



SEPTEMBER
IN THE COPTIC
ORTHODOX CHURCH

Nayrouz 11–26 SEPTEMBER

Coptic New Year and Feast of the Martyrs. Thout 1–16, opening the year 1743 A.M.

Feast of the Cross 27–29 SEPTEMBER

Thout 17–19. A joyful three-day feast, sung in the tune of Hosanna Sunday, when Christ entered Jerusalem.

THIS MONTH'S REFLECTION

The Masks We Wear

From Nayrouz to the Cross: taking the mask off in front of Christ.

Everyone wears a mask. Some are obvious. Most aren't.

We say “I’m fine” in a voice we have practiced. We fix our face on the walk from the parking lot to the church door.

You can wear a mask in front of God too. The right prayers, the whole Liturgy, and your mind somewhere else the entire time.

Most masks did not start as lies. They started as armor. But armor gets heavy, and two questions catch up with you. Who am I when nobody is watching? Who am I in front of God?

Hiding from God

The first mask in the Bible shows up two verses after the first sin.

“Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God...”

GENESIS 3:8

Then God asks: **Where are you?** Not because He did not know. Because Adam did not. Put on a mask and stand in front of a mirror. The mirror is not impressed. It has never changed a heart.

A new year without masks

The martyrs we remember at Nayrouz were handed a simple way out: wear a mask, say the words, believe privately. They would not do it.



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A candle does not prove it is lit by being beautiful. It proves it by giving light. And the battlefield is not out there. It is in here.

“For man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

1 SAMUEL 16:7

People see the mask. God sees the heart. People see the service. God sees the motive.

When the mask falls

Sixteen days later comes the Feast of the Cross. First the Church asks who you really are. Then she shows you the Cross.

“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

LUKE 9:23

Stop pretending. Stop protecting the image. Stop trying to save yourself. Give yourself to Christ.

The Cross is an X-ray. It shows what is under the skin. But nobody gets an X-ray to be humiliated. You get one so the doctor can see what to heal.

Come to Him with the mask off. He already knows what is underneath, and He loves you anyway.



LIVING THE LITURGY

Nayrouz & the Feast of the Cross

September is one of the most beautiful months in the Coptic Orthodox Church. We begin a new year at Nayrouz, and only days later the Church walks us to the Feast of the Holy Cross. If you have ever stood in the nave and thought the tune sounded different today — you were right. Here is why.

What is Nayrouz?

The Coptic New Year, and the first day of the Year of the Martyrs. This year it falls on 11 September, the first of Thoout. The count begins in 284, the year Diocletian took the throne. Not to honor him. To remember the Christians who stayed faithful under him when faithfulness cost them their lives.

How long do the Nayrouz rites last?

The feast itself is 1 Thoout, but its joyful rites run through 16 Thoout. Sixteen days in the joyful tune.

Why joyful, when we are remembering people who were killed?

Because the Church has never read martyrdom as defeat. The martyrs conquered through Christ. Their suffering ended. Their life with Him did not. What they showed the world was love, sacrifice, faith,

endurance, and the one nobody expects: love for their enemies. And the Gospel went out anyway.

What happens when the Nayrouz rite ends?

On 17 Thoout, the twenty-seventh of September, the Feast of the Holy Cross begins. It keeps for three days, through 19 Thoout.

Does the tune change again?

It does. The Church moves to the Hosanna tune, the festive melody of Palm Sunday. At Matins there is a procession of the Cross, with twelve Gospel stations around the church.

Why does the Church put these two feasts side by side?

Because one explains the other. The martyrs could carry their cross because they had first looked at His. Nayrouz teaches us faithfulness. The Feast of the Cross shows us where faithfulness gets its strength.

WHAT CHANGES IN THE JOYFUL TUNE

The Verses of the Cymbals

The Doxologies

The Praxis Response

The Psalm and Gospel Responses

Psalm 150

The Hymns of the Distribution

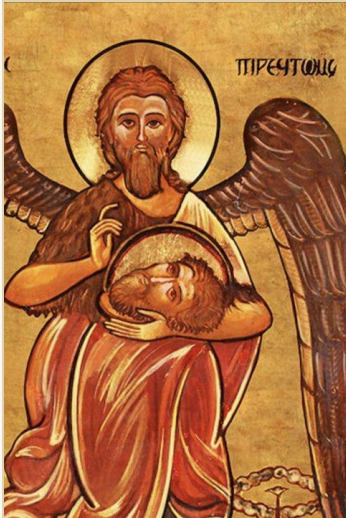
The Conclusion of the Prayers

So this September, when the tune changes, listen. The Church is teaching theology in her melodies, her readings, her processions and her prayers.

2 & 8 THOOUT • 12 AND 18 SEPTEMBER

A Father and a Son

Two martyrs from one house, at the opening of the Year of the Martyrs. Six days apart on the calendar, though their deaths were years apart.



ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

2 THOOUT • SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER

St. John the Baptist

THE SON • THE FORERUNNER

He was killed in the year 31 by order of Herod Antipas, and his whole crime was one sentence. Herod had taken Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, while Philip was still alive. John would not let it pass.

"It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

MARK 6:18

He could have said nothing. He had already done the work he was sent for. He said it anyway, and it cost him his head.



GABRIEL APPEARS TO ZACHARIAS

8 THOOUT • FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

St. Zacharias the Priest

THE FATHER

A priest of the division of Abijah, married to Elizabeth. St. Luke, in his first chapter, gives them a description most of us would not survive.

"They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

LUKE 1:6

They had no child, and both were well along in years. Then, while Zacharias was offering the incense at the altar, the Archangel Gabriel stood beside him and told him a son was coming. He did not believe it, and lost his voice until the boy was born. His martyrdom came years before his son's.

Faithfulness is not a private achievement. It is handed down. A father who stood at the altar, a son who stood in front of a king — martyred years apart, remembered six days apart.

SING WITH THE CHURCH

The Gospel Responses of the Season

Learn them in all three languages. English, Coptic, Arabic.

For the Coptic New Year

GOSPEL RESPONSE

Alleluia (4). Bless the crown of the year with Your goodness, O Lord.

ἀλληλοῖα (Δ). Σμοῦ ἐπιχλομ
ἵτε ἱρομπί: ρίτεν
τεκμετῆρηστος Πῶσις.

الليلويا (٤). بارك إكليل السنة
بصلاحك، يا رب.

This is He to whom is due glory:
with His good Father: and the
Holy Spirit: both now and forever.

Φαί ἐρε πῶου ἐρῆρεπὶ ναϥ: νεμ
πεϣιωτ ἡἀγαθος: νεμ
Πιῖνευμα εἶογαν: ιςχεν ἱνοῦ
νεμ ψα ἐνεϩ.

هذا الذي ينبغي له المجد مع أبيه
الصالح والروح القدس من الآن
وإلى الأبد.

For the Feast of the Cross

GOSPEL RESPONSE · HOSANNA TUNE

For greatly honored: is the sign of
the Cross: of Jesus Christ the
King: our true God.

ὕταίνοῦτ γαρ ἐμαψω: ἡχε
πιμῆνι ἵτε πιῖσταγρος: ἡτε
ἱησοῦς Πιῖριστος Ποῦρο:
Πεννοῦτ ἡἀληθινος.

لأنها مكرمة جداً علامة صليب
يسوع المسيح الملك إلهنا
الحقيقي.

Through His cross: and His holy
Resurrection: He restored man
once again: to the Paradise.

Εβολ ρίτεν πεϣῖσταγρος: νεμ
τεϣῖἀναστασις εἶογαν: ἀϣταθεο
ἡπιρωμι ἡκεσop: ἐϩογν
ἐπιπαρῶσις.

من قبل صليبه، وقيامته المقدسة،
رد الإنسان مرة أخرى، إلى
الفردوس.

Blessed be the Father and the Son
and the Holy Spirit: the perfect
Trinity. We worship Him and
glorify Him.

Χε ῥῖμαρwoῦτ ἡχε Φιωτ νεμ
Πωρη: νεμ Πιῖνευμα εἶογαν:
ἱτριάς εἱτῆνκ ἐβολ: τενογωψτ
ἡμος τενηῶου νας.

لأنه مُبارك الآب والابن، والروح
القدس، الثالوث الكامل، نسجد له
ونمجّده.



ACADEMY UPDATE · FALL / WINTER 2026

Season 2 Has Begun

Bible Study is under way, with live sessions from Week 3, and Christian Apologetics opens this month. Every class meets live online for sixty minutes, free to families.

WHEN EACH PROGRAM STARTS

UNDER WAY · WEEK 1

Bible Study

All three levels began 30 August.
Live sessions start in Week 3.

BEGINS 6 SEPT

Apologetics · High School

Grades 9–12. First live class
Thursday 10 September.

BEGINS 13 SEPT

Apologetics · Middle School

Grades 6–8. First live class
Monday 14 September.

WEEKLY LIVE CLASS SCHEDULE · ALL TIMES US EASTERN

PROGRAM	GRADES	DAY & TIME
Bible Study: Foundations	Grades 3–5	Wednesdays 7:00–8:00 PM
Bible Study: Firm Faith	Grades 6–8	Thursdays 7:00–8:00 PM
Bible Study: Deep Formation	Grades 9–12	Tuesdays 7:30–8:30 PM
Christian Apologetics: Middle School	Grades 6–8	Mondays 7:00–8:00 PM
Christian Apologetics: High School	Grades 9–12	Thursdays 8:00–9:00 PM

Materials are posted every Sunday, and the study week runs Sunday through Saturday.

Bible Study live sessions begin in Week 3, the week of 13 September.

For any questions or concerns, please contact us at

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