

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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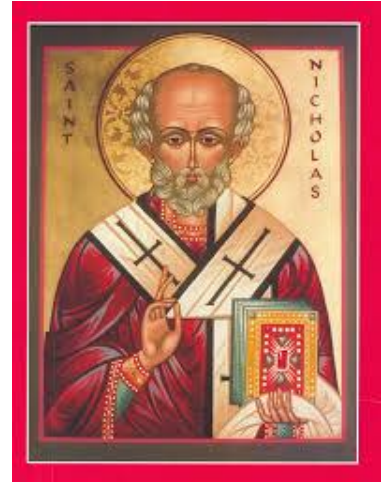
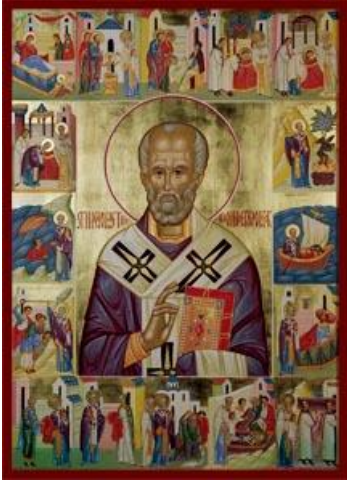
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Parish Council Chairman: Maher Shami



Sunday, October 22, 2017

THE EPISTLE: St. Paul to the Galatians. (1:11-19)

Brethren, I would have you know that the Gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the Church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people; so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when He Who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were Apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other Apostles except James the Lord's brother.

الرسالة: غلاطية ١: ١١-١٩

يا إخوة، أعلمكم أن الإنجيل الذي بشرتُ به ليس بحسب الإنسان، لأنِّي لم أتسلَّمه وأتعلَّمه من إنسان بل بإعلان يسوع المسيح. فاتِّمَّ قد سمعتم بسيرتي قديمًا في ملة اليهود أنِّي كنتُ أضطهدُ كنيسة الله بإفراط وأدمرها، وأزید تقدِّمًا في ملة اليهود على كثيرين من أترابي في جنسي، بكوني أوفر منهم غيرةً على تقاليد آبائي. فلمَّا ارتضى الله الذي أفرزني من جوف أمي ودعاني بنعمته إلى أن يُعلن ابنه فيّ لأبشر به بين الأمم، لساعتي لم أصغ إلى لحم ودم، ولا صعدتُ إلى أورشليم إلى الرسل الذين قبلي، بل انطلقتُ إلى ديار العرب، وبعد ذلك رجعتُ إلى دمشق. ثمَّ إنِّي بعد ثلاث سنين صعدتُ إلى أورشليم لأزور بطرس فأقمتُ عنده خمسة عشر يومًا، ولم أرَ غيره من الرسل سوى يعقوب أخي الربِّ.

THE GOSPEL: St. Luke. (8:26-39)

At that time, Jesus arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And as He stepped out on land, there met Him a man from the city who had demons; for a long time he had worn no clothes, and he lived not in a house but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and said with a loud voice, "What hast Thou to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech Thee, do not torment me." For Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. [For many a time it had seized him; he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters, but he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the desert.] Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. And they begged Jesus not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside; and they begged Jesus to let them enter these. So He gave them leave.

Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country. Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. And those who had seen it told them how he who had been possessed with demons was healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gadarenes asked Jesus to depart from them; for they were seized with great fear; so He got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with Jesus; but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your home, and declare all that God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city all that Jesus had done for him.

