



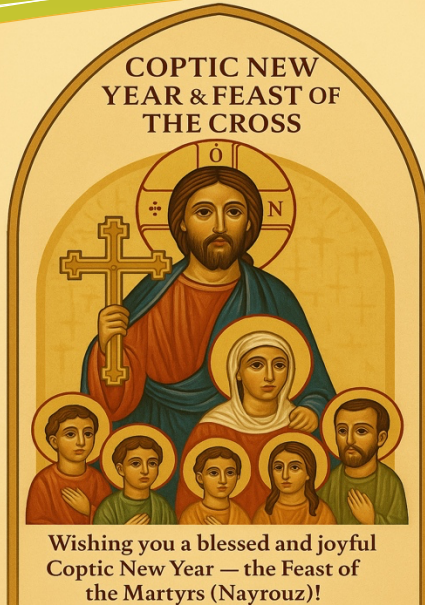
Convent Schedule

Wednesday –
Friday
Midnight Praises –
5:00 – 7:00 am
Liturgy
(Wednesday &
Friday) 8:00 –
10:00 am
Agpeya Prayers –
5:00 pm

Saturday
Midnight Praises –
5:00 – 7:00 am
Liturgy – 8:00 –
10:00 am
Agpeya Prayer,
Praises, & Vespers
– 5:00 pm

Sunday
Midnight Praises –
5:00 – 7:00 am
Liturgy – 8:00 –
10:00 am

Monday and
Tuesday the
convent is closed to
the public.



As we begin this new year in the Coptic calendar, we remember with reverence the countless martyrs who bore witness to Christ through their unwavering faith and sacrifice. May their courage inspire us to walk in holiness and boldness, standing firm in our Christian witness.

We also celebrate the Feast of the Holy Cross, through which salvation came to the world. The Lord reigned from the tree (the cross). The tree on which Christ was nailed became the throne of majesty, the altar of sacrifice, and the ladder to heaven. The Cross was a pulpit from which Christ preached His love to the world.

May the Lord grant you a year filled with peace, spiritual growth, through the prayers of the holy martyrs and the power of the life-giving Cross.

أحبائي محبي دير القديسة كاترين والقديسة فيرينا

نعمة وسلام، راجيا لكن جميعا كل خير وبركة.

يسعدني أن أهنئكم جميعا بعيد النبروز، وهو عيد بدء السنة القبطية الجديدة ١٧٤٢ الذي نحتفل به يوم الخميس ١١ سبتمبر.

وكما هو معروف فالتقويم القبطي هو تقويم الشهداء. لذا نتذكر أبائنا وأمهاتنا الشهداء مع بداية العام القبطي الجديد.

ونحتفل يوم السبت ٢٧ سبتمبر بعيد الصليب، وهو احتفال يمتد ثلاثة أيام، نحتفل في عيد الصليب بالفداء الذي تممه الرب يسوع بموته المحي على الصليب، فأنقذنا من عبودية الموت والخطيئة والفساد.

كل راهبة اختارت طريق الرهبنة الملائكي تضع حياتها ذبيحة حب طاعة للوصية الإلهية، وتتمثل بالرب يسوع والشهداء والشهيدات والأنبا أنطونيوس وكل الأباء القديسين والأمهات القديسات في حياة الطاعة.

كل إنسانة تأتي للدير للزيارة ولقضاء فترة خلوة روحية عليها أن تراجع حياتها في مدى تقديمها الطاعة الكاملة للوصية الإلهية.

زيارة الدير هدفها مراجعة النفس في تقدمها في حياة الطاعة.

نصلي أن يهبنا الله حياة الطاعة الكاملة، متممين الوصية الإلهية: "فاطلب إليكم أيها الأخوة برأفة الله أن تقدموا اجسادكم ذبيحة حية مقدسة مرضية عند الله عبادتكم العقلية" (رو ١٢: ١).

الرب يبارك في حياتكم جميعا بشفاعته أم النور، وجميع مصاف الشهداء والشهيدات والقديسة كاترينا الإسكندرية والقديسة فيرينا.



نيافة الانبا سرابيون

نتذكر قول القديس بولس عن الرب يسوع المسيح "إذ وُجد في الهيئة كإنسان وضع نفسه وأطاع حتى الموت موت الصليب" (في ٨: ٢).

