

كنيسة مار نقولا الأنطاكية الأرثوذكسية

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
Weekly Bulletin

Antiochian Archdiocese of North America
Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

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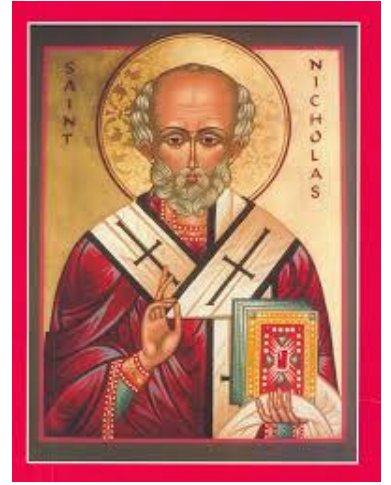
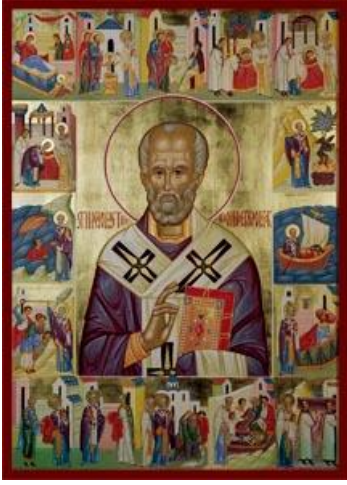
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Sunday, August 20th, 2017

THE EPISTLE: The Reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (9:2-12)

Brethren, you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the Gospel of Christ.

الرسالة: ١كورنثوس ٩: ٢-١٢

يا إخوة إن ختم رسالتي هو أنتم في الرب، وهذا هو احتجاجي عند الذين يفحصونني. ألعنا لا سلطان لنا أن نأكل ونشرب، ألعنا لا سلطان لنا أن نجول بامرأة أخت كسانر الرسل وإخوة الرب وصفا؟ أم أنا وبرنابا وحدنا لا سلطان لنا ألا نشغل؟ من يتجدد قط والنفقة على نفسه؟ من يغرس كرما ولا يأكل من ثمره؟ أو من يرعى قطيعا ولا يأكل من لبن القطيع؟ ألعني أنكلم بهذا بحسب البشرية أم ليس الناموس أيضا يقول هذا؟ فإنه قد كتب في ناموس موسى: لا تكلم ثورا دارسا. ألعن الله تهمة الثيران، أو قال ذلك من أجلنا لا محالة؟ بل إنما كتب من أجلنا. لأنه ينبغي للحارث أن يحرث على الرجاء وللدارس على الرجاء أن يكون شريكا في الرجاء. إن كنا نحن قد زرنا لكم الروحيات أفيكون عظيما أن نحصد منكم الجسديات؟ إن كان آخرون يشتركون في السلطان عليكم أفلسنا نحن أولى؟ لكننا لم نستعمل هذا السلطان بل نحتمل كل شيء لنلا نسيب تعويقا ما لبشارة المسيح.

THE GOSPEL: The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (18:23-35)

The Lord spoke this parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.

When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also My heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

الإنجيل: متى ١٨: ٢٣-٣٥

قال الربّ هذا المثل: يشبه ملكوت السماوات إنساناً ملكاً أراد أن يحاسب عبيده. فلما بدأ بالمحاسبة أحضر إليه واحد عليه عشرة آلاف وزنة، وإذ لم يكن له ما يوفي، أمر سيده بأن يباع هو وامراته وأولاده وكلّ ما له ويوفي عنه. فخرّ ذلك العبد ساجداً له قائلاً: تمهّل عليّ فأوفيك كلّ ما لك. فرق سيّد ذلك العبد وأطلقه وترك له الدين. وبعدما خرج ذلك العبد وجد عبداً من رفقائه مديوناً له بمئة دينار فأمسكه وأخذ يخنقه قائلاً: أوفني ما لي عليك. فخرّ ذلك العبد على قدميه وطلب إليه قائلاً: تمهّل عليّ فأوفيك كلّ ما لك، فأبى ومضى وطرحه في السجن حتّى يوفي الدين. فلما رأى رفقاؤه ما كان حزنوا جدّاً وجاؤوا فأعلموا سيدهم بكلّ ما كان. حينئذٍ دعاه سيده وقال: أيها العبد الشرير كلّ ما كان عليك تركته لك لأنك طلبت إليّ. أفما كان ينبغي لك أن ترحم أنت أيضاً رفيقك كما رحمتك أنا؟ وغضب سيده ودفعه إلى المعدّبين حتّى يوفي جميع ما له عليه. فهكذا أبي السماويّ يصنع بكم إن لم تتركوا من قلوبكم كلّ واحد لأخيه زلّاته.

