details, see Ragheb Moftah et al., “Music, Coptic§The Canonical Hours,” in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, editor in chief Aziz S. Atiya (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991), 6:1724 (henceforth referred to as *CE*). For this outline of the Good Friday Hours and their topics, see *Holy Paskha*, 408.

Christ's body and wind it "in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury" (John 19:40).

Each of these hours consists of scriptural readings, a commentary (ṭarḥ/طرح), and hymns that describe and illuminate the happenings of the hour at hand. They all follow the same general pattern, namely:

1. Lectons from the Old Testament, primarily from the Pentateuch and the Prophets.
2. A lection from one of the Pauline epistles.
3. Lectons from Psalms.
4. Lectons from one of the four Gospels.
5. The ṭarḥ, which is an eloquent elaboration of the hour's events.

Appropriate hymns are interspersed into these lectons that serve to intensify the emotion, and each hour then concludes with the prayer and benediction assigned thereto.

It is well beyond the scope of this article to cite all the texts—both spoken and sung—that are heard during this long day as well as describe the actions of the clergy, a sacred choreography. However, in hopes of giving the reader an idea of the spirit prevailing throughout, a few passages will be excerpted from some of these hours, beginning with the Sixth Hour, which, in elegizing the crucifixion itself, is in many ways the most vivid and heartrending.

### **Excerpts from the Sixth Hour**

Old Testament lectons:

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. (Isaiah 53:7)

Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. (Isaiah 12:2)

And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, . . . I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. (Amos 8:9, 11)

The choir of deacons then sings a series of five hymns that praise the Lord for condescending to sacrifice himself in order to redeem humankind.

Here is the text for the first of these hymns, “Thine is the power . . .” (Thōk te tigom/ ӨԾԻԚ ԿԵ Ժ՝ՃՕՄ . . .):<sup>9</sup>

Thine is the power and the glory and the praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Emmanuel, our God, our King: Thine is the power . . . , etc.

My Lord, Jesus Christ: Thine is the power . . . , etc.

My Lord, Jesus Christ, my good Savior:

My strength and my song is the Lord: He is become for me holy salvation.

Here is the last of these five hymns. Known as the *Trisagion* (“Thrice-Holy”), it was sung, according to legend, by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus as they prepared and buried Christ’s body after the crucifixion. The text is Greek, and it is also sung in the

9. The Coptic text reads as follows:

Thōk te tigom nem piðou nem pi(e)smou nem piamahi sha eneh, Amēn.

Emmanouēl pennouti penouro: Thōk te tigom . . . , etc.

Pachois Iēsous Pi(e) Christos: Thōk te tigom . . . , etc.

Pachois Iēsous Pi(e) Christos Pasōtēr (e)n agathos:

Tagom nem pa (e) smou pe (e)Pchois: afshōpi nēi eusōtēria efouab.

ӨԾԻԚ ԿԵ Ժ՝ՃՕՄ ՆԵՄ ՔԻԾՕՄ ՆԵՄ ՔԻԵՍՄՕՄ ՆԵՄ ՔԻԱՄԱԻ ՏԻԱ ԷՆԵԾ ԱՄԻՆ

ԵՄԱՆՈՒԿՆԱ ՔԵՆՈՒԿ՝ ՔԵՆՈՒՐՕ: ӨԾԻԚ ԿԵ՝ Ժ՝ՃՕՄ . . .

ՔԱԾՕԻՑ ԻՆՏՕՅՑ ՔԻՃՐԻՏՕՑ: ӨԾԻԚ ԿԵ՝ Ժ՝ՃՕՄ . . .

ՔԱԾՕԻՑ ԻՆՏՕՅՑ ՔԻՃՐԻՏՕՑ ՔԱՏՎՏԻՐ ԻՆ ԱԳԱԹՕՑ: ԿՂՃՕՄ ՆԵՄ ՔԱՏՄՕՄ ՔԵ ԻՏՕԻՑ:

ԱԿՎՎՈՒ ՈՒՆ ԵՅՏՎՏԻՐԻԱ ԵՉՕՂՁԵ.

For this text, see *Holy Paskha*, 96-97.

Here are the incipits of the next three hymns:

This censer of gold (Taishourē (e)nnoub . . . / ԿԱԻՓՕՒՐԻ ՈՒՆՕՅԵ . . . )

Behold this man . . . (Phai etafenf e(e)pshōi/ ӨՄԻ ԷՏԱԿԵՆԿ Է ԻՓՎԻ . . . )

O, Thou Only-begotten . . . (O Monogenēs/ Ө ՄՈՆՕԳԵՆԻՑ . . . )

For the complete texts, see *Holy Paskha*, 447-53.