نتذكر الشهداء الذين أطاعوا حتى الموت ولم ينكروا الإيمان، وكما قال القديس بولس: "ولم يقبلوا النجاة لكي ينالوا قيامة أفضل" (عب ١١: ٣٥).

نتذكر القديس الأنبا أنطونيوس أب جميع الرهبان والراهبات الذي أطاع الوصية: "إن أردت أن تكون كاملاً فإذهب وبع أملكك واعط الفقراء فيكون لك كنز في السماء، وتعال اتبعني" (مت ١٩: ٢١).

على الصليب قدم المسيح الطاعة الكاملة نيابة عن البشرية كلها، التي سقطت بسبب عدم طاعة آدم وحواء، الشهداء قدموا الطاعة الكاملة، حتى قدموا حياتهم وقبلوا سفك دماهم، القديس الأنبا أنطونيوس قدم الطاعة الكاملة للوصية الإلهية.

كل مسيحي يقدم الطاعة لله في جهاده الروحي حتى الدم. "لم تقاوموا حتي الدم مجاهدين ضد الخطيئة" (عب ١٢: ٤).

Beloveds and supporters of the Convent of St. Katherine and St. Verena,

Grace and peace, wishing you all goodness and blessings.

It gives me great joy to congratulate you on the Feast of Nayrouz, the beginning of the Coptic New Year 1742, which we celebrate on Thursday, September 11. As we know, the Coptic calendar is the Calendar of the Martyrs; therefore, we remember our fathers and mothers, the martyrs, as we begin the new Coptic year.

On Saturday, September 27, we celebrate the Feast of the Cross, which extends for three days. In the Feast of the Cross, we celebrate the redemption accomplished by our Lord Jesus through His life-giving death on the Cross, by which He saved us from the bondage of death, sin, and corruption.

We remember the words of St. Paul about our Lord Jesus Christ: "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8).

We also remember the martyrs who obeyed unto death and did not deny the faith, as St. Paul said: "Not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Hebrews 11:35).

We remember St. Anthony the Great, the father of all monks and nuns, who obeyed the commandment: "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" (Matthew 19:21).

On the Cross, Christ offered perfect obedience on behalf of all humanity, which had fallen because of the disobedience of Adam and Eve. The martyrs offered perfect obedience, even to the point of shedding their blood. St. Anthony also offered perfect obedience to the divine commandment.

Every Christian is called to offer obedience to God in his spiritual struggle, even to the shedding of blood: "You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin" (Hebrews 12:4).

Every nun who chooses the angelic path of monasticism offers her life as a sacrifice of love and obedience to the divine commandment, imitating our Lord Jesus, the martyrs, St. Anthony, and all the holy fathers and mothers who lived a life of obedience.

Every woman who comes to the monastery for a visit or to spend a time of spiritual retreat should examine her life to see to what extent she is offering full obedience to the divine commandment. The purpose of visiting the monastery is to review one's life and to grow in a life of obedience.

We pray that God may grant us a life of complete obedience, fulfilling the divine commandment: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). May the Lord bless your lives through the intercessions of the Mother of Light, the ranks of martyrs, St. Katherine of Alexandria, and St. Verena.



H.G. Bishop
Kyrillos

10 Commandments of the Fathers on Obedience

4. Disobedience is a result of pride.

a. A certain brother who was engaged in war against Satan, told the matter to Abba Heracles. Hoping to strengthen and confirm him, the elder told him the following story: There once was an elder who had a disciple and had been very obedient to him for many years. When the war came upon him, he made a request to his master. He made a request to his master, saying, "I beg you to make me a monk." And his master said to him, "Find a place for yourself and we will build a cell for you. Then, you will become a monk." So the disciple went, found a place which was about one hundred paces from his master, and made himself a cell. Then the elder said to that brother, **whatever I say to you, do.**

