

كنيسة مار نقولا الأنطاكية الأرثوذكسية
St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
Weekly Bulletin

Antiochian Archdiocese of North America
Diocese of Los Angeles and the West
5200 Diamond Hts. Boulevard, San Francisco, CA 94131
Tel: (415) 648-5200

Email: info@stnicholas-sf.com--website:stnicholas-sf.com

Pastor, V. Rev. Fr. George Baalbaki

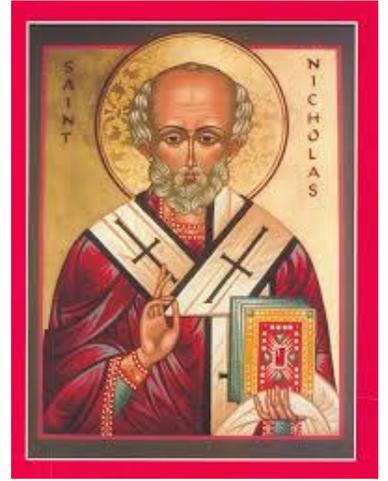
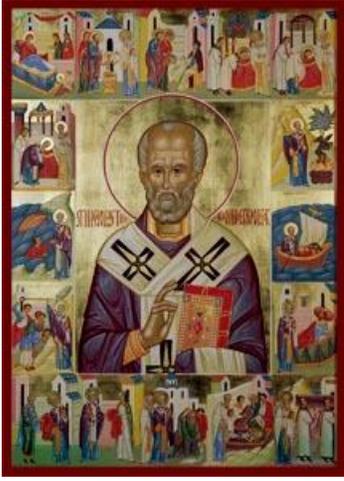
(586) 214-4428 revbaalbaki@yahoo.com

Pastor Emeritus, V. Rev. Fr. Gregory Ofiesh

Sub-Dn. Michel Khoury

Sub-Dn. Ilyan Baalbaki

Parish Council Chairman: Maher Shami



Sunday, December 03, 2017

Memorial Service:

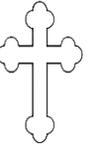
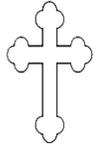
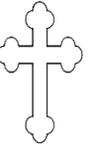
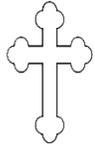
This Sunday:

Six Month Memorial Service for the Servant of God **Bishara Wahab** offered by his family.

One Year Memorial Service for the Handmaiden of God **Janet Srouji** offered by her family.

Forty Day Memorial Service for the Servant of God **Qusta Jeries Wahbeh** offered by his family.

May their memory be eternal!



NATIVITY FAST: November 15th - December 25th We would like to wish you a happy Advent season!

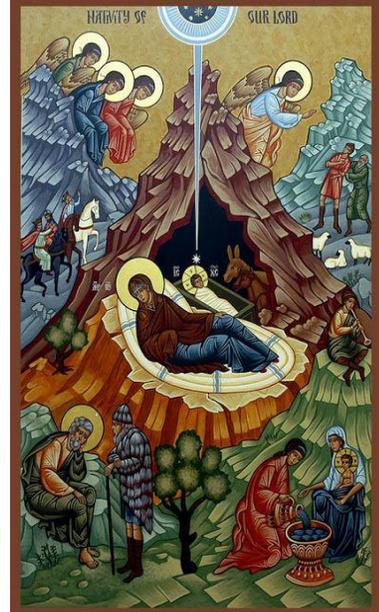
Nativity Fast (Advent) is the period proceeding the Christmas season in which we abstain from meat and dairy products. Eating fish is allowed except Wednesdays and Fridays, and we can eat all the regular meals like breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. The purpose of this fast is seeking the spirituality and the preparation for the feast of the advent of our Lord on December 25th.

بدء صوم الميلاد: أبناء الرعية الأحباء: كل عام وأنتم بألف خير.

في كنيستنا الأرثوذكسية المقدسة، يبدأ صوم الميلاد هذا العام الأربعاء الواقع فيه ١٥ تشرين الثاني، وسيستمر حتى ٢٤ كانون الأول.

وهذا الصوم لا يوجد فيه "صوم انقطاعي". أي لا يوجد صوم للساعة ١٢:٠٠، فهو صوم خفيف. أي نستطيع أن نتناول وجبة افطار صباحا، من مواد صيامية.

