

I am convinced that neither DEATH nor LIFE, neither heights nor the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth nor ANY THING will be able to separate us from the love of God who is in Christ Jesus our LORD.

# SAYINGS OF THE HOLY DESERT FATHERS



# 2019 YOUTH CALENDAR

✠ My beloved children st. Bakhomios group.

Peace & grace of Our Lord be with you. Welcome to year 2019 Calendar hoping you are all well. The theme of this year calendar is: "The sayings of the holy desert fathers." Briefing to you what are the sayings of the fathers; The monastic life started in Egypt end of 3rd century & 4th century. When persecution against Christians ended, our fathers in Egypt found nothing to offer for Our Lord Jesus Christ whom they loved with all their hearts; So, they put to death themselves by themselves and offered their life to the Lord "I beseech you therefore bretheren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). They have given themselves wholly to Our Lord, enjoying His Love and the deep life with Him in full solitude. They gone through a lot of trials from the devil; supported by Our Lord to overcome him. By this gained great wisdom in spiritual warfare and put valuable sayings which is the outcome of so many years in the desert alone with the Lord. Their sayings is a great treasure for the generations. As their sayings are so deep; I chose one saying for each month, put a title for it and a comment explaining how to apply it in our lives. I leave you to enjoy the sayings of the holy fathers and ask to please pray for me.

Happy new year to you all.  
01/01/2019

✠

Fr. Tadros El-Bakhoumi



# 2019



### January 2019

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# JANUARY



## A SAYING FOR ST. BAKHOMIOS - FATHER OF COMMUNAL MONASTERIES

### ENDURING INSULTATION

*“If one of the brothers or sisters annoy you with a harsh word, why do you become angry and become like an agitated animal? Don’t you know that our Lord died for your sake, while you are a sinner? When the devil whispers in your ear with rage against your brother/sister do not accept it, because when you open your ears to the devil, you are opening your heart to accept the poisons that he puts inside you and that is what makes you agitated like the animal or become like fire enflamed with hatred. Quickly vomit that poison, which the devil put in your mind before it spreads in your body and it kills you spiritually because you did not endure a harsh word or a swearing comment your brother/sister said against you. Be aware that the enemy, the devil is the one who is moving him/her against you to perish by anger. Be patient and long suffering with your brother/sister, lest the verse applies on you in Isaiah: “and there will be instead of the beautiful fragrance, the rotteness”. (Isaiah 3:24)*

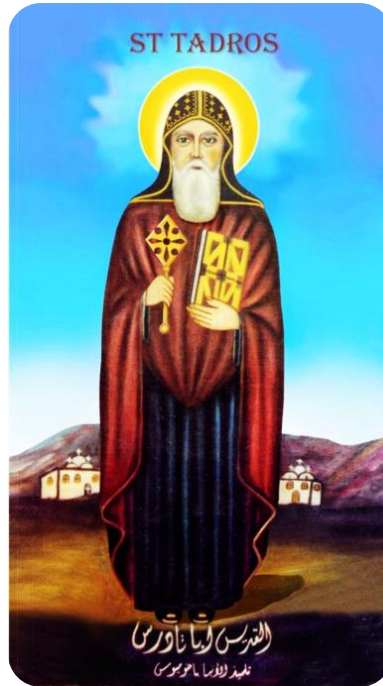
**Comment by Very Rev. Fr. Tadros El-Bakhomi:** *Enduring insults and swearing is not an easy thing to take for humans and there are very little, who can endure it and keep their peace and calmness when they are insulted. This is the power and greatness of Christianity; as our Lord taught us saying:*

*“To him who strikes you on the one cheek, offer the other also”. (Luke 6:29).*

*In fact, the power of enduring insultation, conquers the devils and casts them out. It is mentioned in the paradise of the holy fathers, that there was a ruler of a city, whose daughter was demon possessed and they couldn’t find anyone to help her. His assistant advised him to call a monk, who dwells in a cave in the borders of the city to come and pray for his daughter. When the monk came in and the daughter opened the door, the demon made her to hit him on the right cheek. Then the monk replied, “our Lord Jesus Christ ordered to turn the other cheek, here it is for you”. Upon hearing this, the demon cried out loudly, “woe to us from those who apply the commandment of Jesus Christ the Lord” and the demon went out of her.*