Greek Orthodox Church. However, the melodies for the Coptic and Greek versions are entirely different, the Coptic tune being the “Melody of the Cross” (laḥn al-ṣalbūt/الحن الصلבות).<sup>10</sup> The text reads as follows:

Holy God, who for us became a man, unchanging and remaining God.

Holy and mighty, who in weakness obtained supreme power.

Holy and immortal, who was crucified for us, who, by the cross, endured death in the flesh and passed judgment, and [who] in death conquered death, having become the immortal conqueror, having become the immortal conqueror.

O Holy Trinity, have mercy on us.

The following phrases are then sung three times:

Holy God; Holy and Mighty; Holy and Immortal,  
Thou [who wast] crucified for us, have mercy on us.

The hymn concludes with the Lesser Doxology:

Glory to the Father and the Son, and the Holy Ghost,  
now and forever, and throughout all the eternities. Amen.<sup>11</sup>

10. See Marian Robertson, “The Good Friday *Trisagion* of the Coptic Church (A Musical Transcription and Analysis),” in *Miscellany in Honour of Acad. Ivan Dujčev* (Sofia, Bulgaria). While the editor has told me that this was published some time ago, not having seen a copy, I can give no further details about its appearance.

11. Here is the Greco-Coptic text:

Agios o Theos: o di ēmas an(e)thrōpos: gegonōs atreptōs ke minas theos.

Agios isshyros: o en asthenia to ypereshontēs isshyros epidixamenos.

Agios athanatos o (e)stavrōthis di ēmas o ton dia (e)stavrou thanaton ypominas sarki ke dixasōs ke en thanatō gegonōs yparshīs athanatos athanatos, gegonōs yparshīs athanatos.

Ē agia (e)trias eleēson ēmas.

ΑΓΙΟΣ ὁ ΘΕΟΣ: ὁ ΔΙ ἡΜΑΣ ἀΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ: ΓΕΓΟΝΩΣ ΑΤΡΕΠΤΩΣ ΚΕ ΜΙΝΑΣ ΘΕΟΣ.

ΑΓΙΟΣ ΙΣΧΥΡΟΣ: ὁ ἐν ἀσθενίᾳ τὸ ὑπερῆσαντος ἰσχυρὸς ἐπιδixαμενος.

ΑΓΙΟΣ ἄθανατος ὁ ἐσταυρωθῆς δι ἡμᾶς ὁ τὸν διὰ σταυροῦ θάνατον ὑπομινᾶς

σαρκὶ κε διxασῶς κε ἐν θάνατῷ γεγονῶς ὑπαρχίς ἄθανατος ἄθανατος, γεγονῶς ὑπαρχίς ἄθανατος.

Ἡ ἀγία τῆρις ἐλεῆσον ἡμᾶς.

Here is the Lesser Doxology:

As the chanting draws to an end, incense wafts through the air to accompany this lection from Psalms:

Forsake me not, O Lord: O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord my salvation. (Psalm 38:21-22)<sup>12</sup>

This lection is immediately followed by a reading from one of the Gospels, for example:

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. (Luke 23:44-45)

At this moment the lights in the church are dimmed and the candles extinguished to symbolize the pervasive darkness.<sup>13</sup>

Near the end of the Sixth Hour the officiant chants an eloquent *tarḥ* proclaiming Christ's glory during the agony of his death. It begins:

O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, arise and comprehend this sight, for you hung Jesus, the Son of David, on a wooden cross and clothed him in a purple robe worthy of royalty and monarchs, and you placed a crown of thorns on his head, adorning the heavens with the beauty of the stars. The earth found in him the breath of life. . . . They carried his cross, following him like a king, victorious in war.

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Doxa Patri ke Yiō ke Agiō (e)Pneumati: ke nyn ke ai ke is tous eōnas tōn eōnōn. Amēn.  
ΔΟΞΑ ΠΑΤΡΙ ΚΕ ΥΙΩ ΚΕ ΑΓΙΩ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙ: ΚΕ ΝΥΝ ΚΕ ΑΙ ΚΕ ΙΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΕΘΝΑΣ ΤΩΝ  
ΕΘΝΩΝ. ΑΜΗΝ.

For these texts see *Holy Paskha*, 454; and *The Service of the Deacon* (khidmat al-shammās/خدمة الشمّاس) (Cairo: The Patriarchate, 1965), 315-16. [Texts in Coptic and Arabic]

12. Since the Copts use the Septuagint, their Psalm references differ from those in the King James translation, e.g., King James 38 = Septuagint 37. In every case, I cite the King James reference.