وفي ٢٥ كانون الأول سنحتفل بعيد "الميلاد" الذي فيه أتى ابن الله إلى العالم ليدلنا على طريق الخلاص، الطريق إلى الله الأب. صوم مبارك



الرسالة: أفسس ٥ : ٨-١٩

يا إخوة اسلكوا كأولاد النور (فإن ثمر الروح هو في كلّ صلاح وبرّ وحقّ) مختبرين ما هو مرضي لدى الربّ، ولا تشتركوا في أعمال الظلمة غير المثمرة بل بالحريّ وبخوا عليها. فإنّ الأعمال التي يعملونها سرّاً يقبح ذكرها أيضاً. لكنّ كلّ ما يوبّخ عليه يُعلن بالنور. فإنّ كلّ ما يُعلن هو نور. ولذلك يقول استيقظ أيّها النائم وقم من بين الأموات فيضيء لك المسيح. فانظروا إذا أن تسلكوا بحذر لا كجهلاء بل كحكماء مفتدين الوقت فإنّ الأيام شريرة. فلذلك لا تكونوا أغبياء بل افهموا ما مشيئة الربّ ولا تسكروا بالخمير التي فيها الدعارة، بل امتلئوا بالروح مكلّمين بعضكم بعضاً بمزامير وتسابيح وأغانٍ روحية مرتّمين ومرتلين في قلوبكم للربّ.

THE EPISTLE: St. Paul to the Ephesians. (5:8-19)

Brethren, walk as children of light—for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true—and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it is said, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.” Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

THE GOSPEL: St. Luke. (18:35-43)

At that time, when Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging; and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” And he cried, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, let me receive my sight.” And Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

الإنجيل: لوقا ١٨ : ٣٥-٤٣

في ذلك الزمان فيما يسوع بالقرب من أريحا كان أعمى جالساً على الطريق يستعطي. فلما سمع الجمع مجتازاً سأل: ما هذا؟ فأخبر بأن يسوع الناصريّ عابراً. فصرخ قائلاً: يا يسوع ابن داود ارحمني. فزجره المتقدمون ليسكت فازداد صراخاً: يا ابن داود ارحمني. فوقف يسوع وأمر بأن يُقدّم إليه. فلما قرّب سألته: ماذا تريد أن أصنع لك؟ فقال: يا ربّ أن أبصر. فقال له يسوع: أبصر، إيمانك قد خلّصك. وفي الحال أبصر وتبعه وهو يمجّد الله. وجميع الشعب إذ رأوا سبّحوا الله.

Altar Candle Offering:

- ❖ By **Angel Salfiti** in loving memory of her parents **Costandi and Ellen**, her brother **Elias**, her neice **Lana**, and her cousin **Nadi**. Also for the good health of her and her family.
- ❖ By **Maha Dabit** in loving memory of her husband **Rimon Dabit**, and her parents **Nakleh and Ellen Aho**. Also for the good health of her children **Alex, Christopher, and Alexis**.
- ❖ By St. Nicholas church for the good health of **Dr. Tali Bashour, Rema Kari, Leila Paolino, and Chris Atwan**.
- ❖ By St. Nicholas church for the good health of all who are named Nick, Nicholas, Nicole, Nicola after the **feast of Saint Nicholas on December 6th** on the occasion of their Names' Day! **Fr. Nicholas Borzghol, Nicholas Baalbaki, Nicholas Katout, Nicholas Nabil Hanhan, Nicholas Tannous, Nicholas Qaqish, Nicole Aho, Nicole Hanhan, Nikki Hanhan, Nicole Jadelrab, Nicole Wahab, Nicole Bekhete, Nick Nicola, Nicola Akik, Nicholas Kayyal, Nicholas Maalouf, Nick Baba**, and in loving memory of **Fr. Nicholas Habib and Nick Saba**, God Bless!

Condolences and Sympathy:

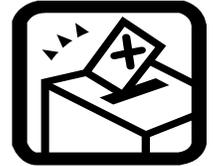
- ❖ To **Paul Nasif** on the passing of his father **Chuck**.
- ❖ To **Issa Shnoudi** and the **Shnoudi** family on the passing of **Dr. Mounir Naim Shnoudi**.
 - ❖ To the **Yanni** family on the passing of **Georgette Yanni**.
 - ❖ To the **Shamieh** family on the passing of **Jackie Nabeeh Shamieh**.
God Bless and May their memory be eternal!