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## FEBRUARY



### THE SAYING OF ST. TADROS, THE DISCIPLE OF ST. BAKHOMIOS - FATHER OF COMMUNAL MONASTERIES

#### THE LOVE FOR MY BROTHER AND SISTER

*This commandment ordered to us by our Lord (“to love your neighbour as yourself”), is above all other commandments and it is the second after the first commandment to love the Lord our God. You are debited to God to fulfil it, as He loved us and is always loving to us. If you want your soul to be pure, practise self-control that you don’t talk any evil about any brother or sister and don’t share in the gossip of others; by this you make the Lord accept you. As just talking bad about a brother or sister is something the Lord never accepts. If you want the Lord to love you, keep your tongue from backstabbing others and be humble; by this the angels will be friends to you and the Lord will take you as a son/daughter to Him, He will be blessing and supporting you in your life.*

#### Comment by Very Rev. Fr. Tadros El-Bakhomi:

*Offering true love in simplicity and humility to our brothers and sisters and avoiding hurting them, even indirectly by talking behind their back, is a great power of self-control, which our Lord asked us to practise. The person who continuously controls his/her tongue and offers love with simplicity and humility, makes the unbelievers be touched and come to believe in our Lord. Here is a great example to us: what is it that made St. Bakhomios - father of communal monasteries a great saint? He grew up in a pagan family, but the simple action of genuine love by the simple peasants of Esna, who met him with his army on the way to the war, offering them food and love and pure Christian service, touched his heart and he questioned about what the reason was behind this and he found out that it was simply because they are Christians. This made him love Christianity and eventually he became the great St. Bakhomios, father of Communal Monasteries.*



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**MARCH**



## **SAYING FOR ST. ANTHONY - THE FATHER OF MONKS**

### **THE WISDOM FOR OUR LIFE**

*If we want to grow up spiritually, we should not remember the old times of sin, but we should be as someone who is always starting fresh and looking up positively to gain the fruits of his/her labour in the Lord. In this we do like what St. Paul taught us, "One thing I do all the time, I forget things behind and look forward to things coming up"; this means having a fresh start (Philippians 3:13). Let us watch ourselves with this wise behaviour, which will help us stand before the throne of the just Judge.*

#### **Comment by Very Rev. Fr. Tadros El-Bakhoumi:**

*Remembering the past life with its sins is a two sharp edged sword, one edge is good, and the other is bad. If we keep remembering the old evils in a negative way, one of two things will happen; either you will fall in despair and lose your salvation, or the memory of the evil will make you fall in it again.*

*The wise person always remembers that the sins of his/her old life should be taken in a positive way to learn a lesson from and to never fall in them once more. On the other hand, he/she does not forget them as if he hadn't committed the sins, as this will make him/her fall in the sin of pride and also unknowingly commit similar sins in different appearances by the deception of the devil, which could sometimes make the person fall in worse sins. Here I quote a saying from one of the holy desert fathers:*

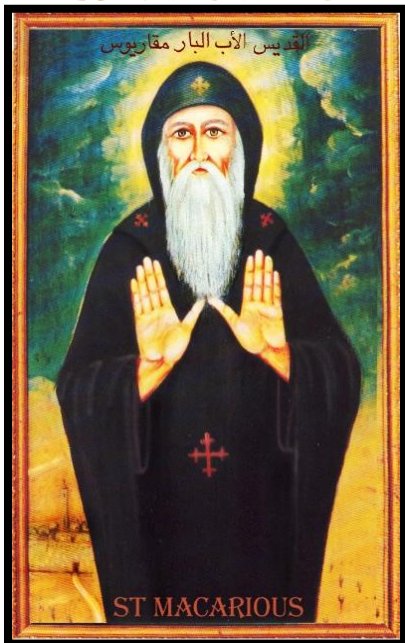
*"I cannot remember that I have fallen in the same sin twice; my rule in life is if the devil makes me fall, I take it as a lesson to me and keep reminding myself not to fall in it again".*

*+My son/daughter, when you always think of achieving the heavenly inheritance and you keep your eye on heaven, this will help you to be always alert not to keep repeating the same sins again.*



