



# St. Mark's Coptic Museum Newsletter

Summer

Vol. 9 No 2

## BOOK REVIEW

*Explore St. Mark's Coptic Museum, An Illustrated Introduction*  
Helene Moussa

In this small book Helene Moussa has set out to provide an overview of the collection at St. Mark's Museum. But the end result is much more than that. In providing a historical account she has also confirmed that Coptic Culture is a living, thriving, ever developing cultural force. She points out how artists of the past have often recognized the links with their Pharaonic past through to the overlay from "external" rulers and the influences each of them has brought. Yet the Coptic element remains dominant and recognizable for the most part.

The book is divided into fourteen chapters by media, acknowledging the difficulty of doing that in some cases. For example should icons be kept as a separate unit, or included with paintings? Should crosses be isolated as a distinct category of object, or included with metal, wood, ivory? And if you do that with crosses do you do the same for censers?

This sounds simple, but organizing this material is a major step before starting to write. Each chapter at first glance, is an outline of the museum's holdings in that category of object. But one soon realizes that each chapter is also a clear scholarly overview of the topic, with sufficient references to allow anyone to delve further into the topic. In fact, each chapter could well serve as the outline for a seminar –be it on pilgrimage vessels, textiles, or the work of individual artists of the nineteenth or twentieth century. So what at first appears to be yet another museum catalogue is in reality an imminently readable work which not only gives a good overview of the museum's holdings, it also provides the scholarly framework for further study for anyone who might wish to do so. Nor is it a dry listing of facts about each object; it is an interpretive narrative which turns out to be a good read. I recommend it.

Sheila Campbell  
Professor Emeritus  
Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies. Toronto



*Explore St. Mark's Coptic Museum, An Illustrated Introduction*  
Available at St. Mark's Coptic Museum  
ON SPECIAL until December 31 for \$15.00 (plus postage and handling)  
All sales directed to the Museum's future space

# Museum Board Members and Volunteers Celebrate Fr. Marcos's Jubilee

On August 27, thirty-one Museum Board members and volunteers (past and present) responded to a dinner invitation to celebrate Fr. Marcos's Jubilee. The dinner was hosted by Dr. Mohsen Assaad, liaison between the Museum Board and St. Mark's Coptic Church Board of Deacons at the elegant Granite Club. The celebration was also marked with the launch of *Explore St. Mark's Coptic Museum, An Illustrated Introduction* dedicated to Fr. Marcos, the visionary who created the first Coptic Museum in North America. The celebration was also an opportunity to affirm past and present Museum volunteers and those who were unable to attend. It was an altogether joyful and celebrative evening!



Photographs: Sarah Asaad

2nd Floor of St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church  
41 Glendinning Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M1W 3E2  
Phone: (416) 494-4999  
Email: [stmarkmuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:stmarkmuseum@yahoo.com)  
Website: <http://www.copticmuseum-canada.com/>