

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

Antiochian Archdiocese of North America
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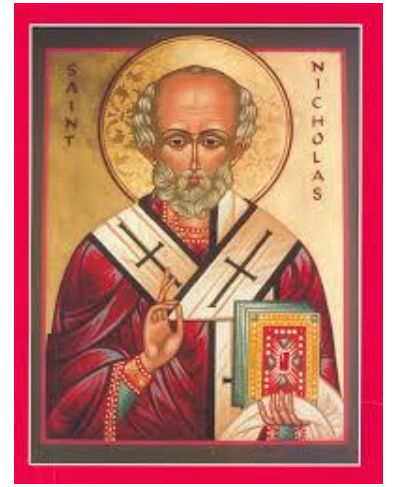
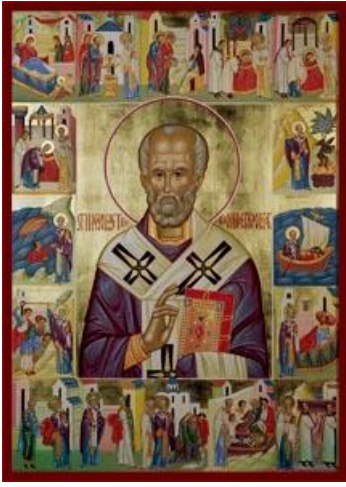
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Pastor Emeritus, V. Rev. Fr. Gregory Ofiesh

Sub-Dn. Michel Khoury

Sub-Dn. Ilyan Baalbaki

Parish Council Chairman: Maher Shami



Sunday, December 17, 2017

Sunday of Forefathers (Ancestors) of Christ

أحد الأجداد القديسين و القديس دانيال النبي والفتية القديسون الثلاثة حنانيا وعازريا وميصائيل

Memorial Service:

This Sunday:

One Year Memorial Service for the Servant of God **Ishaq N. Qaqish** offered by his family.

Sunday December 24th:

Forty Day Memorial Service for the Handmaiden of God **Olga Azar** offered by her family.

May their memory be eternal!

Order of St. Ignatius Sunday - December 17, 2017

Dearly beloved,

We would like to congratulate the members of St. Ignatius from among our parish wishing them a very happy and blessed feast. We would like to encourage our parishioners to consider joining the order. This is a reminder for all the order members to wear their red ribbon and the cross of the order during this Sunday's service. For more info about the order please log on to <http://www.orderofstignatius.org> God grant them many years.

THE EPISTLE: St. Paul to the Colossians. (3:4-11)

Brethren, when Christ, Who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

الرسالة: كولوسي 3:4-11 يا إخوة، متى ظهر المسيح الذي هو حياتنا فأنتم أيضا تُظهرون حينئذ معه في المجد. فأميتوا أعضاءكم التي على الأرض: الزنى والنجاسة والهوى والشهوة الرديئة والطمع الذي هو عبادة وثن، لأنه لأجل هذه يأتي غضب الله على أبناء العصيان، وفي هذه انتم أيضا سلكتم حينئذ إذ كنتم عانثين فيها. أما الآن فأنتم أيضا اطرخوا الكل: الغضب والسخط والخبث والتجديف والكلام القبيح من أفواهكم. ولا يكذب بعضكم بعضا بل اخلعوا الإنسان العتيق مع أعماله والبسوا الإنسان الجديد الذي يتجدد للمعرفة على صورة خالقه حيث ليس يوناني ولا يهودي، لا ختان ولا قلف، لا بربري ولا اسكيثي، لا عبد ولا حر، بل المسيح هو كل شيء وفي الجميع.