الإنجيل: لوقا ٨: ٢٧-٣٩

في ذلك الزمان أتى يسوع إلى كورة الجرجسيين فاستقبله رجل من المدينة به شياطين منذ زمان طويل، ولم يكن يلبس ثوباً ولا يأوي إلى بيت بل إلى القبور. فلما رأى يسوع صاح وخرّ له بصوت عظيم: ما لي ولك يا يسوع ابن الله العليّ، أطلب إليك ألاّ تعذبني. فإنّه أمرّ الروح النجس بأن يخرج من الإنسان، لأنّه كان قد اختطفه منذ زمان طويل، وكان يُربط بسلاسل ويحبس بقيود فيقطع الربط، ويُساق من الشيطان إلى البراري فسأله يسوع قائلاً: ما اسمك؟ فقال: لحيون، لأنّ شياطين كثيرين كانوا قد دخلوا فيه. وطلبوا إليه ألاّ يأمرهم بالذهاب إلى الهاوية. وكان هناك قطيع خنازير كثيرة ترعى في الجبل. فطلبوا إليه أن يأذن لهم بالدخول إليها فأذن لهم. فخرج الشياطين من الإنسان ودخلوا في الخنازير. فوثب القطيع عن الجرف إلى البحيرة فاختنق. فلما رأى الرعاة ما حدث هربوا فأخبروا في المدينة وفي الحقول، فخرجوا ليروا ما حدث وأتوا إلى يسوع، فوجدوا الإنسان الذي خرجت منه الشياطين عند قدمي يسوع لابساً صحيح العقل فخافوا. وأخبرهم الناظرون أيضاً كيف أبرئ المجنون. فسأله جميع جمهور كورة الجرجسيين أن ينصرف عنهم لأنّه اعتراهم خوف عظيم. فدخل السفينة ورجع. فسأله الرجل الذي خرجت منه الشياطين أن يكون معه، فصرفه يسوع قائلاً: ارجع إلى بيتك وحدّث بما صنع الله إليك. فذهب وهو ينادي في المدينة كلّها بما صنع إليه يسوع.

Altar Candle Offering:

- ❖ By **Nadia Shatara** for the good health of **Suheil and Saba Shatara** and the entire **Shatara families**.

Congratulations:

- ❖ To **Darron and Pamela Rishwain** for the baptism of their baby girl **Mila**.
- ❖ To **Nawal (Wahhab) Nikitaras and Nikolaos Nikitaras** for their recent marriage.
- ❖ To **Joseph and Diala Malas** for the baptism of their baby boy **William**.
- ❖ To **Khalil and Helena Rantisi** for the Churaching of their baby girl **Malak**.

God grant them many years!

Condolences:

- ❖ We would like to offer our deepest condolences and sympathy to the **Katout** family on the passing of the beloved **Mary Katout**. Funeral arrangements will be announced shortly. May her memory be eternal!

SAVE THE DATE:

- ❖ **BALLROOM DANCE SHOW:** October 22nd, 2017 @ 5:00 pm. St. Nicholas proudly presents: **A Ballroom Dance Show:** 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 contact **Gladys Maalouf @ 415-832-0316**.
- ❖ **FAMILY NIGHT:** Saturday November 18th, 2017. St. Nicholas Church Family Night! Sponsored by the Rantisi Families.
- ❖ **CHRISTMAS PARTY:** Saturday December 23rd, 2017. St Nicholas Church Christmas Party.

SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Attention Youth and Parents of our Youth! Are you in need of fulfilling community Service Hours, do you love working with children, thought about becoming a teacher and want to gain firsthand experience, or do you want to help spread the good word of Jesus Christ? Well then, we have a perfect opportunity for you! Saint Nicholas Church is now accepting teacher and teacher aid roles for our weekly Sunday School classes. Sunday School classes are typically 30 minutes to 60 minutes per week and should take an additional 30 to 60 minutes a week to prepare for.

Saint Nicholas will provide official documentation of your community service hours which will be good for anyone needing to fulfill community service hours for College/High School purposes. If interested, please contact the Church office at 415-648-5200.

YOUTH MONTH & TEEN SOYO

Christ is in our midst! He is and ever shall be!

I bring to your attention that October in our Antiochian Archdiocese is "Youth Month". It is vital for our church to support our youth as someday many of them may serve in this church and this archdiocese as parishioners, officers, priests, seminarians and so on. During the month of October, we try our best to support and subsidize the proper education and atmosphere for our youth. On behalf of St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church and Teen Soyo, and its officers., I (Ilyan Baalbaki) with V. Rev. Fr. George's blessing invite the youth in our church to take charge of positions this month!

We also would like to congratulate Mia Hanhan (President), Anna Aho (Vice President), Sophie Aho (Treasurer) Elia Saoud (Secretary), and Adrianna Saoud (Public Relations) in their new roles as Teen Soyo Officers. Not only will they be the role models for the upcoming youth in our church, but they will help in establishing a better Teen Soyo for St. Nicholas, and will spearhead all Teen Soyo Projects.

We ask that you pray to St. Nicholas as an intercessor for them, and to guide them in the Lord's work.