SAVE THE DATE:

- ❖ **BURBARA**: December 3rd: Delicious “Burbara” Pudding will be served after Liturgy donated by Diana Batshon in memory of her Husband **Michel Batshon**. May his memory be eternal! Many thanks to Diana. May God bless you and your family.
- ❖ **The Feast of the Patron Saint of our Church: Saint Nicholas**
Wednesday December 6th Celebrating the great Feast of St. Nicholas the Patron Saint of our Church / نيقولاوس العجائبي، رئيس أساقفة ميرا /
Matins at 10:00 AM, Diving Liturgy at 11:00 AM.

- ❖ **Parish Council Election will take place on December 10th.**

There will be a parish council election meeting for the sole purpose of electing some members of the Parish Council for the upcoming term. Three are to be elected and one to be appointed by the Pastor.



Anyone interested in serving or nominating someone to serve on the Parish Council must be fully pledged and spiritually qualified.

Please submit your candidate's name to Father George and/or Maher Shami by Sunday December 3rd.

In order to vote in the elections, members must be in spiritual and financial good standing with the church.

- ❖ **CHRISTMAS PARTY**: Saturday December 16th, 2017. Donation: \$75

Performance by: **FADI HANANI**

- ❖ **YOUTH LOCK-IN**: Friday December 22nd, 2017. 7:00 PM – 9:00 AM. Free admission, just bring your sleeping bags! St. Nicholas Youth Invites all of you to the Youth Lock in! Starting @ 7 PM we will be having a Nativity Movie and discussion led by Fr. George Baalbaki. Directly afterwards, youth will have the chance to bond through games, music, activities and more! Pick them up after breakfast and Morning Service the next day!

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh: On Prayer for the Departed

Whenever someone dear to us departs this earthly life and enters into eternity, we pray for God's mercy, indeed for God's love to enfold the person and bring him into the eternity of joy which is in God. Every Saturday, as on certain other occasions, we pray regularly for the departed, but on Saturdays in a special context - we pray also to the Mother of God and sing her glory. And it is not by chance or in vain that the two prayers are intertwined.

When we pray for the departed, we do not ask God to be unjust and to pardon sins gratuitously, and not to reject those who have rejected Him and are still unable to commune with Him before the love of God has penetrated them, as the warmth of the sun penetrates the cold bodies of the earth.. We pray for the departed testifying thereby that they have not lived in vain on earth, that they have, while they were on earth, kindled in our hearts a flame, a flame of gratitude, of reverence, of love; this flame may be small or great; it may be nothing more than the flickering light of a candle, but it can also be like the burning bush, shining with all the glory of the love of God, of His divine presence. We testify, when we pray for the departed, that we have received from them a message, a message of truth, of faith, of hope, of joy; that they have been for us a way to God, that they have opened to us a door which leads into eternal life, because life eternal consists in knowing the living God, and we pray to Him indeed, because He is not the God of the dead but the God of those who live. And if our love can be undying, if the Old Testament could say that love is stronger than death - how much more can we say that the love of God in Christ is stronger than anything - death indeed, among other things, because in Christ death has been defeated, death has been harrowed, life has gushed forth like a torrent from the tomb of the Resurrection.

And this is why we turn to the Mother of God, both in prayer and in veneration, rejoicing that She is one of us, a Woman among women, and yet - a Woman like none for the greatness, the perfection of her gift of self to God, of her transparency to God, for her suppleness in the creative hands of God. Indeed, it is because She could believe unreservedly, heroically that the Incarnation was made possible! She is truly the Mother of Life, but not as the first Eve, the mother of all those who live on earth and are doomed one day to depart this life. - No, She is the Mother of Life because She has brought into the world Life Eternal, God Himself become man, the Son of God Who in, but also through Her, has become the Son of man.

She also had to die, as Christ did, in total solidarity, in union with us; but She died inseparably united to the God to Whom She had given her soul and her body, her life without reserve, and indeed, as we are told in one of the Church's prayers, the grave and death proved incapable of keeping her a prisoner. She so communed to eternal life by her total gift of self to God and for unity with Christ, that She rose alive, and She is after Christ the first fruit of all those who have lived on earth, departed this earthly life and entered into eternity; She alone, after Christ, entered it fulfilled, entered it in body and soul. We are expecting the glorious resurrection of the last day, when living souls, cleansed, renewed by repentance, by the tears of our broken-heartedness and washed in the blood of the Lamb will be reunited to our bodies and stand, an incarnate humanity beyond death, beyond sin, beyond everything which is less than communion with God, since we are promised that the day will come when God shall be all in all.

