



**Proclamation From The Assembly Of The Priests For
The Diocese of Sydney & Its Affiliated Regions
Coptic Orthodox Church**



COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH
+ DIOCESE OF SYDNEY +
& AFFILIATED REGIONS
NSW • QLD • NT

**In Relation to the distressing events taking place in Egypt against
the Coptic Christian People**

In The Name of The Father & The Son & The Holy Spirit, One God Amen



On Thursday the 12th May 2011 the assembly of the fathers the priests of the diocese of Sydney, which represents all the parishes in the diocese, met to discuss the current circumstances which the church and the Christian community in Egypt are experiencing and have agreed to declare the following:

Firstly: Our faith is deep and unshakable in our good God, the shepherd of our Church who has promised us that: “The gates of Hades will not prevail against it.” And that He is with us until the end of days. We have confidence in the Divine protection as was written “Unless the Lord builds the house, They labour in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain.”, and “for he who touches you touches the apple of His eye.” And “The Lord is my Light and my Salvation”; He assured us and said “Do Not Fear”.

Second: We are observing with sadness, sorrow and bitterness what is unfolding in Egypt since 1952 by the previous regimes to marginalize the Copts, and discriminate against them because of religion; leading to the systematic and undeclared persecution of the Christians in their livelihood and their churches, which led to the giving of blessings to commit atrocities such as that of Elzaioia Elhamara, Minya, Abu Kerkas, Assiut, Alexandria, and El-Kosheh; up until the events of Nag Hammadi on Christmas Eve 2010, El-Talibia November 2010, and the Church of the Saints, Alexandria on the New Year's Eve of 2011, and the train shooting of Christians in Upper Egypt.

And since the Revolution of January 25, 2011, in which not only Coptic Christians took part in, but were the initial spark which lead the Egyptian nation to reject the previous corrupt system, when they went out in demonstrations in El-Talibia (Giza), in Alexandria and in other provinces in rejection of the terrorism of the state.

We were encouraged by these events until the situation worsened significantly against us, and the church of the Saints in Soul was attacked and demolished, and our youth were killed and their homes burned in Mokattam, and the ear of a Christian Citizen was cut under Islamic law, and the appointed Governor of Qena in Upper Egypt was rejected by the mobs because of his religion, and in all this no one was held accountable and put under the power of the law, rather we saw that Christians were forced to accept in all these events the customary local councils to deal with cases.

In a shameful and unprecedented precursor we see the government allowing the mediation of the radical and extremist elders and Salafies, while the state itself is in absence. Until it is now seen and obvious to the whole world that the Military is guided by the extremist radicals in all its decisions.

Then comes the great disaster as a result of all this negligence, the attacks on the churches in Imbaba and the forced and illegal search with the intent to, and the burning of the church and the killing of innocent people and the terrorizing of the Christian population and the stealing of property; and shamefully when the authorities finally intervene they arrest the Christians and investigate them, rather than the perpetrators. While under all laws, they where in the state of self defence in protection of themselves and their churches.

Third: We see that what is happening in Egypt and especially against the Coptic Christians and as reported in the media by all outlets, and as is seen and analysed by the whole world and as acknowledged within reports submitted by the Freedoms Committee of the U.S. Congress, and denounced by the Prime Minister of Canada, as well as talks in Italy and the Vatican, France and the appeal of the United States Secretary, that the matter has become an International matter, a situation we never wished upon our beloved Egypt, rather we wished that freedom and equality for all, would prevail, ensuring the civility of the state through those responsible in Egypt.

Fourth: We bow our heads in appreciation and reverence to:

1. Our righteous martyrs whom we in confidence acknowledge their presence in the Paradise of Joy, we ask for their prayers in these difficult circumstances.
2. The loved ones who carried their lives on their hands and went out to defend and protect their churches bearing the difficult situations in a peaceful sit-in to claim the rights of the Copts in Egypt, since they are citizens and have the right to full citizenship, we support them in all their legitimate demands.
3. The beloved Muslim partners in the homeland who are in support of the claim of equality and who even shared in the peaceful sit-in to achieve these legitimate demands.

Fifth: We call upon all our children and all the Coptic associations in the diocese to participate in the claim for the legitimate rights of the Coptic Christians. That they all be one hand, acting through the legal channels, in a Christian manner that seeks peace and love and is distant from slur, violence and abuse of any one.

Sixth: We in the name of the Assembly of the Priests and all the Diocese of Sydney, raise prayers for the safety of the mother church in Egypt and the head of our Church our father the beloved His Holiness Pope Shenouda III; we support him in all his stands, spiritually, pastorally and nationally.

We condemn every infringement on his honourable person for he represents well the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt and in all the Diaspora.

*Assembly of the Priests – Diocese of Sydney & Affiliated Regions
Sydney on May 12, 2011*