

## **HABIB GIRGIS (1876-1951)**

Reformer, educator, preacher. He was born in [Cairo](#) and joined the Coptic school of Harit al-Saqqayin, which Patriarch **Cyril IV** had established. He was educated in the **Clerical College** of the [Coptic Orthodox Church](#) and became a professor of **theology** from 1898 in the same college, and then its principal from 1918 until his death. He published *al-Karma* (1906-1923), a weekly magazine that radiates his teachings.

At the turn of the 20th century, he founded the [Sunday School](#) system to teach Coptic children the Christian faith. Habib Girgis played a key role in the introduction of the study of the Christian religion to Coptic students in [government](#) schools and provided the Ministry of Education with a two-volume manual as a teacher's guidebook. He strove for the reform of the Coptic [Church](#) and succeeded in persuading **Patriarch Cyril V** (1874-1927) to take steps to limit the ordination of **priests** to graduates of the Clerical College.

Girgis is the author of [numerous](#) articles and books in [Arabic](#) related to the [theology](#) and liturgy of the Coptic Orthodox Church. His most significant work, entitled Practical Means for Coptic Reformation: Aspirations and Dreams Which Could Be Realized in Ten Years (in Arabic), appeared in [Cairo](#) in 1942 and was reprinted by the Sunday Schools Press in 1993. Many of the disciples of Habib Girgis continued his work, in particular as [Sunday School](#) leaders, including the present patriarch of the Coptic Church, Pope Shenouda III, who highly appreciates him.

**[GAWDAT GABRA](#)**

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