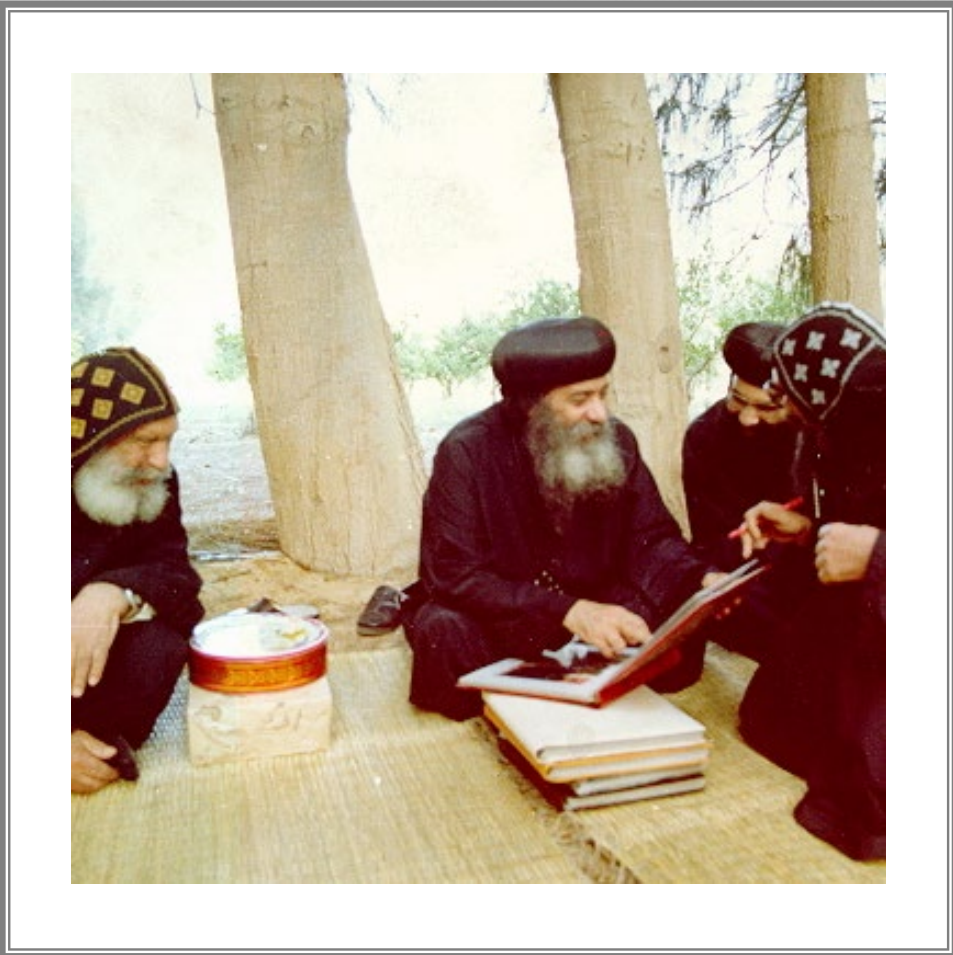




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ANTONI

Monasticism



What is Monasticism? H.H. Pope Shenouda

- Monasticism is living a life of inner liberation from materialism. Our fathers have lived angelic lives. It is said that the monks are earthly angels and heavenly humans. They are people who have deprived themselves of everything, to live humbly, and in contemplation in its highest level, executing the word of the Holy Bible.
- "Do not love the world or the things in the world" (1 John 2:15-17).



How did it Start?

- Monasticism as ascetic life was well known among many nations thousands of years prior to Christianity. (Indians, Buddhists, ancient Egyptians, ancient Greeks, and Jews.)
- Christian monasticism itself started around the 4th century in Egypt.
- Around that time is when the country converted from the paganism to Christianity and so the persecution and martyrdom ceased.
- The people recognized that through monasticism and asceticism they could offer sacrifices for the Lord instead of martyrdom.