THE GOSPEL :St. Luke. (14:16-24)

The Lord spoke this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But, one by one, they all began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

الإنجيل: لوقا 14:16-24 قال الرب هذا المثل: انسان صنع عشاء عظيمًا ودعا كثيرين فأرسل عبده في ساعة العشاء يقول للمدعوين: تعالوا فإن كل شيء قد أُعدّ. فطفق كلهم، واحد فواحد، يستعفون. فقال له الأول: قد اشتريت حقلًا ولا بد لي ان أخرج وأنظره، فأسألك ان تعفيني. وقال الآخر: قد اشتريت خمسة فدادين بقر وانا ماض لأجربها، فأسألك ان تعفيني. وقال الآخر: قد تزوجت امرأة فلذلك لا أستطيع ان أجيء. فأتى العبد وأخبر سيده بذلك. فحينئذ غضب رب البيت وقال لعبده: اخرج سريعًا الى شوارع المدينة وأزقتها، وأدخل المساكين والجدع والعميان والعرج الى ههنا. فقال العبد: يا سيد قد قُضي ما أمرت به، ويبقى ايضا محلّ. فقال السيد للعبد: اخرج الى الطرق والأسبجة واضطررهم الى الدخول حتى يمتلئ بيتي. فإني أقول لكم انه لا يدق عشاى احد من اولئك الرجال المدعوين، لأن المدعوين كثيرين والمختارين قليلون.

Altar Candle Offering:

- ❖ 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 **Nadim, Basma, Janan, Ivette, Jennifer, Brandon and Matthew Howell, Jane and Oscar Moran** for the good health of **Jim Howell** on the occasion of his birthday December 17th.
- ❖ By **Mimi Hanhan and family** in loving memory of **Basem Hanhan, Shukri and Wadia Hanhan, Joseph and Margret Hanhan, and Nakleh and Ellen Aho**. Also for the good health and thankfulness to God for **Mimi Hanhan and Family**.

Congratulations:

- ❖ And best wishes to the newly elected members of the Parish Council: **Jiries Tannous, Ramzi Srouji, and Louise Habeeb LeFevre**. God bless and many years!
- ❖ And best wishes to the newly elected members of the Ladies Auxiliary: President: **Gladys Maalouf**, Vice President: **Salwa Shnouidi**, Treasure: **Mimi Hanhan**, Secretary: **Sue Rantisi**. God bless and many years!
 - ❖ To **Evelyn (Saleh) and Raied Azar** for the occasion of **Sofie's** churching this Sunday.
 - ❖ To **Rana and Omar Azar** for the occasion of **Andrew's** churching this Sunday.

Holy Bread of Oblation:

- ❖ Offered by **Evelyn and Raied Azar** for the good health of the **Azar and Saleh** families.

SAVE THE DATE:

- ❖ **CHRISTMAS PARTY:** Saturday December 16th, 2017. Donation: \$75. Seats are still available. Please call the church office to make your reservations ASAP.
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!
- ❖ **SANTA CLAUSE W/ GIFTS:** Sunday December 24th, 2017. Directly after Sunday service. Please bring your children!
- ❖ **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE:** Sunday December 24th, 2017. Time: 6:00 PM. Matins followed by Divine Liturgy.
- ❖ **METROPOLITAN JOSEPH VISIT:** Sunday February 4th, 2018. His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph will make his Fatherly visit to our church. He will also be ordaining Deacon Niphon Sweis to the rank of Priesthood. More info to follow..

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh: The Genealogy of Christ

Every year before Christmas we read the genealogy of Christ from St. Matthew's Gospels, and for years I asked myself, why? Why have we got to read all these names that mean so little to us, if anything at all? And then I became more perceptive of what they convey to us.

For one thing, they are the people to whose family the Lord Jesus Christ belongs through His humanity. They all are relatives of His, and this should be enough for us to find their names deeply moving: Christ is of their blood, Christ is of their family. Each of them, thinking of the Mother of God can say, 'She is a child of our family', and of Christ, 'He also is a child of our family, although He is our God, our Saviour, the very Divine Presence in our midst'. Furthermore, some names stand out: names of Saints, heroes of the spirit, and names of sinners.

