

COPTIC  
MUSEUM  
OF CANADA



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## Father Marcos Marcos (1929-2020) The Cultural Legacy of a Pioneer and Visionary

A Special Exhibit, December 11, 2021 - March 30, 2021

On December 11, 2021, the Coptic Museum of Canada launched an exhibition to commemorate the one year of passing of Fr. Marcos, the founder the Museum.

*I feel that keeping upholding our heritage is a divine responsibility a ministry we should that we all should share for the glory of God.*

The above statement written in Fr. Marcos's carefully scripted handwriting, in red ink, on the back of the agenda of a Museum management meeting dated December 20, 2006 captures succinctly his understanding of the role of the Coptic Museum. It also reflects the importance Fr. Marcos placed on his role as President of the Board of Directors, a position held until his retirement in 2017.

Visitors at the Museum will learn how Fr. Marcos acquired some of the first artefacts, the artists that created them, and how they were used before reaching the Museum. The artefacts on display also tell us how his ministry upheld his belief on the importance of sharing the Coptic cultural heritage.

Exhibit highlights include:

- The **first English translation of the Coptic Divine Liturgy**, by a Copt in Egypt, and which Fr. Marcos brought 50 copies back to Canada in 1964. He used them for the first time to celebrate the Coptic Easter service at the Armed Forces Camp in Sudbury, Ontario in 1967, in honour of the visit of the Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia.
- An **icon of St. Mark the Apostle** by Dr. Isaac Fanous, which was specially commissioned in 1964 for the Coptic Church in Canada. It was part of a 1971 travel exhibition to Alberta overseen by Fr. Marcos.
- A **panel outlining Museum milestones** achieved under his direction, beginning with his vision to create a Coptic Museum in 1964 up to his retirement in 2017.



Fr. Marcos and Labib Mousa, current President Museum Board of Directors, at a special event honouring Fr. Marcos on December 15, 2018, when he unveiled a plaque with the following inscription:



*In appreciation for his inspired leadership, on 22 September 2018 the Board of Directors voted to confer the title of Founder and President Emeritus upon Father Marcos A. Marcos in recognition of his unwavering commitment to realize his vision for a Coptic museum in Canada, in keeping with Pope Shenouda III's wish that the museum be a steward of the Coptic cultural heritage in North America.*

- A **display of Fr. Marcos's writings** indicating the pivotal role he played in supporting the offering Coptic Studies courses at the University of Toronto from 2006-2012 when the University of Toronto took over the funding and established an endowment fund.
- For the first time, visitors will be able to view the **Flying Priest**, a painting by Kirolos Kilada, a contemporary Canadian-Coptic artist who sought to express Fr. Marcos's belief of the importance of his liturgical and cultural ministry. This work of art also tells the story of how Fr. Marcos created the atmosphere that helped produce the next generation of Coptic artists.

# Reopening and Reimagining the Future

## Museum Annual General Meeting (Virtual)

### November 20, 2021

Labib Mousa, Board President, introduced the annual report by explaining that the AGM theme was very pertinent to Copts: "Throughout our long history, Copts have learned to adapt, recreate and function under difficult circumstances. This pandemic has been another such challenge. Surviving is NOT good enough for us. What has kept us focussed is the Museum's vision and mission. Our cultural heritage is a gift. We have the responsibility to preserve this gift for future generations and to reimagine news ways of sharing it." His report covered organizational developments, including fundraising, Covid-19 policies and protocols to ensure the safety of museum personnel & visitors and the care of collection, networking and partnerships, ending with a recognition of volunteers.

Marina Fathala, Education Director, followed by reporting on virtual and on-site programs and exhibitions leading to the reopening of the Museum on September 15. Among the challenges for the future are building confidence to visit the Museum in person and how digital tools can enhance visitor experience and help the museum transition through what comes next!



On the recommendation of the Museum's Nomination Committee, members voted unanimously to appoint Monika Massoud as "Director – Collections Management and Care" for a six year term on the Board of Directors.

Monika has a Master's degree in Egyptology and Museology, specialising in collections management and care, from Alexandria University.

## University of Toronto Coptic Studies Endowment Fund named after Fr. Marcos

On December 11, 2021 at the St. Mark's Coptic Cathedral's (Markham) one year commemoration programme in memory of Fr. Marcos's passing, Professor Timothy Harrison, Chair, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations announced that the University's Legal Department has approved naming the Coptic Studies Endowment Fund: **Father Marcos Memorial Fund in Coptic Studies.**

This endowment fund, named in his memory, wishes to pay tribute to the breadth and scope of his vision and accomplishments in the field of Coptic Heritage. Under his leadership, discussions between the University of Toronto and St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church led to the offering of Coptic Studies courses in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations.



L-R: Neven Shehata, Helene Moussa, Fr. Pishoi Atalla, Tim Harrison, Susan Marcos

## In memory of Fr. Marcos, St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church establishes an annual contribution towards the UofT Coptic Studies Endowment Fund

On Wednesday November 24, three members of the planning committee preparing for the one year commemoration activities on the passing of Fr. Marcos (1929-2020) met with Professor Timothy Harrison, Chair of the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations (NMC), to present a donation towards the UofT Coptic Studies Endowment Fund. Fr. Pishoi Atalla, chair of the committee, explained that while "this is a modest donation, we hope it will grow because it is set as an annual contribution in Fr. Marcos's memory towards the Endowment Fund." On behalf of the committee and St. Mark's Church & Cathedral, Fr. Pishoi also expressed "deep appreciation for all the efforts the NMC and Professor Harrison in particular for continuing to offer Coptic Studies courses and setting up the Endowment Fund."

Other members of the committee attending were Mrs. Susan Marcos and Mrs. Neven Shehata. Also attending were Courtney Booth, Development Officer, Faculty of Arts, Advancement Office and Dr. Helene Moussa, Volunteer Curator, Coptic Museum of Canada.

This donation, in Fr. Marcos's memory, honours his pivotal role in establishing, Coptic Studies courses. In 2004, under Fr. Marcos's leadership, the Coptic Museum of Canada initiated discussions at the University of Toronto that led to the offering of Coptic Studies courses in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations. In addition, he was able to secure annual funding from St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church to allow the university to offer Coptic Studies courses from 2006 to 2012, at which point the NMC took over the full financial responsibility. In 2012, the University of Toronto also launched an Endowment campaign for a permanent Coptic Studies faculty position with an initial funding support from St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church, again with Fr. Marcos's stamp of approval.