13. Other passages about the darkness can be found in Mark 15:33 and Matthew 27:45. Also see *Holy Paskha*, 454-61.

As the Sixth Hour ends, the lights of the church dimly come on, and the candles are relit as a sign that the darkness has lifted.<sup>14</sup>

### **Extracts from Subsequent Hours**

As was mentioned, the Ninth Hour, ca. 3:00 p.m., recalls the moment of Christ's death. It begins with lections from the Old Testament, such as:

Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand; . . . And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. (Joel 2:1, 13)

The hymns sung during the Sixth Hour are repeated, then the officiant chants from Psalms:

Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. . . . They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. (Psalm 69:1, 21)

Lifting the censer, the officiant then chants passages from each of the four Gospels. Here are two extracts:

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14. See *Holy Paskha*, 461, 467. Translated from the Arabic by Marian Robertson-Wilson.

These three hours of darkness during Christ's agony on the cross quite possibly correspond to the three hours of upheaval so vividly described in 3 Nephi 8:5-19 with that "great storm . . . and terrible tempest; and . . . terrible thunder, insomuch that it did shake the whole earth as if . . . to divide asunder. And . . . exceedingly sharp lightnings, such as never had been known in all the land" (vv. 5-7).

On a personal note about those three hours, my mother used to tell about the time when, on Good Friday, she went grocery shopping at midday in Burlingame, California (where we were then living), only to find all the stores closed and the streets empty. Upon inquiry, she learned from a passerby that on this holy day, from noon until 3:00 p.m., all businesses were shut down in memory of Christ's hours on the cross. With her Utah-Mormon background she was surprised and bemused at her innocent ignorance.

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (Mark 15:34).

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. (Luke 23:46)

The Ninth Hour ends with the baḥrī side of the choir chanting, “Our Holy Messiah [Christ] came and suffered so as to save us by his suffering,” and the qiblī responds, “And now we glorify him and exalt his name, for he showed us compassion, and sublime is his mercy.”<sup>15</sup>

The Eleventh Hour, ca. 5:00 p.m., recalls how Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus retrieved Christ’s body. The ṭarḥ begins:

O inhabitants of Israel, whose sins overwhelmed the air, behold the centurion, a foreigner, how he confesses the one crucified, and not only he, but those with him, they all cry out, “Verily this man is the Son of God.” . . . And Israel did not understand that the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, through his suffering, sanctified the world forever.<sup>16</sup>

The Twelfth and final Hour, ca. 6:00 p.m., depicts the burial. The sanctuary is again opened and the altar now draped with a cloth suitable for the awaited vigil (see below). The church lights that had been dimmed are set to their brightest level, and the candles and censers are relit. The deacons have changed their sashes back from somber purple, blue, and black to their original bright red,<sup>17</sup> and the icon of the crucifixion is prepared while the officiant reads from Lamentations:

15. See *Holy Paskha*, 480. Text paraphrased from the Arabic by Robertson-Wilson.

16. See *Holy Paskha*, 487. Text paraphrased from the Arabic by Robertson-Wilson.

17. Ramzy, “Letter No. 1,” 2-3.

I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. . . . My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord: . . . [but] My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me . . . therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. (Lamentations 3:1, 18, 20-22)

The choir once again sings the hymn, “Thine is the power . . .” (see above), and then come lections from Psalms, which include these excerpts:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. . . . Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (Psalm 23:1, 4)

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. (Psalm 45:6)

Passages chanted from all four Gospels recount how Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus wrapped Christ's body in clean linen, laid it in a new tomb and rolled a stone over the entrance while Mary Magdalene and other women watched from afar.<sup>18</sup>

At this point the congregants witness one of the most dramatic and memorable events of the entire day. As the officiant holds the cross aloft, he and the deacons gravely chant “Kyrie eleēson” (“Lord, have mercy”) 412 times, turning first toward the east, then toward the west, then the north, and lastly toward the south, chanting 100 times at each turn. Finally, turning once again toward the east, they chant Kyrie eleēson twelve more times to the accompaniment of small brilliantly sounding hand cymbals (bil-nāqūs/بالناقوس).<sup>19</sup>

18. See *Holy Paskha*, 491-95. The New Testament passages can be found in Matthew 27:58-61; Mark 15:43-47; Luke 23:50-56; and John 19:38-42.

19. See *Holy Paskha*, 496; Ramzy, “Letter No. 1,” 3. For more details about the small hand cymbals (al-nāqūs), see Marian Robertson-Wilson et al., “Music, Coptic Musical Instruments,” in *CE* 6:1738-39.