Subdeacon Ilyan Baalbaki, Teen Soyo Director.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh: Healing of two possessed in Gergesene

How familiar is this story to us. Yet every time we read it we rediscover something in it which touches our heart, or gives a new light to our mind. And to-day I would like to attract your attention to three features of this passage.

The first is the attitude of the devils, of the powers of evil, to their victims. The powers of evil have no other intention or desire than to take possession of a living creature and to make it both a sufferer and one that will fulfil their will. The Fathers of the Church teach us that the devils can have no direct action in this world; all they can do is enslave human beings and through them work the evil within them. So this is what these powers of evil had intended: to enslave these men and to make them instruments of destruction, but at the same time to make them suffer for it.

When Christ commanded them to leave their victims they cried, shall I say, for a place of refuge, a place where they could dwell and work destruction. And Christ allowed them to in-dwell the pigs. Pigs, in the eyes of Jews, were a symbol of impurity; the request to be lodged in their bodies was a sign for all who could understand - and every Jew could - that they were as impure as the impurest of

the animals. But what happened next was a demonstration to people of what happens when we allow ourselves to be possessed of evil, when we allow passions to have power over us - hatred, lust, jealousy, and all the passions of body and soul. Being possessed by them we are doomed to destruction, as this herd ended in death.

We should remember this because we do not always realise how much we are in the grip, in the power of those things which rule our life: likes and dislikes, hatreds, resentments and so on. We are not only possessed, but we are also working evil through our subjection to the power of evil. And the warning is clear: if we only allow evil to take possession of us completely, it will mean death; not physical death, but a total, tragic alienation from all that is life: from God, from love, from beauty, from meaning. We cannot fall out of existence but we can be possessed of an existence which is a ghostly one, an existence without life, without content - a shell that is empty, and yet a torment. And in contrast to this we see the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God become Man. He is the Creator, He is the Lord, He is the Saviour of the whole world; and He forgets everything, as it were, the whole of creation to pay attention to nothing but these two men who are in need of salvation, indeed He is prepared to leave ninety-nine righteous, whole people who do not need Him at that moment alone in order to give all His attention, all His life, indeed all His power to save these two men. In the face of all the need of the world He can see every individual need and respond to it with all His love, all His compassion, all His understanding and all His divine power to save and to heal.

There is a third group of people whom we see in action in this Gospel story; it is the inhabitants of the country. They had known of the desperate condition of these two men; they were told of what Christ did for them; they were told who their master was, who was their tormentor; should they not have come to give glory to God and thank Him for delivering the two men from the power of evil? NO! All they saw in the act of Christ was that they were deprived of their herd of swine. What mattered to them the wholeness and the life and the salvation of these two men? They were deprived of what was important to them, what mattered to them more than a human life, and they asked Christ to leave their borders, to go because they did not want to risk another miracle that would be costly to them. What a tragic - not monstrous, but just tragic contrast between the attitude of God and the attitude of these people.

Let us give thought and ask ourselves, where do we stand? Of course, the first movement we shall have is to say, 'On God's side' - it is not true. When there is a tragic need, and the cost of helping would be perhaps not a disaster but a pain or loss to us, what would we choose? Let us reflect on this: are we really on the side of Christ Who can forget the whole world because His Heart is pierced, transfixed with compassion, or - do we allow our heart to be moved one moment, and then recalculate the cost and turn away from the need?

Let us reflect - because every one of these stories, every parable, every image, every act of God is challenging us: Where do you stand? Who are you? The person possessed, to whatever extent? A disciple of Christ ready to forget everything for the sake of a desperate need? Or rather one of those who say to Christ: Go, go away - you are disturbing our peace, the harmony of our life and our security?

Let us reflect deeply; but not only reflect, take a decision and act.

القلب مسكن الله

ماذا يعني أن نجتمع ونقيم الذبيحة الإلهية عن نفس أخ لنا انتقل إلى رحمة الله؟ ما نعرف من العهد الجديد في ما يخص الموت، أن الله يكافئ كل واحد عن أعماله، وأن مصيره الأبدي مرتبط بأعماله. ما أود أن أتبه إليه في قول «إن أعمال الإنسان تتبعه وأن الله يجازي كل واحد عن أعماله»، لا يعني أن الله يقيم حساباً، سجلاً في السماء يحفظ فيه على الإنسان أعماله، حسنة كانت أو سيئة، بل إنها دعوة إلى العمل الصالح.