when you are hungry, eat; when you are thirsty, drink; and sleep. But you must not go out of your cell until the Sabbath Day, when you will come to me." Then the elder went back to his cell and the brother did according to what the elder told him for two days. On the third day, he became depressed and tired and said, "What has the elder done to me, seeing that he has not commanded me pray?" Then he rose up and sang more Psalms than usual, and after the sun had set, he ate his food. Then he rose up, went and lay down on his mat. He saw, an Ethiopian who stood up and gnashed his teeth at him. So the monk, in great fear, ran quickly to his master and knocked hastily at his door saying, "Father, have mercy on me and open to me immediately." Now because the elder knew that he had not kept his commandment, he refused to open the door to him until the morning. When he opened the door in the morning, he found him there. The brother asked him to enter. The elder had compassion on him and brought him in. Then he began to say to the elder, "I beg you, O father, believe me. When I went to lie down to sleep, I saw a black Ethiopian on my bed." The elder said to him, "This happened because you did not listen to my words." Then **he set a rule** for him which was suitable to his strength and to the monastic life. Then he dismissed him and little by little, he became an excellent monk" (*Paradise of the Fathers*, 2.7.244) (to be continued.....)

Give Me a Word

Mother Theodora said: It is good to live in stillness and inner quiet. A wise person practices this stillness, and it is truly a good thing for a virgin or a monk to live in peaceful silence before God, especially for the young ones. But be aware: if someone chooses to take up this life of inner stillness, the evil one comes right away and weighs down the soul with attacks of bitterness, discouragement, and troubling thoughts. He also weighs down the body with illness—on purpose—bringing pain to the knees and all the limbs, draining the energy of both soul and body, so that I feel sick and unable to offer the Divine Liturgy. But if we stay watchful, all of this fades away. There was a monk who, as soon as he began to offer the Liturgy, began to feel hot and cold with a severe headache. In that moment, he said to himself, “Here I am, sick, and I might die at any time. Let me get up and offer the Liturgy before I die.” And he forced himself to go against these tempting thoughts and offered the Liturgy. And as he was finishing the Liturgy, the fever also ended. Once again, the brother resisted these negative thoughts, offered the Liturgy, and overcame the temptation.

St. Katherine’s Garden: A Living Testament of Faith

On the quiet grounds of our convent, a new space is taking shape—a space where beauty, prayer, and the witness of the saints will meet in one living, growing testimony to God’s glory. St. Katherine’s Garden will not simply be a collection of plants and paths. It will be a sanctuary of Scripture, a lesson in virtue, and a place where the natural world sings the praises of its Creator.

The Shape of a Martyr’s Story

The garden’s design is inspired by St. Katherine’s wheel—once intended to break her, yet broken instead by God’s power and her steadfast faith. What was meant for harm became a testimony to the saints’ great love for Christ and to His glory. Here, the wheel becomes a sign of victory—remade into a place of life, peace, and contemplation. Grey, rounded walkways form the spokes of the wheel, inviting visitors to journey inward, just as the spiritual life draws us closer to the heart of Christ.

At the end of each walkway rests a quiet bench, surrounded by plants that embody one of St. Katherine’s seven virtues: **Wisdom, Courage, Purity, Faithfulness, Evangelical Zeal, Discernment, and Love/Charity**. Each space offers not only a resting place for the body but also a meditation point for the soul.

The Seven Virtues in Bloom

Every virtue is represented by a plant chosen for its rich history and deep Christian symbolism:

- **Wisdom – Olive Tree**
The olive tree has long been a sign of wisdom, peace, and God’s blessing. Its deep roots and enduring fruit remind us of the steadfast wisdom that comes from walking with the Lord.
- **Courage – Thyme**
In the ancient world, thyme was planted on the graves of warriors as a sign of bravery. It speaks to the holy boldness needed to stand for truth, just as St. Katherine faced emperors and pagan philosophers without fear.
- **Purity – Jasmine**
With its delicate white blossoms and sweet fragrance, jasmine reflects the purity of heart that delights in God.

- It reminds us of the beauty and tenderness of a soul kept pure before Him.
- **Faithfulness – Rosemary**
Known as the herb of remembrance, rosemary signifies loyalty and constancy. Like faith that endures through every season, it stays evergreen, reminding us to remain steadfast in the Lord.
- **Evangelical Zeal – Grapevine**
Jesus said, “I am the vine, you are the branches” (John 15:5). The grapevine represents spiritual fruitfulness, abundance, and the call to spread the Good News to all.
- **Discernment – Sage**
The same sage that symbolizes wisdom also represents discernment—clear thinking, spiritual insight, and the healing that comes when we walk in God’s truth.
- **Love/Charity – Lavender**
With its soothing fragrance and gentle beauty, lavender reflects sacrificial love and quiet strength—the love that serves without seeking recognition.