Immediately thereafter, as the choir sings the stately hymn “Golgotha,” the officiant carries the icon of the crucifixion three times around the altar and three times around the church. As the procession returns to the sanctuary, the deacons circle the altar three more times; the officiant wraps the icon in a shroud of white linen, lays it on the altar, places a cross over it, and completely covers it (buries it as it were) under rose petals and spices—red roses signifying Christ’s atoning blood—to re-create thereby a resting place befitting the highest, supreme sovereign of humankind.

The Twelfth Hour quickly ends with a final benediction: “Bless me unto repentance; forgive my sins; pray for me.” The sanctuary door is closed once again, and this symbolic tomb is to be left undisturbed until the Easter service early Sunday morning.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, as the people leave the chapel, the officiant and his deacons remain behind to keep vigil by chanting Psalms and other passages from the Old and New Testaments, each person taking a turn at reading a designated passage.<sup>21</sup>

To conclude this long holy day, the congregants break their daylong fast with a convivial meal, which may take place as a

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20. See *Holy Paskha*, 496–99; Ramzy, “Letter No. 1,” 1–3. Here is the Coptic text for the benediction:

(e)smou eroi: is timetania: Khō nēi evol gō (e)mpi(e)smou.

ἘΣΜΟΥ ἘΡΟΙ: ΙΣ ΤΙΜΕΤΑΝΙΑ: ΧΩ ΝΗΙ ἘΒΟΛ ΧΩ ἘΜΠΙἘΣΜΟΥ

A word about the hymn “Golgotha”: One of the best known hymns in the entire Coptic repertoire, it describes the crucifixion of Christ at Golgotha between two thieves and recounts how Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus took Christ’s body, prepared and placed it in a tomb, all while singing the *Trisagion* (see above). Consisting of some thirty-two verses, it is built on two musical themes. For a musical transcription of these themes, see Marian Robertson, “Music, Coptic§Description of the Corpus and Present Musical Practice,” in *CE* 6:1723. For a transliteration and translation of the entire text, see Marian Robertson, “Revised Guide to the Ragheb Moftah Collection of Coptic Chant Recordings” (Salt Lake City: 2005), 2:121–24. Manuscript copies are housed in the Music Division at the Library of Congress; Rare Books and Special Collections Library at the American University in Cairo; Special Collections at the Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; and Special Collections at the Marriott Library, University of Utah, among other venues.

21. For more details about this vigil, see Ragheb Moftah and Martha Roy, “Music, Coptic§Canticles,” in *CE* 6:1729.

communal gathering in the church basement or at home with beloved family members.<sup>22</sup>

Then, very early Sunday morning, the people return to celebrate the long-awaited, highly anticipated Easter service, with its joyous shout (first in Greek, then Coptic):<sup>23</sup>

“Christ is risen, Truly he is risen.”

“Christos anestē, Alēthōs anestē.”

“Pi(e) Christos aftōnf, Ḥen oumethmēi aftōnf.”

### Conclusion

Although an article about the Coptic Good Friday services may seem a bit esoteric and unusual for an LDS publication, the author offers it as a way of broadening our understanding of another venerable Christian tradition. We are all children of God, and the more we may come to know about each other, the closer we may draw to our Maker, ever constant, ever loving. It is in this spirit of universal brotherhood that I have written.

Therefore, in fellowship, let us join the Coptic choruses and sing together jubilant praises to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, who—by his suffering on the cross, his resurrection and atonement—brought all humankind the greatest, most precious gift of all, even life eternal.

*Marian Robertson-Wilson, a researcher in Coptic music, is a consultant to the Music Division of the Library of Congress.*

22. This meal must still conform to the restrictions imposed by Lent, known by the Copts as the “Great Fast” (al- ṣūm al-kabīr/الصوم الكبير), which will end only after the Easter service early Sunday morning. Having begun some fifty-five days before Easter, it is a period during which Copts are asked to abstain from all meat, fish, dairy, and other animal products as well as alcohol. One typically Egyptian staple for this Good Friday meal could be “Fūl Nābit” (فول نابيت), a soup of skinned, sprouted fava (broad) beans, boiled in a broth seasoned with salt and cumin. Ramzy, “Letter No. 1,” 1, 3; N. Atiya, “Good Friday,” 2.

23. Here are the Greek and Coptic phrases:

ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ . . . ΑΛΗΘΩΣ ΑΝΕΣΤΗ.

ΠΙΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ ΑΥΤΩΝΗ-ΒΕΝ ΟΥΜΕΘΜΗ ΑΥΤΩΝΗ.

See *Holy Paskha*, 607.