The Saints among them could well teach us what it means to believe; not simply to have an intellectual faith, a world-outlook which coincides, as far as it is able, with God's vision, but a faith which means a complete trust in God, an unlimited faithfulness to Him, the readiness, because of what we know of God, to give our lives for what He stands for, for what He is. In this context think of Abraham whose faith was tested to the utmost. How difficult we find it to give to God something of ours: but Abraham was asked to bring as a blood-offering his own son — and he did not doubt God. And Isaac? He surrendered without resistance, in perfect obedience to his father, and through him — to God.

We can remember the struggle of Jacob with the Angel in the darkness, as we at times struggle for our faith, for our integrity, for our faithfulness, in the darkness of the night, or the darkness of doubt, in the darkness that seizes us at times on all sides.

But we can also learn something from those who in history, in the Bible, appear to us as sinners. They were frail, this frailty conquered them, they had no strength to resist the impulses of their bodies and of their souls, of the complex passions of men. And yet — and yet, they believed in God passionately. One of them was David, and one of his Psalms expresses it so well: "From the deep I cry unto Thee .." From the depths of despair, of shame, from the depths of his fall, from the depths of his alienation from God, from the darkest depths of his soul he still cried to God. He does not hide from Him, he does not go away from Him, it is to Him he comes with this desperate

cry of a desperate man. And others, men and women have this same concreteness as, for instance, Rahab the harlot — and so many more.

Do we, when we are at the darkest point of life, when we are wrapped in all the darkness that is within us — do we, from within this darkness turn to God and say: It is to You, oh Lord, I cry! Yes — I am in darkness, but You are my God. You are the God who created the light, and the darkness, and You are within the darkness as You are within the blinding light; You are in death as You are in life; You are in hell, as You are on the Throne; and from wherever I am I can cry to You.

And then, there is a last thing I would like you to think about. To us these people are names; of some of them we know a little from the Bible, about others we know nothing. But they all were concrete human beings, men and women like us, with all our frailty and all our hope, all the wavering of the will and all the hesitations, all the incipient love that is so often marred, and yet remains light and fire. They are concrete and real, and we can read their names with the feeling, that, Yes — I don't know you, but you are one of those who are of the family of Christ, concrete, real, who through all the vicissitudes of life, inner and outer, belong to God. And we ourselves can try and learn, in the concreteness of our lives, whether we are frail or strong at a given moment still to be God's own.

So let us reflect on this genealogy, let us next time we come to hear it receive it with a spark in our eyes, with a warm feeling in our hearts; but this will be possible only to the extent to which Christ becomes more and more real to us and when it is in Him, through Him that we discover them all — real, living, our own and God's own.

مع اقتراب العيد

مع اقتراب العيد نسأل ماذا نقدّم للإله الطفل المولود من أجلنا، بعد أن اعترف به المجوس بهداياهم إلهًا وملكًا ومُعَدًّا للذبح. ماذا نقول أكثر من ذلك ونحن نرتّل صباح العيد أنّ ما يريده المسيح منّا «أقوالاً لاهوتية مستقيمة الرأي»، أي أن نعترف به فاديًا إلهيًا أزليًا، نورًا من نور، إلهًا حقّ من إله حقّ، مولودًا غير مخلوق.

الكثيرون إذا سألوا، عندهم أنّ المسيح نبيّ أو أنّه رجل كبير ومُصلح اجتماعيّ وما إلى ذلك من تعابير، ولكننا نحن الذين نجتمع في الكنيسة إنّما نأتي لتقبّله ونعترف به إلهًا وسيّدًا، لنقرّ بأنّ الإله وحده يفدي الإنسان، وبأنّ الإنسان يتخبّط في جهالته وفي موته. لكن إذا أردنا أن نخرج من هذه الدوامة ومن اليأس ومن الموت الروحيّ، فليس علينا سوى أن نقرّ بأنّ هناك قوّة تأتي من الله نفسه بالنعمة لتشفيينا.

