

كنيسة مار نقولا الأنطاكية الأرثوذكسية

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

Antiochian Archdiocese of North America

Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

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His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop
of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

Pastor, V. Rev. Fr. George Baalbaki

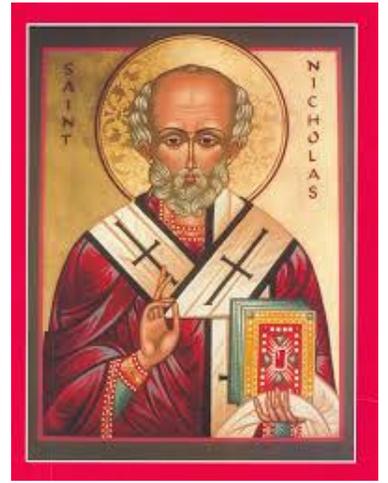
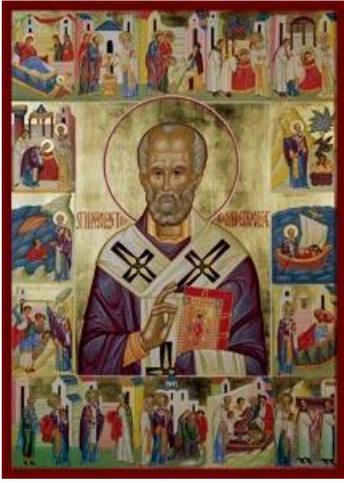
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Pastor Emeritus, V. Rev. Fr. Gregory Ofiesh

Sub-Dn. Michel Khoury

Sub-Dn. Ilyan Baalbaki

Parish Council Chairman: Maher Shami



Sunday, February 4, 2018

Sunday of the Prodigal Son

أحد الابن الشاطر / البارّ إيسيدورس الفرسيّ

ATTENTION: THIS SUNDAY FEBRUARY 4TH:

Orthos will start at 9:30 AM and the Divine Liturgy at 10:30 AM.

Memorial Service: Sunday February 11th:

Three, Nine, and Forty-Day Memorial Service for the Servant of God

Milad Dahood Wahab offered by his family.

May his memory be eternal!

House Blessings are underway:

If you have not received a phone call from the church office yet, please reach out and contact us to set up a time for a home blessing from Father George. You can also reach him at 586 214 4428

THE EPISTLE: St. Paul to the Corinthians. (6:12-20)

Brethren, all things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything. Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food; but God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two shall become one flesh." But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

الرسالة: اكورنثوس ٦: ١٢-٢٠

يا إخوة، كلّ شيء مباح لي ولكن ليس كلّ شيء يوافق. كلّ شيء مباح لي ولكن لا يتسلّط عليّ شيء. إنّ الأطعمة للجوف، والجوف للأطعمة، وسيبيد الله هذا وتلك. أمّا الجسد فليس للزنى بل للربّ والربّ للجسد. والله قد أقام الربّ وسيقيمنا نحن أيضًا بقوّته. أما تعلمون أنّ أجسادكم هي أعضاء المسيح؟ فأخذ أعضاء المسيح وأجعلها أعضاء زانية؟ حاشي. أما تعلمون أنّ من اقترن بزانية يصير معها جسدًا واحدًا لأنّه قد قيل يصيران كلاهما جسدًا واحدًا. أمّا الذي يقترن بالربّ فيكون معه روحًا واحدًا. اهربوا من الزنى، فإنّ كلّ خطيئة يفعلها الإنسان هي في خارج الجسد، أمّا الزاني فإنّه يخطئ إلى جسده. أم أستم تعلمون أنّ أجسادكم هي هيكل الروح القدس الذي فيكم الذي نلتموه من الله، وأنكم لستم لأنفسكم لأنكم قد اشترىتم بثمن؟ فمجدوا الله في أجسادكم وفي أرواحكم التي هي لله.

THE GOSPEL: St. Luke. (15:11-32)

The Lord spoke this parable: “There was a man who had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.’ And he divided his living between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in loose living. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country, and he began to be in want. So he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have fed on the pods that the swine ate; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what this meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.’ But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, but he answered his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command; yet you never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed for him the fatted calf!’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. It was fitting to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.’”