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APRIL



## SAYING OF ST. MAKARIOS THE GREAT

### THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUOUS STRUGGLE

*All the deeds that we push ourselves to do for the sake of the Lord, weather it is spiritual struggle or service to the Lord in anyway; yes, it is a struggle and we feel tired but I want you to love it and don't deliver your bodies for laziness and negligence because you will regret it on the judgement day. On that day, the righteous will be crowned with glorious crowns for the struggles they suffered either in martyrdom or for spiritual growing, while those who delivered themselves for laziness, entertaining their bodies with different foods and ways of the body and entertainment, will stand before the throne of our Lord- the just Judge empty handed, and they will lose their reward. Tell me even in life, who has achieved any income without suffering or toil? or who has achieved a good life without pushing themselves hard? that is the fact of life, both spiritually and socially.*

#### Comment by Very Rev. Fr. Tadros El-Bakhoumi:

*My beloved children, I notice over the years that the majority are inclined to doing minimum and sometimes nil in their spiritual struggle and practise. They busy themselves with everything, but when it comes to what concerns their salvation, they very easily accept laziness and become negligent. But the fact is that without struggle and effort, we will never be admitted to heaven and the crowns of heaven are for those who struggle. It is mentioned in the conclusion of the theotoki (praise for St. Mary the mother of God in the midnight praises) it says, "the martyrs will come carrying their sufferings and also the righteous will come carrying their struggles for virtues". That is why St. Paul said: "I submit my body and enslave it, lest after I preach to others, I myself be disqualified" (1 Corinthians 9:27). +My children, it is a fact that the centre of the life of all the Apostles, Martyrs and saints is struggling and pushing themselves hard to achieve Heaven. Push yourself hard in this life, that you find rest in the life of the age to come.*

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**MAY**



## THE SAYING FOR ST. JOHN THE SHORT

### SELF-ACCOUNTING

*Like the merchandiser who wants to achieve high income/gain, he/she sits at the end of each day, making account to see what he/she should change or what he/she should improve. You also my son/daughter, if you want to gain heaven, do not let a day pass without sitting with yourself at the end of the day, setting accounts for what you have offered to the Lord on that day. Remember the Lord had blessed you with the light of the day, the beauty of the nature, the work you are doing, the health you have, the water you are drinking, the food you are eating, the money you have etc... so is it wise for you to enjoy all that the Lord is giving to you and you do not check on yourself if you have pleased or upset Him on that day? If you found something not on the good way, pray asking forgiveness, until you see your confession father to get it out of your system.*

**Comment by Very Rev. Fr. Tadros El-Bakhoumi:**

*what I noticed over the years is that the majority of people are living in a status of forgetfulness and absence of mind. Since they wake up in the morning, till they come to sleep, they are enjoying what the Lord God is granting them, but they get busy with it, they get busy to achieve, busy to grow etc.. and forget about God Himself, Who is giving everything for them. There are hardly but only a very few who set accounts with themselves at the end of each day, to see if they did good with the Lord or not. Many sometimes do not even give the minimal energy to pray and thank the Lord for all what He had given to them. A day drags to another and a year to another, until they suddenly come to the end of life, regret what they have done but it is too late. That is why Solomon the wise said: "remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days come and you get old and you say, I have no pleasure in them". (Ecclesiastes 12:1)*



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**JUNE**



## **ST. BEMAN THE ASCETIC**

### **THE WARS OF THE DEVILS**

*One of the fathers asked St. Beman, “why does the Lord allow the devils to fight us?”. St. Beman answered, “the truth is that, after you are baptised and had the holy Spirit, the devils do not dare to fight us, unless we have inside us things that belong to them; I mean our desires, lusts, bad intentions, anger, jealousy etc... Those things are in fact devils inside us. So when the devils see these things inside us, they have power over us and have the right to fight us, because their belongings are inside us. The more the person tries to uproot those evil intentions from his/her soul and heart, the more power he/she has to push the devils away quickly when they try to fight us.*