Types of Monasticism

Monarchism Ex. St. Paul the First Hermit

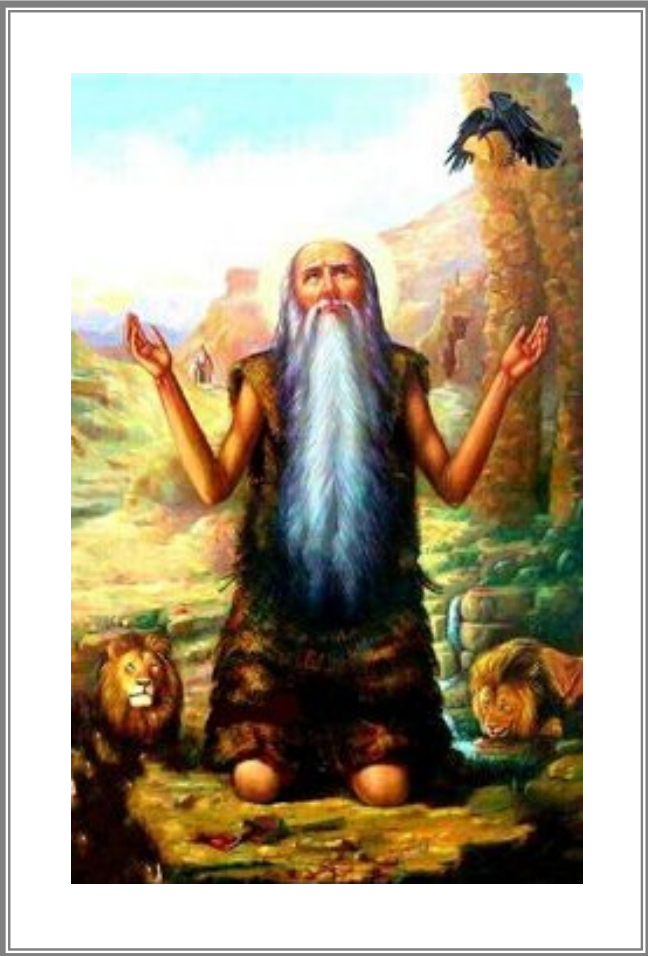
The Coenobitic System Founded by Saint Pachomius

The Communal System or Semi-eremitic Life
Ex. Saint Anthony



St. Anthony the Great

- St. Anthony was born in upper Egypt to a wealthy family, and when he was 20 his parents died, he then inherited all their possessions.
- He always had a desire in him to imitate the life of the Apostles and the early Christians.
- A then a couple months later at a church St. Anthony heard the priest reading the bible saying:
- "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." ~Matt. 19:21
- He sold all he had and gave his money to the poor, left his sister to live in a group of Christian virgins and went into the wilderness to live an ascetic life devoted to God. -270 AD
- Around 305 AD disciples in the wilderness who were also pursuing ascetism were attracted to him and his teachings.
- He devoted himself to teaching and organizing them for 5 or 6 years, and then returned to living alone.



St. Paul the First Hermit

- St. Paul was born in Thebes (Luxor, Egypt) in 277 AD and departed in 342
- He and his married sister lost their parents
- His brother-in-law trying to betray him and gain the inheritance reported him to the persecutors at the time.
- St. Paul then fled into the desert when he was about 16 during the persecution of Decius and Valerianus (250 AD).
- When he was 43, he started being feed half a loaf of bread daily by a raven.
- When he was 113 St. Anthony was told in a dream about the older hermit's existence (342 AD)
- The next time St. Anthony visited him St. Paul was dead and was buried by St. Anthony with the help of two lions.

St. Pachomius the Great



- St. Pachomius was born in 292 in Thebes (Luxor, Egypt) to pagan parents.
- At that time Egypt was under Roman domination. In 312 the Emperor Maximin Daza needed soldiers to wage war.
- St. Pachomius was conscripted against his will when he was 21.
- During the war he was introduced to Christians and was impacted by how kind they were to the soldiers, feeding and letting them sleep in their houses.
- After the war he immediately got baptized 313 AD and set out to lead the life like St. Anthony
- During that time Pachomius heard a voice that told him to build a dwelling for the hermits. He then established his first monastery in 318 AD.



Monasticism a Life of Struggle

- Monasticism itself is not fleeing from the world and its struggles, it is running towards fighting the devil.
- It is similar to martyrdom where not any person can commit to it and is often a bigger sacrifice and struggle than what it seems.
- The devil never left St. Anthony:
Dreams, Visions, and in the daytime.
- Different Forms:
Treasure, Fascinating Women, Wild animals and beasts, Memories of his sister and his former life

Principle 1: Life of Virginity and Celibacy

- Virginity was well known in the Old Testament as it was documented that Elijah and Elisha preferred to live in the desert and mountains.
- In the New Testament, St. John the Baptist lived in Jordan desert until the day he began his preaching and teaching to Israel.
- St. Paul also speaks much about his life of celibacy: “He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord.” (1 Cor. 7:32-35). St. Paul willingly chose this life of celibacy from an early age and urged unmarried men to live this life as well: “For I wish that all men where even as myself.” (1 Cor. 7:7).
- “But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.” (1 Cor. 7:9)
- The life of virginity has always been present since the early church, three centuries before the appearance of monasticism.