And when we pray now to the Mother of God, and for the departed, these are thoughts which are in our hearts and minds. Yes, death is overcome, and we have evidence of it in the person of the Mother of God, and not only in the unique victory of Christ. But can we, frail, hesitant in our faith, hope to follow her into eternity? Indeed, yes, if we learn from her the transparency that allowed the light of God to shine through her, the surrender that allowed her to become the vessel of the Incarnation, the gift of self, heroic, courageous, self-sacrificing that allowed her to be the Mother of our Saviour.

We must remember the words of Saint Paul, or rather of Christ spoken to Paul when he felt unable to fulfil his earthly mission and asked for strength, "My grace sufficeth unto thee, My power is made manifest in weakness", - not in laziness, not in cowardice, but in that weakness which is perfect surrender.

Let us learn from the Mother of God so to surrender that the life of God may pervade us; and let us pray for all the departed who entered into eternity in twilight that they should be enlightened, indeed, more that this - be filled with light, in the words of Saint Gregory Palamas, like pure crystals which obscure no light that flows through them, and yet reflect it in all directions through the many, many facets of their unique personality Let us hope, let us believe, let us surrender, let us learn, and give glory to the Mother of God, and to our Lord and Savior and God Jesus Christ!

أن أبصر

طلب أعمى أريحا إلى يسوع رحمة، والرحمة كانت تعني عنده أن يُبصر. هذا يعني أنه كان مبصرًا ولم يولد أعمى، قد ذاق جمال البصر وأراد استعادته. قيل له إن المعلم الجليلي الجديد يشفي فاستغاث مرتين، وكان متيقنًا أن يسوع قادر على شفائه. لكنّ الربّ أراد حوارًا مع الأعمى فسأله: ماذا تريد أن أصنع لك؟ ولما طلب الأعمى شفاه الربّ. كلّ قضية للإنسان مع الله قضية استرحام ورحمة. ولعلّ أهم شيء في الوجود أن نعرف خطيئتنا، أن ندركها وأن نستفظعها ونحسّ بأنّها باعدت بيننا وبين الفادي. القضية أن نعرف أننا فقراء إليه وأنّ كلّ ما لدينا من مال أو صحّة أو مجد أو جمال أو ما إليه جميعًا باطلّة تافهة لولا رحمته، ولولا التفاتاته منه تتوالى علينا كلّ يوم. إن عرفنا أنفسنا أننا خطاة منسحقين تحت كثرة الشرور التي نرتكب، فإنما نذهب إليه ونستغفر لعلمنا بأنّه يضمّ بنيه جميعًا إلى صدر الأب الرحب. «أن أبصر»، هذا هو المبتغى وهذه هي الضرورة لكلّ إنسان، لأنّ كلّ منّا تعميه شروره وأغراضه. كلّ امرئ أعمى. فالشهوة إذا دخلت وتربعت وتحكمت فإنّها تعمي البصيرة ويصبح الإنسان بلا رأي صائب وبلا حكم صحيح، ينفعل، يضرب الناس بيديه أو بشفتيه أو بقلب متمرد.

يحتاج الإنسان إلى أن يُبصر في كلّ يوم وفي كلّ لحظة، لكنّه لا يستطيع أن يرى ما لم يعرف أنّ الله مصدر الروح، وأننا بلا ربنا قد ننظّم بعض الأشياء، بعض أمور عائلتنا وأرزاقنا، لكننا لسنا بشيء ما لم نصل إلى الفعالة بأنّ المسيح هو حياتنا وبأنّ كلّ الأمور الباقية إنّما تزداد لنا، وقد تأتي وقد تذهب، وقد نكون في سلامة أو قد نكون في صحّة أو في مرض، في غنى أو في فقر، كلّ هذه الأشياء متساوية.

الأمر الوحيد الجليل، الطاهر، الدائم، الصامد هو أن يكون المسيح رفيق حياتنا في كلّ شيء وملهمها ومنعشها. ولهذا يجب أن نستغيث قائلين: يا ربّ نريد أن نبصر، فأذهب عنا هذه الشهوات السامة، وأعطنا روح بساطة وروح تواضع أمامك وأمام الناس حتّى لا نستكبر. وإذ ذاك يجيب الربّ: يا ابني إيمانك خلّصك فأبصر.