المسيح بشرٌ بها وكانها وسكبها على الصليب وفجرها بالقيامة. وما الميلاد الذي سنعيده قريبًا سوى بداية المسيرة الطيبة التي سوف يسيرها من مغارة إلى مغارة، من مغارة المولد إلى مغارة الموت. المسيح بأقمة طفلًا، المسيح بعد ذلك في كفن، المسيح تضحية من البدء إلى النهاية ليظهر للناس نورًا يضيء عليهم ونارًا. من تأججت فيه محبة المسيح فهو في المسيح نور العالم.

المسيح كمال الأزمنة كما نقرأ في رسالة الميلاد، ولا ننتظر زمانًا غيره، ولا ننتظر مكانًا نعيش فيه غير مكان المسيح، لا ننتظر فكرًا آخر، لا ننتظر شعورًا آخر. كلّ الأشياء قد تحقّقت وما علينا الآن سوى أن نأخذ، سوى أن نصغي إليه، أن نتأمّل في وجهه، أن نحيا من هذا الوجه وأن نوحى للآخرين به.

لماذا نستطيع أن نعيش بوجه يسوع وأن نمده في الناس حياة، ذلك بأننا به صرنا أبناء الله. لقد نفخ فينا الروح القدس وهو الذي يجعلنا نقول لله: «أبا» وبلغتهم يعني «يا بابا». هذه كلمة الدالة من الابن على أبيه وأمه. نحن دخلنا إذا في عائلة الله. بعد أن كنّا مولودين في عائلة من لحم ودم، انتقلنا من كلّ ما هو أرضيّ وجسديّ ومن كلّ علاقة في اللحم والدم إلى علاقة العبادة. والعبادة بالعربية من العبودية، أي أنّنا جعلنا أنفسنا عبيدًا لله. ليس أنّنا عبيد، ولكن استعبدنا أنفسنا لمن نحبّ بحيث إنّنا ننظر إلى عين الله فقط. وهكذا نولد من جديد، نولد من رؤية الحبّ الذي يرانا الله به، لأنّه لو كان يرانا كما نحن بخطيانا، لو كان يرانا بكلّ أوساخنا، لمُننا ولكنّه يرانا بالرحمة ويتلقّانا على قلبه الأبويّ.

في العيد سنكون مولودين من جديد في عالم لا يعرف الله ولا يعرف جمال الإنجيل. سنكون نورًا عظيمًا في دنيا مظلمة فسيري الناس الأعمال الصالحة ويمجدون أبانا الذي في السموات.

St. Nicholas Annual Christmas Party

SATURDAY
DECEMBER 16th 2017

Doors @ 7:30 PM

Special Guest Singer

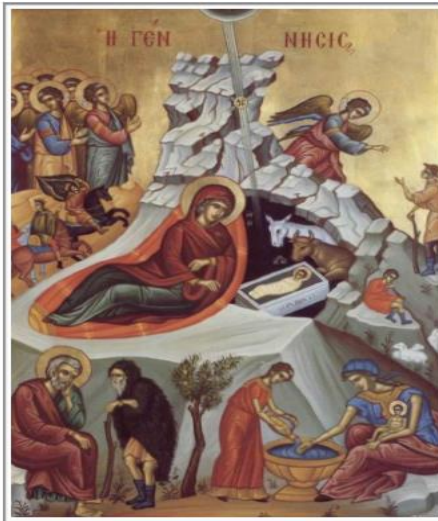
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Complimentary wine on tables

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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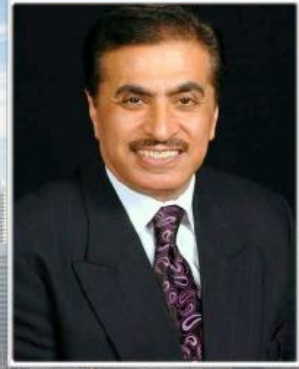


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