الإنجيل: لوقا ١٥ : ١١-٣٢

قال الرب هذا المثل: إنسان كان له ابنان. فقال أصغرهما لأبيه: يا أبت أعطني النصيب الذي يُخصني من المال. فقسم بينهما معيشته. وبعد أيام غير كثيرة جمع الابن الأصغر كل شيء له وسافر إلى بلد بعيد وبذر ماله هناك عائشاً في الخلاعة. فلم أنفق كل شيء حدثت في ذلك البلد مجاعة شديدة، فأخذ في العوز. فذهب وانضوى إلى واحد من أهل ذلك البلد، فأرسله إلى حقوله يرعى خنازيره. وكان يشتهي أن يملأ بطنه من الخرنوب الذي كانت الخنازير تأكله فلم يُعطه أحد. فرجع إلى نفسه وقال: كم لأبي من أجراء يفضل عنهم الخبز وأنا أهلك جوعاً. أقوم وأمضي إلى أبي وأقول له: يا أبت قد أخطأت إلى السماء وأمامك، ولست مستحقاً بعد أن أدعى لك ابناً فاجعلني كأحد أجرائك. فقام وجاء إلى أبيه، وفيما هو بعد غير بعيد رآه أبوه فتحنن عليه وأسرع وألقى بنفسه على عنقه وقبله. فقال له الابن: يا أبت قد أخطأت إلى السماء وأمامك ولست مستحقاً بعد أن أدعى لك ابناً. فقال الأب لعبيده: هاتوا الحلة الأولى وألبسوه، واجعلوا خاتماً في يده وخذاء في رجليه، وأثوا بالعجل المسمن واذبحوه فأكُل ونفرح، لأن ابني هذا كان ميتاً فعاش وكان ضالاً فوجد. فطفقوا يفرحون. وكان ابنه الأكبر في الحقل. فلما أتى وقرب من البيت سمع أصوات الغناء والرقص. فدعا أحد الغلمان وسأله: ما هذا؟ فقال له: قد قديم أخوك فذبح أبوك العجل المسمن لأنه لقيه سالمًا. فغضب ولم يرد أن يدخل. فخرج أبوه وطفق يتوسل إليه. فأجاب وقال لأبيه: كم لي من السنين أخدمك ولم أتعد لك وصية قط، وأنت لم تُعطني قط جدياً لأفرح مع أصدقائي. ولما جاء ابنك هذا الذي أكل معيشتك مع الزواني ذبحت له العجل المسمن! فقال له: يا ابني أنت معي في كل حين وكل ما هو لي فهو لك. ولكن كان ينبغي أن نفرح ونسر لأن أخاك هذا كان ميتاً فعاش وكان ضالاً فوجد.

Altar Candle Offering:

- ❖ By **Jiries, Jeanette, Shadi and Ramzi Azar** to congratulate **Hana Azar** and **Claudia (Rantisi) Azar** on their wedding.
- ❖ By **Nabil Khoury** for the good health of **Johny Khoury** on his birthday.
- ❖ By St. Nicholas Church for the good health of **Saida Jaghab** on her birthday.
- ❖ By **Saida Jaghab** in loving memory of her brother **Elias Louh**.

SAVE THE DATE:

- ❖ **METROPOLITAN JOSEPH VISIT:** Sunday February 4th, 2018. Orthos will start at 9:30 AM and the Divine Liturgy at 10:30 AM. 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..
- ❖ **ST. NICHOLAS VALENTINE PARTY:** Saturday February 10th at 8:00 PM. Mazza, full dinner, and open bar! With famous superstar MOUHANAD AL MOSHALAH and maestro Radwan Shakshir + ensemble. Donation: \$100
- ❖ **RETREAT:** Saturday March, 10th. A retreat with the great scholar and teacher Father Paul Tarazi. More info to come.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh: PRODIGAL SON

Time and again I have occasion to preach on the Parable of the Prodigal Son, on the story of the Publican and the Pharisee, and every time I notice how easy it is for me - not in fact, not in reality, but in imagination - to identify with the sinner who has found his way to God, with the publican who stood broken-hearted at the gate of the church, unable to walk even into the holy space of God, or with the prodigal son, who in spite of grievous sin, of incredible insensitiveness, of cruelty, still found his way home.

And how rarely I was touched to the quick by the destiny of the pharisee, by the destiny of the elder son - yet, God condemned neither of the two. About the publican He said: And this man went home more forgiven, more blessed than the other one. He did not say that the pharisee went without the love of God accompanying him, that God was forgetting his faithfulness, his sense of dutiful obedience.

