

MY FIRST, MY LAST AND MY EVERYTHING

2. THE SCRIPTURE

THE MAP OF MY JOURNEY

Is there is a need of a map?

On your way from your school to your house, are you in need of map? Do you need a guide to know the kind of transportation you have to use?

According to **St. John Chrysostom** Adam and Eve were not in need of the written word of God, the Holy Bible. For, as God used to speak with them in the Garden of Eden face to face. It is said, “ Then they heard the sound of the Lord God as He was walking in the garden in the cool of the day.” (Gen 3:8) Now after our fall in sin, we could not practice that. God grants us the natural law and the written Law so that we may hear His lovely voice that guides us to the way.

MY FIRST

1. GOD, THE WORD, THE BEGINNING OF THE WAY

The written word of God is the divine map presented to me that I, the dearest creature in the sight of God, may know where I am, where I will go, and what are my needs.

God is the Starting point of the way, He is the Way, and He is the End of the Way.

God is Love, the movement of love is not outside Him, but from the eternity there is movement of love among the Three Hypostasis. In fact almost every human being, whatever is his age or his circumstances, complains: “I’m in need of love. None can understand me, and share me my deep feelings.” He cannot start his way unless he becomes very close to God, the Love, to carry him, and water his depth by the fountain of His love. He grants him new daily experience of love that cannot become old.

The holy Scripture reveals God as the true Lover of mankind. He offers His Only-Begotten Son as the Victim, so that He may receive me, the servant His child.

We have an experience in the prison of Wadi-El-Natroun, at last events of El-Sadat. One of the criminals who was so violent even with himself and the keeper of the prison, found his pleasure to come to the hall where were the bishops, priests and laity. He used to say that he never found any person loved him, except this group. He was so kind with them.

2. DISCOVERING THE CONCEPT OF THE DIVINE COMMANDMENTS

God does not issue orders so that I have to obey. He grants me His commandments to give me the chance to have a **lovely respond of His love by my obedience**.

St. Mark the hermit states that Christ is hidden behind the commandments.

“How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Ps 119:103)

This is the experience of David, the king and the prophet. He was a man of suffering from his boyhood till his death, but the word of God changed his life into unceasingly feast. While he was persuaded by Saul the king and the commander of the army, or by his own son Absalom, who did not seek less than his head, he was singing psalms, daily and nightly. It is the work of the word of God in his life.

St. Jerome who discovers the sweetness of the word of God asks if there is a happier person in the world than the Christian believer.

Origen in the second century who devoted all his life and energies for studying the Bible and teaching it asks God if there will be a glory in heaven more brighter than that which the believer receives while he enjoys the bible. For him the entire bible is a joyful trip of the soul from earth to heaven under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Through it the soul is renewed daily, sanctified and beautified to be in the icon of her heavenly Groom Jesus Christ. She enters the conjugal room with her Groom, who reveals His divine mysteries to her.

Once a person in Alexandria was suffering of family problems. He wanted to get rid of his wife by denying the Lord Jesus Christ and divorcing her. I sent a deacon to meet him in his work. He was a manager. He insulted him, the Lord Jesus Christ, the church and the priests. He almost kicked him out of his office, telling him that may his priest meet him on the following day at the police station, for he insisted that he would complete the proceedings of changing his religion. The deacon was very silent and in humbleness said to him that he came to drink a cup of tea. He became in shame and asked for a cup of tea for him. The deacon opened his bible and started to read in a loud voice, for it was the last chance to speak with him. The manager started to weep and he asked the deacon if he wanted a paper in which he signs that he changed his mind, but the deacon said to him: "I'm not coming for this aim. I want to tell you that there is a Person who loves you." The manager said, "I don't think that there is any person loves me." The deacon said, "Jesus loves you and He died on your behalf. The church, the priest and me love you." After noon I visited him and I know that he had no bible at home, and he never read in it. When we read a chapter and spoke about the divine love he asked, "Where was the church all these 50 years which I lost, as I didn't enjoy the bible." I was in grief for my shortage and I gave him my bible. On the second day he said to me that he spent almost all the night reading, repeating and meditating on one verse; it was very sweet in his mouth!

Now I hope that every person discover this sweetness!

3. DISCOVERING MY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

God truly descends to establish a covenant with me, as a man with man. How great humbleness He shows to me!

God grants me His written word, preparing me to receive the Word of God Himself. In Him I have the right to enjoy the unity with the Father through His Holy Spirit.

a. The real Fatherhood of the Father: "For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father"." (Rom 8:15)

Through the Bible **I discover the reality of God.** He is Love. He is not separated and isolated in His heaven. He seeks for me. He loved me, even before my creation. His love is practical. He sacrificed His Only-Begotten Son on my behalf.