Altar Candle Offering:

- ❖ By **Clemence and Abdallah Shami Family** in loving memory of **Anthony, Anna, Jasmin, and Jamillah Shami**. Memory Eternal!
- ❖ By **St. Nicholas Church** for our **Very Reverend Father George Baalbaki's birthday** on Sunday, August 20th. God bless and many years!
- ❖ *Sponsors for Sunday's are needed. Please make checks payable to **St. Nicholas Church** in the amount of \$25.00 or more. Thank you!*

SAVE THE DATE:

- ❖ **August 20th, 2017 @ 5:00 pm. Ladies Auxiliary Outing.** Mandaloun Restaurant: 2021 Broadway St., Redwood City. Everybody is welcome! Mezza and dinner. Star singer **Fadi Hanani** will be performing. Donation: \$50.00 Please reserve by calling **Gladys Maalouf @ 415-832-0316**.
- ❖ **September 30th & October 1st: St. Nicholas Church Annual Food Festival.** A lot of items are needed for our festival. We would appreciate your generosity to donate and help us with purchases. Thank you for your continuous support.
- ❖ **October 22nd, 2017 @ 5:00 pm. St. Nicholas proudly presents: A Ballroom Dance Show:** We are having our first Ballroom Dance Show on October 22nd including: dinner, DJ, raffle, and contest by HAT. So ladies get out your best HAT and let's have some fun. Donation: \$50.00 For further information please call **Gladys Maalouf @ 4158320316**.
- ❖ **We need your help:** Preparations for the Annual Church Food Festival begin very soon. We need all the help we can get so we can make it as successful as possible. We will be starting at 9:00 am during all these days. Everybody is welcome. If you have any questions, please contact Khourye Eman Baalbaki or Gladys Maalouf. We will be making:
 - ❖ **August 24th:** Kebeh.
 - ❖ **September 6th & 7th:** Fatair & Zaatar.
 - ❖ **September 25th:** Kaak
 - ❖ **September 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, & October 1st:** Grape leaves, stuffed zucchini, & eggplant.

ATTENTION: UPDATE: ST. NICHOLAS' BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

The ST. NICHOLAS BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT is well underway. You will notice some of the exterior improvements

- ❖ Check out the west wall where the Sermon on the Mount icon is located. The entire exterior of the church will be repainted.



- ❖ Duncan St. driveway has been reconfigured
- ❖ Driveway near the kitchen has been widened.
- ❖ Waterproofing along the Duncan Street wall

We are anxious to complete many of these projects before our **ANNUAL FESTIVAL ON SEPTEMBER 30 AND OCTOBER 1.**

We want to thank those who are behind the scenes and have put their time and effort into setting all the wheels in motion. We look forward to sharing our progress with you.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh: Mercy and Justice

Today's gospel is about mercy, and it seems to us so often from the experience we have of our earthly relationships that the gap between justice and mercy is almost unbridgeable. It seems that the two are in contradiction. Don't we always fall into the trap of being unjust when we try to be merciful and so hard when we try to observe mercy. Did not one of the great writers of the past say that a judge is at the same time below the level of man and above the level of man: above – because he has a power which is superhuman to judge and to condemn, below – because it is not given him to have mercy. And yet Holy Scripture teaches us that in God justice and mercy have met. But the justice which we find in God is so different from the kind of justice which we try to apply. For us to observe justice is to pass a right judgement and then either to revoke it or to pardon but without being able within ourselves to reconcile compassion and severity. So often when we want to be just, severe, we must force our heart to be silent. Such is not the way of God. Christ says in the Gospel that our justice must be beyond the justice of Scribes and Pharisees, beyond the people who try to be righteous before God, who try to be spotless before Him.