1876 – 21 August 1951

Principle 1: Life of Virginity and Celibacy

- A life of celibacy allows the person to focus on being with God wholly (mind body and soul), not thinking about marriage or any thing of the such.
- It allows a person to be free and devote their lives to causes they believe in.
- A great example is Archdeacon Habib Girgis who lived a life of celibacy.
- He dedicated his time teaching and studying theology and founding Sunday School to educate and deepen children's faith from a young age.
- "A Church without Youth is a Church without a future. Moreover, Youth without a Church is Youth without a future." - Pope Shenouda III



Principle 2: Solitary Life

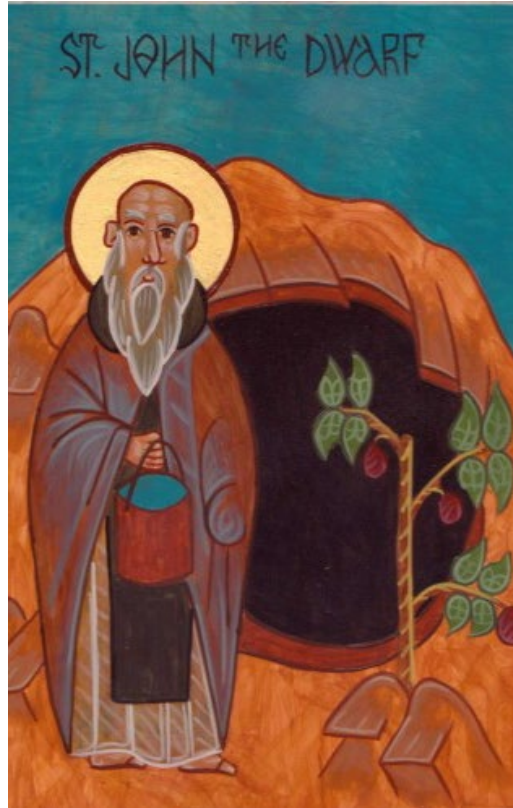
- Solitary life deepens your relationship with God, it lets all the other aspects of your life seem unimportant, it helps you seek inner peace and deepen your relationship with God in such a personal manner.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ himself displayed the importance of Solitary (“He went to a hill to pray” Mark 6:46), (“At that time Jesus went up a hill to pray and spent the whole night there praying Luke 6:12).
- Before the Lord began his teaching and preaching, he also spent 40 days in the desert of Jordan
- Being able to go alone and searching for God in solitude is an important step in order to build a relationship with him and feel him throughout our life.



Principle 3: Forsaking the Worldly/Voluntary Poverty

- Poverty means to live a simple life, where you give the money you earn to the lord, leaving jobs to devote all of your time to a life of prayer and service
- Being Rich in itself isn't bad but it's the attachment to money and feeling of always wanting more is the slippery slope.
- It teaches you to DETACH from the world and ATTACH to God.
- “No servant can be the slave of two masters; such a slave will hate one and love the other or be loyal to one and despises the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” Luke 16:13.

Principle 4: Principle: Obedience



339 AD - 405 AD

- Obedience is setting aside one's self-will in order to follow the church or your fathers/elders.
- Saint Pemwah gave St. John a piece of dry wood and ordered him to plant and water it. John obeyed and went on watering it twice a day even though the water was about 12 miles from where they lived. After three years, the piece of wood sprouted and grew into a fruitful tree.
- St Paul talks about Our Lord Jesus Christ's Obedience: ("But even though he was God's Son, he learned through his sufferings to be obedient." Hebrews 5:8) and ("He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death – His death on the cross." Philippians 2:8).

Principle 4: Principle: Obedience

- In Monasticism they practice concrete obedience since they trust their father's.
- We are called to do the same in our lives, but we are encouraged to ask questions, so can be certain in our actions and avoid spiritual harm.

Service/Spiritual Life

Father's direction to us

God's Commandments

Final words by H.H. Pope Shenouda

- The goal of true monasticism is a continuous life filled with prayers. A life of continuous prayer is the main feature of a monk's life, which ordinary people cannot live because of their worldly engaging tasks and interests.
- He who begins a monastic life trains himself to a continuous life of prayer. When he succeeds, he then begins a life of isolation, which then helps him in his prayers and contemplation.