#### **Comment by Very Rev. Fr. Tadros El-Bakhoumi:**

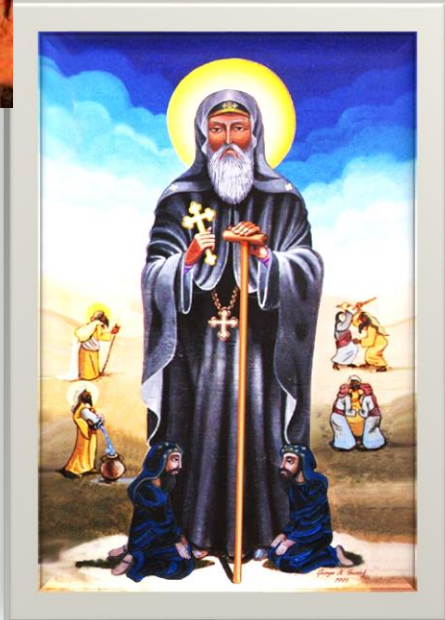
*What St. Beman the ascetic said is what I have seen over the years in majority of those who are troubled by the devils, falling under their different trails and keep falling in sins. From the gospel of St. Mathew, there was a man who was demon possessed, living naked in the cemetery and no one could approach the area. Just the Lord stepped on the borders of the city, the demons cried out, “woe to us from you Jesus the Son of God, You will destroy us”. Our Lord will never stay in my heart when I have those evil intentions and belongings of the devil inside me, but the more I put the effort to cleanse myself from them, practise spiritual life under guidance of the confession father, the devils will have no power over me by the grace of God. Here I say: - What is the difference between a saint and a sinner? They both had the same spiritual great gifts (baptism, confirmation, holy Communion etc..) the devils come to fight the saint and find him/her vigilant, find him/her struggling and watching over him/herself, he cannot hurt him/her much, but he comes to the sinner, finds him/her negligent, sleepy, lazy etc... then pushes him/her to different sins.*





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# JULY



**ST. MOSES THE BLACK**

## JUDGE NOT

*Do not be cruel to your brother/sister and judge him/her because we are all under the same temptation.*

*Try your best not to hear about a falling of a brother or sister, lest you judge him/her unintentionally.*

*Because the more you hear and know, the more you cause grief to yourself*

*(Ecclesiastes 1:18):*

*“For in much wisdom is much grief, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.”*

*It is mentioned in the book of Exodus that the last plague, which the Lord God brought on the Egyptians to get His people Israel out; He sent an angel, which killed all the first-born all-over Egypt; there was wailing and weeping in all houses. After this, no one will dare leave his/her house to weep for his/her neighbours' first born.*

### **Comment by Very Rev. Fr. Tadros El-Bakhoumi:**

*The Lord said, “judge not that you be not judged” (Luke 6:37)*

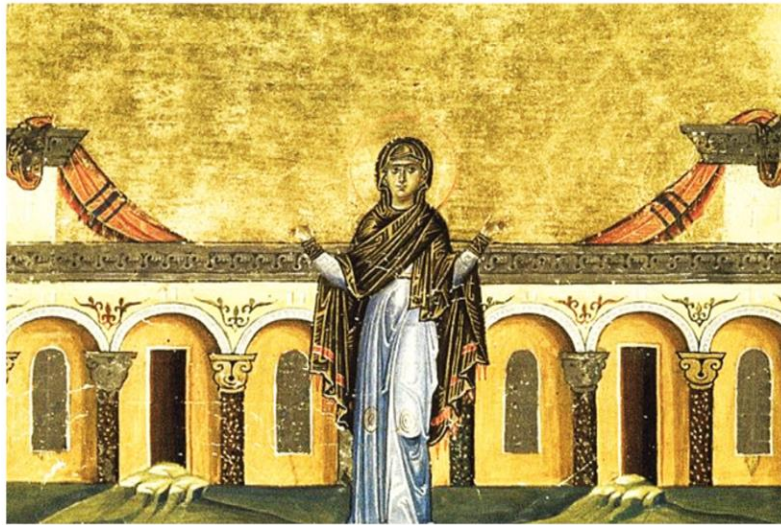
*The result of sin is death, even if your brother is at fault. By judging him/her, you yourself are falling in sin and under the judgement of death. So why do you do this? The Lord Who has all the perfections being the Holy God said to us, “learn from Me for I am gentle and humble in heart” (Matthew 11:29). The gentle person is always kind to everyone, so he/she will never judge anyone and the humble sees everyone better than him/herself, so he/she will never judge anyone. It is a very simple concept; when you judge your brother or sister, you are not learning from the Lord but rather you are doing against His teaching, more so you make yourself taking the place of the Lord, Who is alone the Just Judge. From the quotation of St. Moses the Black; when you judge a brother/sister, it is as if you are leaving the wailing of a dead person in your house, to go and share in weeping for a dead person in your neighbour's house. To understand this; you yourself are a sinner and you should be concerned for your sin to deal with, but when you judge your brother/sister, you are leaving your own sins and concerned about other people's sin.*

*+My children enough for you to care for your own salvation and leave others alone.*



