



In the name of The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God Amen.

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate
St. Mary and St. Joseph
COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

Minutes for Deacons Meeting - June 2, 2013

- The most important item we discussed last meeting was that whenever we decide on something in a meeting, only the deacons in the meeting apply it while the other deacons continue doing something different. This problem was addressed by sending the minutes to all deacons so that everyone is aware of what should be done.
- Unfortunately, Amir didn't receive many confirmations that people read the minutes, although some people may read the minutes and not replying that they read it.
- Abouna is thanking the deacons that the communion service has improved very much based on the decisions made in previous meetings.
- Although there are now usually two or three deacons standing with Abouna during communion, this is still not enough. The deacons standing must be very aware of everything that is going on and must proactively assist Abouna.
- The deacon's main duty in the church is to serve the Holy Altar in every single way possible. Chanting hymns and songs never meant to be the only service for deacons.

Notes on Holy Week:

- In general the Holy Week service was very good and Abouna is thanking the deacons for all their hard work in the downstairs and upstairs Pascha as well as Good Friday.
- There are small improvements to be made.
- Sometimes in the downstairs Pascha the assigned deacons would not arrive for their designated service and no one was there to cover for them.
- The church is happy to give the younger deacons a chance to say hymns and lead. However, there shouldn't be one single Pascha that has an overwhelming amount of younger deacons saying hymns / leading the chorus.
- One suggestion is to distribute the Evening Pascha leading task among many deacons. Meaning, one deacon leads the First Hour, another deacon leads the Third Hour, etc.
- It's nice to provide the younger deacons with a chance to say the Psalm in the long tune because usually after the deacon says it once he passes his breaking point and can say it many times.

- At the same time, we should not assign a young deacon this difficult hymn if he is not ready because this puts unfair burden on the child and also on the congregation who have to hear a young deacon say the hymn while struggling.
- It was very nice that a group of deacons says the big Holy Week hymns.

Notes on Feast of the Resurrection:

- The Resurrection Re-enactment should be said as a group because if there are three priests and three deacons saying it, then that is six different people saying one hymn in five minutes.
- For next year, the deacons should learn and say the Re-enactment hymn together in a group of two/three/four.
- Similarly, for the big Altar Responses like Is Pateer, the deacons should say it as a group as it sounds nicer and the group is stronger than the individual.
- One common problem for the deacons is that there are many, many hymns to review because there are many Feasts and events in a short period of time. One solution is to start a bit earlier.
- Another solution is to decide from now that every Easter the same three deacons will say the Re-enactment and those three deacons can meet earlier in the year to learn the hymn. This way they only need to meet once or twice before the Feast just to review the hymn, not learn it.

Notes on the Divine Liturgy:

- There should be only one deacon leading the Divine Liturgy from the beginning to the end. It's not necessary to give each deacon one hymn or response - the lead deacon should say all of it.
- This is especially important for things such as "Khen PiKhrastos" after the Fraction or the three final Amens before the confession. These should be said by the lead deacon.

Notes on Altar Service:

- Again, as stated in every deacons meeting, young deacons who do not know the responses should not say them. It ruins the spiritual atmosphere and is a distraction to the congregation.
- This is not a matter of sounding good. When a deacon does this, he breaks the continuity or spiritually of the liturgy for the congregation.
- Abouna is suggesting a system where the young deacons are tested to see what hymns they can say and then they are only allowed to say these hymns during the liturgy.
- There is a problem with the young deacons in the altar because if they say the responses, they say them wrong, but if they don't say anything, they may get upset. We also cannot remove them from the schedule completely because that will upset them. Therefore, we can put them in the altar but only let them respond if they know the hymn properly and have gone to hymns class.

- One issue is that there is no standard reference for the English altar responses. We need to decide on one set of English recordings for all the deacons to learn from. Abouna Abraam suggested that Albair from Mississauga has recently recorded the entire English Divine Liturgy. Abouna Shenouda will listen to these recordings and decide which standard the church will follow.
- The incense circuits should be with the cross only, not the cross and the bishara. Also, the deacon who is standing with Abouna during communion should have the candle, cross, and cloth for the Body, and a candle only for the blood.

Notes on Readings:

- The deacon who is reading must be chosen based on whether or not he can read. If a deacon cannot read the Word of God properly, he should not read until he has practiced and learned.
- One mispronounced word can change and ruin the entire meaning of a sentence.
- We should practice with the younger deacons how fast they should read, how far they should hold the microphone, etc.
- The current English gospel is not being read in the correct tune at all. The older deacons must sit and confirm the correct tone and then teach this to the younger deacons.
- For the time being, if the Gospel will not be read correctly in the English tune, it is better for it to be said without tune.
- The conclusion to the Pauline, Catholic Epistle, etc. should be read with the same strong and clear voice as the rest of the reading. It shouldn't be mumbled quickly after everything else is done.