القول المبارك إن الله يجازي كل واحد عن أعماله (رومية ٥: ٦) ورؤيا يوحنا (٢٢: ١٢) يعني أن أعمال الإنسان تطهره. فإذا أنت أحببت الرب والقريب وأحسنيت إلى أخيك وانتبهت إليه وفرجت عن كربته وأسيته، وكنت إليه في كل الأحوال

وتواضعت، فأعمالك تطهرك. ليس أن الله يحسبها، هي تطهرك وترفعك إليه. ليس في القضية مجازاة أو عقاب، فإله ليس بمننقم ولا يسرّ الله بأن يرى معاقبين في الجحيم.

الحقيقة المعلنة لنا أن الإنسان يقربه الله إليه وأنه هو أيضاً يقترب إلى الله بالطاعة، فيرى الإنسان نفسه محبباً لله ويرى الله محبباً له، وكلّ القضية محبة. فمن أحبّ ينجذب إلى وجه الله، ومن لا يحبّ يبتعد عن وجه الله ويبقى في ظلامه. ليس أن الله يطرح أحداً في الظلمة البرّانية. ليس أن الله خلق الجحيم، الله لم يخلق جحيماً. الإنسان خلق جحيماً لنفسه فهو يعدّب نفسه في خطايا، وليس من خطيئة إلا وتحمل عقابها.

الله لا يعاقب، الإنسان يكرهه والكرهية ذاتها تعذيب. الإنسان لا يُطرح في الجحيم عبثاً وتعسفاً لكنه يأتي بالجحيم إليه. هي تُطرح فيه ولا يُطرح هو فيها. الإنسان يجعل نفسه في ظلام لأنه لا يحبّ، لأنه لا يتطهّر، وإذا أحبّ يجعل السماء في ذاته. الإنسان لا يذهب ولا يأتي، لا يصعد ولا ينزل. الإنسان هنا في هذا القلب البشري، يأتي بالله إلى قلبه أو يملأ قلبه بالشرور. يفرح بالفضيلة وهي ترفعه وتجمّله.

القلب البشري إذا سكنه الله، أي إذا سكنته الفضيلة فهو سماء. وإذا فهمنا أن القلب البشري إذا سكنته الخطيئة فمزقته وصار جحيماً نكون قد فهمنا كلّ شيء. ليس في الدنيا إلا الله. فإذا أنت أحببته فأنت معه وأنت فيه وهو فيك. وإذا أنت أحببت شهوتك وخطيئتك وكرهت الناس فأنت في الجحيم والجحيم فيك، وأنت مع الشيطان والشيطان يلازمك، وأنت بعيد عن وجه الله لأنك ترتجف منه ولأنك تبغضه بأعمالك.

لا تظنوا أن الإنسان يحبّ الله لأنه يتكلّم عليه ولأنه يصلّي، هذا ليس بمحكّ. المحكّ أن الإنسان يحبّ الله إن أطاع وصاياه وأطاع الإخوة. وما الصلاة والأسرار المقدّسة والأصوام والجهادات الروحية كلّها إلا وسائل ضرورية حتى نصل إلى الجمال الروحيّ فينا الذي هو سكنى الله.

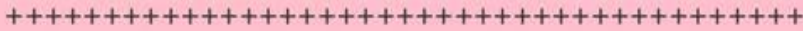
نجتمع في القدّاس الإلهيّ لإيماننا بأنّ المحبة الإلهية التي انسكبت على الصليب تنسكب في القدّاس الإلهيّ، الذي هو احتفال بالصليب الذي تمّ على الجلجلة واحتفال بالقيامة.

جاورجوس مطران جبل لبنان

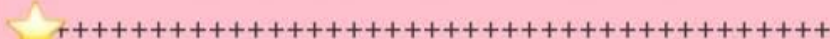


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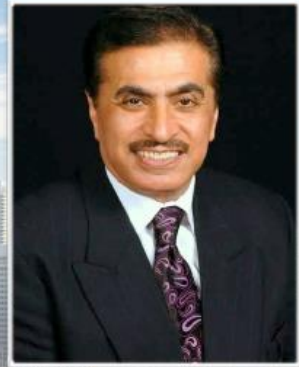


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