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A Cry for Justice to President Mubarak and World's Conscience...

Free Innocent Father Meta'os!



Father Meta'os

For Father Meta'os, joining couples in holy matrimony is one of his many duties as a priest in the Christian Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt. It is also one of the happiest tasks which are always accompanied by the out pouring of joy and celebration. Fr. Meta'os must have performed dozens of wedding ceremonies without encountering a problem. This was until this latest wedding which landed him a prison sentence of 5 years at hard labor.

The latest couple was not the typical Coptic Christians seeking marriage. The bride was an ex-Muslim who converted to Christianity while the groom was Christian. Egyptian law doesn't approve conversion out of Islam. Thus it was deemed a crime for Father Meta'os to marry an ex Muslim woman to a Christian man

Fr. Meta'os maintained that he was not aware of the past history of the bride. He went by the ID card that showed her religion as a Christian. The ID card seemed to be authentic to him not being an expert. Few months later, the ex-Muslim lady went on TV and declared that Fr. Meta'os had no knowledge of her conversion from Islam. (Please note; when a Muslim clergy marries a Christian woman to a Muslim man the Egyptian law does not penalize him).

However, assuming that the court was dealing with a case of a Christian woman, who was once a Muslim, who fell in love with a Christian man and both wanted to get married as Christians; what is the crime in this? From the Christian religious point of view, there is no reason to stop this couple from getting married as Christian couple. If the priest refused to join them together in marriage, he would have failed his duties as a Christian priest.

Mr. Mubarak:

- Does it not state in the Egyptian Constitution in articles 1 and 40 that Egypt is a State which is based on citizenship? And, that all citizens are equal in the eyes of the law?
- Do you not agree that religion is a personal matter and it is not for the State to regulate it or to interfere in personal freedoms?
- This problem is not only of concern to Copts inside and outside Egypt, but also to all freedom loving people regardless of their religion.

Mr. Mubarak: as a president of all Egyptians and guardian of human rights to all Egyptians, we appeal to you to commute the sentence against Father Met'aos, release him from prison among criminals and return him home to his family and congregation. Thank you...

This message is sponsored by the European Union of Coptic Organization for Human Rights, the United Copts of Great Britain, Holland Copts, Swedish Coptic Association, Austria Amalgamation and Friendship Coptic Association, European Coptic Association-France, International Office for Human Rights-Switzerland, Friends of France Coptic Association, Kimi Coptic Association Graz-Austria, The Egyptian-Greek Coptic Association for Human Rights, Canadian Coptic Association, Coptic Assembly-Chicago, Christian Copts of California, Austrian Coptic Association, , International Christian Union, American Coptic Association, Al-Kalema Centre for Human Rights Cairo, El-Million Centre for Human Rights-Cairo, El-Masri Centre for Human Rights Cairo, Baladna Centre for development and Legal Support-Cairo.

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