God is interested in me. I'm not one of billions of His creatures. **I'm special for Him.**

b. Ambassadors for Christ: "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God." (2 Cor 5:20)

c. **“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Cor 3:16)**

4. GUIDING IN MY JOURNEY TO HEAVEN. “I am a stranger in the earth; Do not hide Your commandments from me.” (Ps 119:19)

The Holy Bible is the ladder through which I have the right to **practice the heavenly life**, the risen life with Christ, the communion with heavenly hosts, and the unceasingly inner joy. He promises me sharing in His heavenly glory. Now, it is the due time to have the pledge of these promises.

MY LAST

1. BECOMING HIS MARVELOUS GOSPEL. “clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.” (2 Cor 3:3)

2. DISCOVERING MY ETERNAL GLORY. “For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end” (Heb 3:14)

MY EVERYTHING

1. CORRECTING MY CONCEPTS

- a. **God.**
- b. **Man.**
- c. **The Church**
- d. **Time.** (Moses started his ministry while he was 80 years old). **“The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years.” (Ps 90:10)**
- e. **Virtues and righteousness.**
- f. **Asceticism.**
- g. **Future.**
- h. **Suffering.** **“For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.” (Rom 8:15-17)**

2. SOURCE OF REAL JOY. “And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 13:52)

3. CHALLENGING

- a. **Sin and**
- b. **Death.** **“O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (1 Cor 15:55)** Death is a divine gift. Moses was ordered to ascend to the top of Mount Nebo to die. Joyfully he ascended with no human being although he was 120 years old. His death, funeral service and burial were unique to the Jewish tradition his death is called “death of kiss,” for God descended and embraced him, receiving his soul and accompanied it. His funeral was not served by his nice, the High Priest, priest and Levites, but by heavenly hosts. According to the Book of Deuteronomy, the Lord took care of the burial of his corpse. Archangel Michael

was involved in a battle against Satan so that his corpse would not be known, lest the Israelite would worship him.

c. **Satan.**

3. THE MAP OF GOD'S MYSTERIES. "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him." (Matt 11:27)

The Holy Bible reveals our life as a continuous celebration of our spiritual and everlasting marriage. Through it my Heavenly spouse reveals His mysteries to me, and I speak with Him openly. By His Holy Spirit I open my heart to Him, who opens to me His heart.

4. A PERSONAL MESSAGE

The Bible is not a book among billions of books in the world. It is a **personal message** sent to me from my Beloved God. He is interested in me, as His special child.

Once Emperor Constantine sent a letter to **St. Anthony** asking him to pray for him and to bless him. The monks asked their father if he answered the emperor's letter. As they repeated their questions for many days, he said to them that he was very busy in answering on the divine letter, and he had no time to answer the emperor. They begged him to answer the emperor's letter for he was the first emperor who was converted to Christianity and helped the church by all means.

The Bible also is a **communal message** for God who is concerned in me personally knows me as a member of the one body of Christ. It is His pleasure that I'm interested in other members for we are one body. God grants me His Bible to enjoy **the personal contact with Him**, and at the same time **the membership of His One Church**.

The Holy Bible is not a monologue, but it is a dialogue, through which God reveals His pleasure not only in His speech with me, but also in hearing me. It declares the mutual love between God and me. In the Song of Songs the heavenly Groom declares His eager to hear my inner voice and to see my inner face, saying, "Let me see your face, Let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, And your face is lovely." (Song 2:14) Do we have the same feelings towards Him while we are reading His message?

5. DISCOVERING EVERYTHING IS MINE

The Scripture asserts that everything is mine. "Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come -all are yours." (1 Cor 3:21-22) The Scriptures grants me new concepts towards my own self and all others. For example:

- a. Me as a human being is the dearest creature in the mind and sight of God. He created me to be His own child, a free king, I attain Him.
- b. God reveals Himself to me as my beloved Father, or as the Heavenly Groom who wants to reveal all His mysteries to His own bride.
- c. The world is the royal place established by the King of kings, especially for me.
- d. The Body is a divine gift. It will share my soul its eternal glorification.
- e. Satan, truly is a deceiver and murderer. But I'm not a part in the battle against him. I'm hidden in Christ, the Conqueror, who grants my victory. Suitable place for Satan is under my feet.

- f. Righteousness is attaining the Righteous One, my Lord Jesus Christ. I share Him His divine nature. In Him sin has no place in me, and no authority on me.
- g. Eternal life is present. I enjoy its pledge. On the Last Day I shall enter the kingdom of God as an extension to what I experience daily.
- h. My neighbor is every human being, regardless his or her age, culture, nationality, attitudes and situation. He has especial place in my heart and mind as I have the same in my God's bosom.