



Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate

DIOCESE OF THE MIDLANDS

ST. MARY & ST. MARK'S COPTIC CENTRE



## YOUTH CONFERENCE

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2012

### REPENTANCE

“The LORD is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

— 2 Peter 3:9

## Workshop 1 - Why should I bother with repentance? Why is it important?

One day you will get up to heaven and when you get there, one of the angels will take you on a tour. While showing you around, you'll find a room with a sign above the door that says: RESERVED FOR \_\_\_\_\_ (*insert your name there*). And when you go inside there, you are going to see a bunch of boxes. Boxes boxes boxes. Floor to ceiling, stacks and stacks of boxes. And you are going to say to the angel "*Wow! Are all those for me?*" And the angel will reply, "*Sort of. Those WERE for you. God wanted to give them to you, but you refused.*" "*What's that?*" you respond. The angel explains, "*God wanted to give them to you, but you refused to repent. Repentance would have unlocked the door to this room and given you access to these gifts, but you chose not to use it. Every time someone repents, God opens up their personalized storeroom of gifts and gives them one box to open. But no repentance, no gifts. Sorry.*"

1. *In Isaiah 59 we see how sin impacts our relationship with God specifically. What's the big deal if we're separated from God?*

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2. *How does knowing that we have a "citizenship in heaven" and that we are "joint heirs" with Christ help us to know why we need to repent?*

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Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement; he is a rebel who must lay down his arms . . . This process of surrender—this movement full speed astern—is what Christians call repentance. Now repentance is no fun at all. It is something much harder than merely eating humble pie. It means unlearning all the self-conceit and self-will that we have been training ourselves into for thousands of years. It means killing part of yourself, undergoing a kind of death. - **C.S. Lewis**

3. *What about that one sin that I've struggled with for as long as I can remember? Is there any point in repenting when I know it's going to happen again?*

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Saints that suffered, struggled and achieved measures of joy, holiness and fruitfulness through repentance: St Mary of Egypt, St Augustine

## Workshop 2- What does real repentance even look like?

What would you do today if you believed you won the lottery? Would that change anything in your day? I'm not talking about if you played the lottery and thought you had a chance to win. I am saying imagine you just got a certified letter, hand-delivered to you, saying that you've just won £100 million and the check is in the mail. The point is this: if you really believed that you had £100 million right now, it would change your behavior. You couldn't go about your day as usual. That piece of information entering your mind will affect how you behave and the decisions you make. Said another way, **the inner change of mind** (*I am not broke anymore, I now have money*) **will lead to outer change of behavior** (*singing, dancing, telling off my co-workers*). There's no way that it wouldn't!

1. *The original greek for repentance is metanoia (from meta = after + noéo = to understand) literally meaning "afterthought" or "to think after". According to this why must repentance start in the mind? James 1:14-15*

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Be ashamed when you sin, don't be ashamed when you repent [To repent means to have a change of heart and mind. It is not simply a feeling of sorrow, but a psycho/spiritual growth away from evil/death and a turning to God/life]. Sin is the wound, repentance is the medicine. Sin is followed by shame; repentance is followed by boldness [ Boldness means to beg God for undeserved mercy]. Satan has overturned this order and given boldness to sin and shame to repentance. - **St John Chrysostom**

2. *Read 2 Samuel 12:1-14. What is the danger of delaying repentance?*

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You may say, perhaps, 'It is never too late to repent.' I answer, 'That is right enough; but late repentance is seldom true.' And I say further, you cannot be certain if you put off repenting, you will repent at all. - **J C Ryle**

3. *How do I know if my repentance is true and I'm not just kidding myself?*

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Biblical example of psuedo-repentance -1 Samuel 15,  
Biblical example of real repentance - Psalm 32, Psalm 51

**Workshop 3-Okay, so now I've repented. Where do I go from here?**

Think of it this way. Imagine standing outside on a hot summer day (we know that's rare but just really use your imagination here!) The weather is hot and humid and that means GNATS! Lots and lots of gnats. If you've never experienced gnats, they are literally the most annoying creatures on the planet. They seem to be infinite in number and they never leave you alone – flying around your head, in your ear, up your nose... IT'S THE WORST! The only thing you can do is wave your hand and try to swat them away when they come near. It isn't very effective because they just come back as soon as you put your hand down. So you end up just waving your hands pretty much the whole time you're outside or you give up and live with gnats in your ears. The gnats are the temptations of the devil – infinite in number and never let up. You block them from one entrance (ear) and they'll find another (nose). They keep coming and coming. But even if you don't decrease the number of gnats in your ear, the important part is the fight that you put up.

**Repentance doesn't mean perfection. Repentance isn't about results as much as it's about process.**

1. *Why do I need to confess my sins to **Abouna** if I've repented?*

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St Moses the Black

2. *Psalm 103:12. What if I don't feel God has forgiven me?*

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East to West - Casting Crowns

3. *Do we only repent when we sin or is repentance a way of life?*

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