A Crown of St. Katherine’s Lace

- Threaded throughout the interior of the wheel will be the delicate beauty of **St. Katherine’s Lace** (*Eriogonum giganteum* ssp. *giganteum*, Polygonaceae)—a plant native to Santa Catalina Island, historically known as *St. Katherine Island* in Latin. Its airy white blossoms form intricate, lacy clusters that echo the very shape of the wheel’s spokes. Like the saint it honors, the plant is both graceful and strong, able to thrive in challenging conditions. Its presence throughout the garden ties each virtue together, symbolizing unity in holiness and the beauty that blooms from a life fully given to God.

A Garden of Abundance

- Encircling the wheel, shade trees will provide a cool refuge on warm days, while the surrounding grounds will be planted with a variety of fruit trees—figs, pomegranates, apples, and citrus. Each fruit tree carries its own biblical echoes: the sweetness of God’s promises, the harvest of righteousness, and the joy of His provision.



St. Isaac the Syrian

+ Support the weak and distressed with a word as far as you are able, that the right hand upholding the universe may sustain you.

+ Endeavor to enter the treasury within you and you will see that treasury which is in Heaven. The former and the latter are one and through a single entrance you will see both of them

+ Leave the things of no value that you may find precious things.

+ Consider at all times the mighty afflictions of those whose anxieties are grievous and cruel so that you may be grateful for the lesser things which happen to you and be able to bear them with joy.

(On Ascetical life *by SVS Press*).

- The paths will wind through these plantings, allowing visitors to taste and see the goodness of the Lord—quite literally—while enjoying the beauty of His creation.

The Heart of the Garden: St. Verena's Well

- At the very center of St. Katherine's Garden will stand **St. Verena's Well**, a water feature surrounded by the snowy-white blooms of St. Katherine's Lace. Here, two holy women meet—one, a fearless martyr; the other, a gentle healer. The well recalls the historic St. Verena's Cave and Well in Zurzach, Switzerland, where pilgrims have come for centuries to drink and wash from the waters associated with her healing ministry.

St. Verena, an Egyptian saint, devoted her life to caring for the sick, the poor, and the forgotten. In the early centuries of the Church, she carried the love of Christ to distant lands, offering both physical and spiritual refreshment.

Our plaque at the well will read: *"Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst."* (John 4:14)

In honor of St. Verena, a woman of holy compassion, healing care, and steadfast service. Through her quiet strength and nurturing presence, she carried the love of Christ to the forgotten, the sick, and the poor. Her life was a wellspring of mercy and healing—overflowing with grace, humility, and holy service.

A Place for Prayer and Encounter

St. Katherine's Garden is meant to be more than a scenic spot. It will be a place where Scripture is

made tangible, where the virtues are not just read about but also experienced through the senses. Visitors will be able to sit among the rosemary and remember God's faithfulness, inhale the fragrance of lavender and be inspired to love more deeply, or rest in the shade and reflect on the wisdom that comes from above.

The garden will also be a space for quiet prayer, small group reflection, and spiritual retreats—inviting girls and women of all ages to draw near to Christ in the stillness of nature.

Rooted in Heaven, Growing on Earth

Every plant, every path, every bench in this garden has been chosen with care so that the space itself becomes a living icon—a picture of the Kingdom of God breaking into our everyday lives. Just as a garden must be tended, so too must the virtues be cultivated in our hearts. And just as the wheel's spokes all lead to the center, so do all virtues lead us closer to Christ.

In a world that often rushes past beauty and neglects the inner life, St. Katherine's Garden will stand as a quiet proclamation: the soul matters, holiness matters, and beauty is a pathway to God.

When the garden is complete, we pray it will not only honor St. Katherine and St. Verena but also bless all who visit—offering rest for the weary, inspiration for the pilgrim, and a foretaste of the paradise that awaits those who love Him.

-In His service, **Kathy Abraham**

How to Donate

- 1 Mail a Check – Just write it out to: 📧 "St. Katherine and St. Verena Convent" and pop it in the mail with a prayer!
- 2 Credit or Debit Card – Fast and simple—your kindness in just a few clicks! Visit Our Website – All the details are there! You can see our updates, photos, and make your donation online.

HOW TO DONATE

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