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# AUGUST



## SAYING FOR MOTHER SARAH

### WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN OUR LIFE

*“If I busy myself in following what everyone does, says and wants, I will find myself lost in hundreds of directions, as humans are full on in so many different intentions. He/she who wants to walk on the way of the Lord to Heaven, should endure the troubles and sufferings of the spiritual struggle in the beginning, until the Lord gives him/her comfort and strength (and not to winge about it), it is exactly like those who start to light a fire for warmness; in the beginning it makes a lot of smoke, which makes their eyes watery, but as soon as the fire settles, they enjoy the warmness of it. Mother Sarah’s famous saying is: “I have made a rule to my life that whenever I put my foot on a step of the stairs, I imagine that I might die before I put my other foot on the next step, by this I lived all the time ready for when the Lord calls me out.”*

Comment by Very Rev. Fr. Tadros El-Bakhoumi:

*It amazes me how people in life are affected by what other people say in their ears in different ways. The one who opens his/her ear to hear from others or follow their ways, will find him/herself lost (spiritually and socially) and not knowing his/her direction. No one will love you or tell you the truth but only those who genuinely care for your salvation and wellbeing in life. The main one of them is your father of confession. So many people lose their way because of hearing many opinions and thoughts from others. That is why I always advise everyone saying, the golden rule to keep you safe from falling in traps and to grow up spiritually is, “love all and keep away from all”. The person who really wants to guarantee his/her place in Heaven, should always remember death. This is the only guarantee that keeps us on the right track to heaven, achieving salvation. Sadly, over 90% of humans forget that they will die in an unknown moment and accordingly, lose track of their way and become always immersed in the busyness of this world.*

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# SEPTEMBER



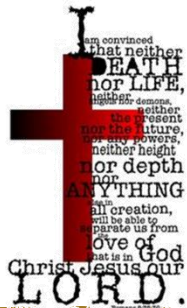
## A SAYING FOR ST. ARSANIUS - THE TEACHER OF THE KING'S CHILDREN

### TALKING

*St. Arsenious - because of his great knowledge and wisdom, was chosen by the king to be the teacher for his two children and he kept him in the royal palace with great honour and position to fulfil his duty. St. Arsanious used to pray all the time to ask the Lord to guide him for his salvation and once while praying, a voice came to him, "escape and you will be saved". So he left everything and came to become a monk in the deserts of 'Shiheet' in Egypt. The monks knowing his great knowledge and wisdom, started to talk to him a lot, so he found that this will not help him, so he put a stone in his mouth for 3 years and never got it out but only when he eats or prays in the church or talks about something important. When they questioned him about this, he answered his famous saying, "so many times I spoke and regretted it, but about keeping silent, I never regretted it".*

#### Comment by Very Rev. Fr. Tadros El-Bakhoumi:

*It amazes me how much the people keep talking, talking and talking necessarily and unnecessarily. One of the things I noticed after we finish the prayers of the 'praises before vespers' and the priests go inside the sanctuary to be dressed with the dressing of the service, which takes less than two minutes, I am shocked about the amount of talking, as if a big energy is blocked inside and an open door or a chance has been given to flow it all out. Our Lord said, "every idle word you utter, you will have to give an answer for it in the last day" (Matthew 12:36). And also, the Bible says, "the much talking will never be free from sin" (Proverbs 10:19). I have been advising all and praying for all to stop talking unnecessarily! that the people can save themselves from sins and find their salvation; let alone the hours on the phone with people. I always tell the people, "If you talk to the Lord one over 10 of what you talk to other humans, this will be a great achievement and I will be happy" but no one listens. I pray wholeheartedly and hope that people can stop unnecessarily talking and only talk in what is needed.*



# OCTOBER



## THE SAYING OF ST. PAPHNAUTIUS (THE DISCIPLE OF ST. MAKARIOUS)

### OBEYING THE CONFESSION FATHER

*A monk came to St. Paphnautius asking, "tell me a word of benefit, with which I live to achieve my salvation?"*

*St. Paphnautius answered, "my son do not block the channel of water that waters your life". Then the monk answered, "I don't understand, can you please explain it to me my father". Then St. Paphnautius answered, "the channel of water that waters your life is your father of confession, who guides you in the Lord by the work of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament. If you always keep your continuous contact with your father of confession, follow his guidance strictly and without argument or putting your own thoughts into it, you are on the way to heaven".*