What is God's justice? We can see it in the Old Testament and the New Testament in a way which at times may frighten us, that the justice of God consists first of all – and this is perhaps the most frightening example Christ gives us – in recognizing for everybody the right to be himself even if he is in the wrong, even if he follows evil ways. Oh, it does not mean that we can come to terms with evil, accept the ways of it, but we must learn to distinguish, as God does, between an evil deed and a person, between the sickness unto death of a person wounded by sin and possessed of evil, and a person whom God has willed and loved into the world and for whom He proved ready to live and to die. God knows how to distinguish. One of the most frightening and striking examples of it can be found in the very beginning of human history when Cain murders his brother Abel and then feels that not only God's rejection but man's hatred will hunt him down. And the Lord says to him, 'I will put My seal on thy forehead and no one will kill you.' And by doing this God recognises that He has given freedom, a frightening freedom to man and that He is to guarantee the freedom and even its misuse – but not only that.

If that was the case, then God would be responsible for all the evil of the world and we could condemn Him for all the suffering that is ours, for all the horror that has been in human history. But there is one more thing God does. He takes upon Himself all the consequences of deliberate or foolish human choices. He takes them upon Himself and carries the consequences upon His shoulders.

Christ's incarnation, the incarnation of the Son of God, the life, the suffering, the death, the dereliction upon the Cross, the descent into hell of Christ, the Son of the Living God become the Son of Man, are different manners in which God covers, takes upon Himself the consequences of human evil and evil in the world. His justice consists in accepting the other one on his own terms but also in paying the cost of human folly and human evil.

And here love, sacrificial love and justice as we do not either understand or exercise it meet in a way which can frighten. To recognize in another person even when this person is endangering our integrity, our life, a human being whom we are called to take upon ourselves and carry and save, is something which few achieve. I have mentioned to a certain number of you the story of a woman of this parish who is now coming step by step to her death. When she was young she was taken to prison in the course of the Russian Revolution. She underwent interrogations, and one night when she had been interrogated for hours and hours and felt that she could no longer endure it, she felt that she must break the spell even if she must suffer for it, even if it meant punishment... and she turned to her interrogator ready to challenge, to insult him, but make an end to this endless torment. And suddenly she saw on the other side of the interrogation table a man pale, grey with tiredness, with anguish on his face because he was exhausted. And she suddenly saw him as a human being, not an enemy but one whom the cruel circumstances of human history had put on one side of the table while she was on the other. And having seen him a human being, she smiled at him. The interrogation did not come to an end. He smiled back, but he continued to interrogate her. But she was now beyond the power of being destroyed. She had seen a man; she would answer now with patience to a man and be gradually drawn to her tomb without hatred, without bitterness in an act of surrender.

This is a great example, but it is not taken from the Scriptures, which seems so often remote, nor from the lives of saints, which seem to be beyond us, but from the life of a woman who is one of us. Can't we understand that the first act of justice which may lead us to stern action unto salvation of the evildoer, is first of all to recognize in him the right, to hate in him the evil that possesses him, to hate in him all that is destruction in him, but to serve him, indeed to worship him, to serve him as we would serve our God, to serve him unto salvation. The distance between justice and mercy seems to be infinitely great in our lives. We must learn to discover what it means to love unto salvation and to be just with the crucified love of the living God, which He has left with us as our most precious and holy gift, the Church.

ارحم رفيقك كما رحمتك أنا

هذا الأحد اليوم يتوسط بين عيد التجلي و عيد ارتفاع الصليب. في التجلي وُعدنا بأننا سنتلألاً بضياء الإنجيل كما تلألاً المسيح على الجبل. وفي الصليب سوف ينتصر المسيح ويغفر لنا. ولكن كي نتجلى ويُغفر لنا ينبغي أن نحب كما علمنا المثل الإنجيلي.