إيمانك يهديك إلى أنّ شهواتك ضارّة، وهو الذي يعلّمك المنازعات والمقاتلة إنّما هي أمور تافهة والإنسان الذي أمامك هو خير من كلّ مصالحك.

إيمانك يعلّمك، فالإيمان ليس كما يتصوّر الكثيرون أن نصدّق عجيبة تحدث هنا ومعجزة تحصل هناك. ليس الإيمان أن نفتتح بكلّ ما يقوله لنا عامّة الناس. ليس الإيمان أمراً يتمّ في العقل، في الذهن. (طبعاً من السهل جداً أن نقول إنّ الله موجود، فالطبيعة كلّها تشير إليه. ولكنّ الله إذا كان لا يحركك ولا ينيهيك ولا يعشك ولا يجعلك عاملاً رسولاً في سبيله مقدّساً، فكأنّه غير موجود). الموجود هو من أتعاطى وإياه بالحبّ. الإيمان ليس تصديقاً، الإيمان ثقة، ثقة بالله، وأن نسلم النفس إليه. الإيمان يقين. الإيمان ليس الظنّ أو التخمين لكنّه رؤية.

الأعمى بعد أن أبصر عظم إيمانه لأنّه لمس قوّة يسوع. لا يستطيع أحد أن يقتعه بأنّ يسوع غير قويّ، أو غير شافٍ أو غير فاد، ولكنّه أخذ بصراً وصار يعلم أنّ المسيح كلّ شيء. المؤمن ليس من يحسب أنّ هناك آخرة قد تكون، لا. القضية ليست ظناً، إنّها علم. الإيمان علم بأنّ الله قويّ وبأنّه محبّ وبأنّه الرحيم. الإيمان رؤية بأنّ المسيح معنا الآن وأنّه سيلازمنا غداً، وأننا نناجيه على الرجاء.

إن لم يكن عندنا هذا الإيمان سنبقى في التخمين وفي الظنّ وفي تصديق ما يُقال هنا وهناك. إن لم يكن عندنا هذا الإيمان الذي يجعلنا نحسّ ونلمس ونتيقّن أنّ المسيح أقوى من الموت. إذا توصلنا إلى هذه القناعة بأننا إن فقدنا كلّ شيء وبقينا وحدنا وتيقنا أنّ المسيح كافٍ لنا عندئذ نكون من المؤمنين ونكون من المبصرين. جاور جيوس مطران جبيل والبترون وما يليهما (جبل لبنان)

St. Nicholas Annual Christmas Party

SATURDAY
DECEMBER 16th 2017

Doors @ 7:30 PM

Special Guest Singer

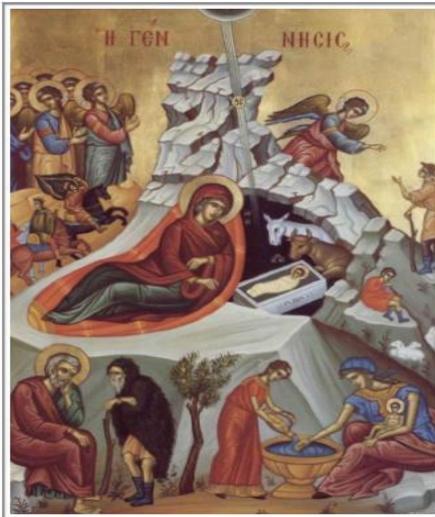
**FADI HANANI &
ENSEMBLE**

Complimentary wine on tables

Donation: \$75

St. Nicholas

Youth Lock-in 🗝️



All Age Groups Welcome!

Nativity Story Led by Fr.

George!

Teen Soyo Event

Friday December 22nd

7 PM- 9 AM

Free Admission.

Just Bring your sleeping bags!

St. Nicholas Youth Invites all of you to the Youth Lock In!

Starting @ 7 PM we will be having a Nativity Movie and discussion led by Fr. George Baalbaki. Directly afterwards, youth will have the chance to bond through games, music, activities and more! Pick them up after breakfast and Morning Service the next day!

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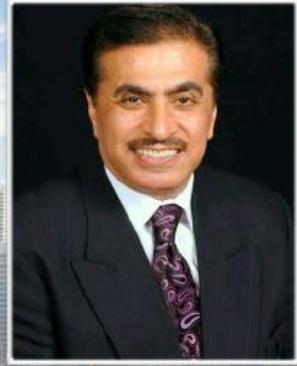


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