#### Comment by Very Rev. Fr. Tadros El-Bakhoumi:

*This is a story from the paradise of the holy fathers – a monk came to an old father saying to him, "I asked my confession father that I want to go for martyrdom, but he replied to me saying, it is not your level now, but I desire martyrdom, what shall I do?". The old father answered wisely, "go back to your confession father, submit to him; for your obedience to him is a crown equal to the crown of martyrdom". So the monk returned back to his father and then his father said to him, "if you want to go for martyrdom go" but the monk replied, "no my father, your blessing to me is better" and when he said this, a voice came from heaven saying, "I have crowned you with the crown of martyrdom just for your obedience to your father". The main thing that frightens the devil is when a person is always obeying his father of confession and asking in everything before he/she does it. I always say in most of the meetings this statement, "ask and you will be safe". According to the holy fathers, the level of a son/daughter in obedience to his father is one of the very high levels in heaven. My son/daughter, as long you trust your confession father, obey him you will be saved.*



# NOVEMBER



## THE SPIRITUAL ELDER ST. JOHN SABA THE SIN AND REPENTANCE

*No one is worse than the sinner. Not even a dirty animal like the pig or the dog, for those animals never change and keep their kind as they are. But as for humans, he/she is originally created on the icon and likeness of God, it means he/she can live in a holy clean life as much as possible for the human; taking the likeness of his/her Creator. But the human changes this beautiful icon of God to a dirty icon of sin like the pig, which no matter how much you clean it, it dirties itself again.*

*The only recovering from this terrible thing is the great Sacrament of, 'repentance and confession'. No matter how ugly the sin is, even if it is worse than the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord out of His great love in the Sacrament of 'repentance and confession', wipes away the dirt of our sins and makes us clean. Then we become His children full of light and if we continue like this to the end of life, He will surely accept us with Him in heaven.*

### Comment by Very Rev. Fr. Tadros El-Bakhoumi:

*As we are born in the flesh from our father Adam to be like him; also we are re born in the sacrament of Baptism to be children of the Lord God, according to the verse in (John 1: 12-13): "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His Name, who were born not of flesh, nor of the will of man but of God". Our loving Lord God, knowing the weakness of our humanity and that we quickly defile the beautiful icon we gained in Baptism; granted us this great sacrament of 'repentance and confession', which does a continuous act of baptism in our lives, to be continuously re born again spiritually to be children of our Lord Jesus Christ. My children as long as you have breath in and out, do not despise this great gift given to us that no matter what we commit against His holy Word and Holy will; out of His great mercy on us and love to us, will re accept us when we regret our sin, repent and flush it away by the sacrament of 'repentance and confession'. This does not mean that we take it lightly and continue falling in sins, but it is to help us to start fresh and grow beyond the past sins.*



# DECEMBER



## SAYING FOR ST. ISALAH THE ASCETIC

### THE CAUSES OF SIN

*St. Isaiah said, “the human cannot keep himself away from sin, unless he/she protects and preserves him/herself from the things that causes the sin, which are: ‘smallness of heart’, ‘bordness’, ‘doing our own mind’, ‘love of positions and leadership’, ‘love of possessions and increasing what we have’, ‘talks of the world’, ‘mixing a lot with people from different types’, ‘gossip and seeking those things that will never benefit us’ and the top of them all is ‘judging our brothers and sisters’. These are the things that causes us to fall in different sins and unless we take away the causes of sin, how can we stop the sin?*

#### Comment by Very Rev. Fr. Tadros El-Bakhoumi:

*From the years among people, the devil is very cunning, very experienced with humans and very smart to notice the movement of the human or the facial expressions of the human and he can realise that this human has an intention or inclination to a certain sin, desire, lust etc... The devil also hates us because we are taking his place in heaven and all his work day and night is in full concentration to make us fall in sin, as he does not waste time in eating, drinking showering etc... he always comes to us in round ways, in tricking and deceiving approaches, as if he is trying to offer his goods to us, while hidden behind it is the venom of the scorpion.*

*My children be very cautious of the tricks of the devil, pray and read the bible as much as you can, learn verses off by heart as they will protect us and are a very strong weapon against the devil; remember that the Lord taught us the example when He allowed the devil to tempted Him on the mountain. The Lord answered each trial of the devil with a verse from the book of Deuteronomy of the Old Testament. Be very open with your father of confession on a regular basis, then you will walk on your way securely and safe, until you make it to heaven.*

*God be with you all.*