حكى السيد هذا المثل عن ملك كان دائناً لعبد له عشرة آلاف وزنة التي تساوي مئات الملايين بعملة اليوم، أي أنه كان ديناً عظيماً وكان الإنجيل يريد أن الملك هو الله نفسه وأتينا مدينون له بما لا يُقدّر، مدينون له أولاً بالحياة ومدينون بما هو أهم من الحياة، بالفداء الذي تممه يسوع على الصليب وبالحياة الأبدية وغفران خطايانا عندما نتوب عنها. الله كما قال العبد تمهل أي أنه لا يعاقب الإنسان إذا استمهله الإنسان، أي إذا أدرك الإنسان خطأه وأراد أن يصحّحه. السيد يريد كلّ أبنائه ولو كانوا خطاة لأنه يحبّ جميع أبنائه، «فإنه يشرق شمس على الأشرار والصالحين ويُطر على الأبرار والظالمين» (متى ٥ : ٤٥). الناس على مختلف أنواعهم ومذاهبهم وسلوكهم يتمتعون بالمتع الواحدة التي يعطيها الله لأحبائه بطرائق مختلفة. الله مربّب يعاملنا حسب المحبة.

العبد الذي سُحح له بدين كبير كان له دين تافه، مئة دينار، في ذمّة عبد آخر، وكلّ ثلاثة آلاف دينار تساوي وزنة واحدة، فأخذ يضربه وكاد يميته ووضعه في السجن.

والمثل الذي يستخرجه يسوع من هذه القصة هو أنك إن أردت رحمة من ربك عليك بدورك أن تكون رحيماً للناس. إن أحببت يتسع صدرك، أن تكون واسع الصدر مع الناس وأن ترحم.

لماذا يجب أن يتسع صدرنا وأن نرحم؟ لأنّ الناس وحدهم، كلّ إنسان وحده، كلّ إنسان شقيّ. ومهما كنّا سُعداء فنحن بالنهاية نعيش في عزلة ولا يُخرجنا من العزلة إلاّ الله وحده. كلّ ما لنا يزول: العائلة، الأرزاق، المال، والله وحده الصديق. كلّ إنسان يريد أن يفترقه آخر، أن يلتفت إليه وجه آخر، أن يطلّ عليه جار، ولكنّ الذي يطلّ بالحقيقة هو الربّ.

كيف نرى الرب؟ الله لا نرى له وجهًا ولكننا نسمع كلمته ونحسّ بنعمته. الله يطلّ علينا بواسطة الآخرين وهو أحد الناس الذين نفتقدهم. وهم إذا افتقدونا نحسّ أنّ الله قد افتقدنا. إذا أحبّونا نعرف أنّ الله قد أحبّنا. يريد الآخرون أن نحبّهم في الضيق، ولذلك نعزّي بعضنا بعضًا ونفرح بعضنا لبعض آخر. قد يكون هذا أحيانًا على سبيل الرياء والمصانعة أو على سبيل العادة ولكنّ الإنسان يريد عاطفة صحيحة صادقة.

يكون الإنسان في ضيق ليس فقط إذا فقدَ عزيزًا. قد يكون في ضيق نفسيّ وإذا رأينا على قريبتنا أو جارنا علامات الملل والضجر، فعلينا أن نفتقده. هذا ضروريّ في الحياة العائليّة بنوع خاصّ. علينا أن نكون رحماء تجاه الناس لكي يرحمنا الربّ.

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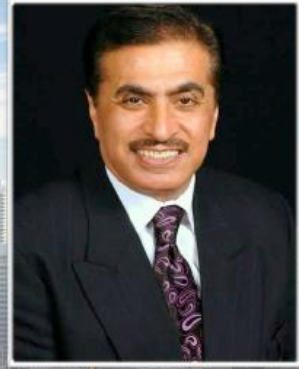


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