

# Intercession of the Saints

## Objectives

To understand that the intercession of the saints is a biblical command and is honored by God and to know the difference between redeeming and pleading intercessions

## References

1. Defending the treasures of the Coptic Church (Hanna Hanna El Kassis)
2. The Intercession of the Saints (St. George Church- Sporting)
3. Introduction to the Coptic Orthodox Church (Fr. Tadros Malaty)

## Scriptural Verse

“Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.” (Hebrews 13: 7)

## Lesson Outline

### A Bond of Love

- ❖ The Saints are the triumphant members forming with us the One Body of Christ.
- ❖ They pray for us, and we pray for them and venerate them and God in His Fatherhood appreciates this mutual love.
- ❖ We put their icons in the church and the priest approaches them with incense as he does for the congregation and then goes to the altar to offer all the prayers to God.
- ❖ The more we approach the saints, the closer we are to God; that’s why we make friendship with the saints celebrating their feasts and asking for their prayers.

## Intercession of Saints

Our belief in intercession is biblical, as it appears from the following points:

- ❖ Saints who departed are still alive (Luke 20:37, 38), Moses and Elijah appeared on the Lord Jesus' transfiguration (Luke 9:28-33)
- ❖ Those who are in heaven rejoice for the repentance of a sinner (Luke 15:7-10).
- ❖ The Lord blessed Isaac for the sake of Abraham his father (Genesis 26:5).
- ❖ God was gracious to Israel because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (2 Kings 13:23)
- ❖ God preserved the kingdom in the days of Solomon for the sake of his father David (1 Kings 11:11-13).
- ❖ God raised a dead man when his corpse touched the bones of Elisha the prophet, revealing the great position of this prophet in God's sight (2 Kings 13:20, 21).
- ❖ We ask for the intercessions of the saints, as Moses asked for the intercession of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Exodus 32:13)

- ❖ God honors those who honor Him (1 Samuel 2:30), attributes Himself to them (I am the Lord of Abraham) and hears their supplications... Therefore the rich man appealed to Abraham (Luke 16:27, 28).

## Types of Intercession

**Redeeming intercession:** This is the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ through His Holy Blood to abolish the sins of Mankind.

**Pleading Intercession:** Asking for help in all matters in our life (including helping us in our spiritual struggle) from St. Mary, the angels and the saints who departed and the holy people living among us as in (Genesis 20: 1- 18).

## Veneration of the Saints

We venerate the Icons of the Saints, their pictures and their relics as it reminds us of their holiness, purity and struggles for the word of God, so that we do like they did.

The intercession of St. Mary is above all intercessions including the angels and archangels. She offers our pleadings to God and directs us to follow His commandments (John 2: 1- 11).

We don't worship any of the saints. We love them and ask for their prayers and intercessions.

Veneration of the Relics is a biblical teaching:

- ❖ Josiah the king who came from Judea to Samaria, burned all the bones of the dead and kept the bones of the prophets and the Saints (2 Kings: 23: 17- 18).
- ❖ The bones of Elijah raised a dead (2 Kings 13: 21).
- ❖ The handkerchiefs and aprons brought from St. Paul's wounds healed the sick (Acts 19: 12).

## Conclusion

Salvation is only from the Lord Jesus Christ, but intercession of the saints who are in heaven or the righteous people who are still on earth, is mentioned clearly in the Old and New Testament and is honored from the Orthodox Church from the Apostolic Age.

## Activities / Discussion Points

1. Find stories from Scripture regarding intercession.

Ex.: Moses for the Israelites (Exodus 32: 11- 14), St. Paul asked the congregation to pray for him (Romans 15: 30). Abraham interceded for the people of Sodom (Genesis 18) and God was willing to forgive them **for the sake of** righteous people (if any were found)..

2. Discuss the Verse: "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2: 5).