And again today we find ourselves face-to-face with the elder son. All his life he had lived side-by-side with his father, all his life he had made his father's interests his concern - he had worked hard, faithfully, forgetful of self, without paying attention to tiredness, without claiming any reward just because he felt it was right to do so. There was something indeed lacking in him - a warmth, a tenderness, a joy in his father. But there was one thing which is so impressive in him - his faithfulness; in spite of the fact that his heart was not aglow, he remained faithful. In spite of the fact that he received no visible reward or no visible acknowledgement he remained faithful, he worked, as he says - he slaved.

How hard we are when we think of him as of one who deserves little of our sympathy; but how few of us are capable of being so faithful, so perfectly and steadily obedient to the call of duty as he was when we are not met with recognition, do not hear a word of encouragement, do not receive the slightest reward because, as the father did with regard to the elder son, those who surround us, those whom we serve, for whom we slave perhaps, those whose interest is at the very centre of our life, take it for granted. Isn't it natural? Isn't he my son? Isn't he my father? Isn't he my brother? Isn't he my spouse? Isn't he my friend? Doesn't all this imply total, unlimited devotion which is its own reward?

How cruel we are so often to the people who surround us and who are put by us in the position of the elder son - never recognised and always expected to do the right thing unflinchingly and perfectly.

Indeed, the prodigal son had warmth, the prodigal son had come back broken-hearted, he was ready to become new, while the other one could only go on, plod on with his stem faithfulness; unless - unless, confronted with the father's compassion, he understood what it meant that his younger brother had been truly dead and had come to life, had been truly lost and was found.

Let us think of ourselves. We, all of us, have someone around us whom we treat with the same coldness with which we think of the elder brother; but also all of us have someone whom we treat as contemptuously and harshly as the elder brother treated his younger brother whom he had written off, who was no brother to him; he had been unfaithful to their father, he was unforgivable. And yet, here was the father, the victim of the son's rejection, light-mindedness, cruelty, who forgave wholeheartedly and tenderly.

Let us find our own place in this tragic and beautiful parable because then we may find our way, either out of being the elder son, though perhaps so much less dutiful, so much less honest, so much less devoted to the interests of our father, our friends, our relatives; or else perhaps, can we find in our heart a creative sympathy for the younger son and learn from him first that there is never a situation out of which a honest repentance, a turn-about cannot bring us and that there is one at least - God - and probably one person, or many, who are ready to receive us, redeem us, restore us and allow us to begin a new life together - father, younger and elder brother.

الابن التائب

مثّل الابن الشاطر يُقربنا من الصوم المبارك بالمشاعر التي ينبغي أن نتحلّى بها إذا أقدمنا على صوم حقيقي. ولد طائش أراد أن يبني حياة لنفسه وأن يستقلّ عن البيت الأبوي. طلب الشاب ميراثه قبل الوقت. منحّه أبوه هذا الميراث. ذهب وبدده في الخطيئة التي وُصفت في إنجيل اليوم. بادئ ذي بدء، يحسّ بأنه يجب أن يتحرر وألا يخضع لشريعة البيت. ثم يذوق المرارة، مرارة الخطيئة. الخطيئة ساحرة للوهلة الأولى إذ يتصوّر الانسان قبل أن يقترفها جمالا. يتصوّر مثلا أنه سيخلص نفسه لو كذب، ثم يكذب أيضا وأيضا فيغرق. تدخل إليه حسرة الخطيئة، مرارتها. الخطيئة إغراء ليس إلا، ولكن عندما تقبض عليها لا تجدها بين يديك. أنت تقبض على لا شيء، ولهذا لا بدّ لك أن تقتنع أن لك أبا إلهيا سماويا يحتضنك. وإذا عدت فأنت ابن البيت، وأنت صاحبه، وأنت محبوب، وأنت مرحّب بك.

يعود الابن، ووالده ينتظره من بعيد. الله دائما ينتظر. إلهنا ليس بإله منتقم. انه يتحسّر على الخاطئ. يفتح صدره وذراعيه ويحتضن كل ابن ضال يعود. ونحن إن عُدنا فإننا نعود إلى الرشد وإلى الصواب وإلى الحقيقة وإلى النور وإلى ما يعزّي النفس. نحن لا نخسر في العودة ولكننا نربح انتباه الأب وغفران الأب وصدافة القديسين ومحبة الأبرار. وكان الفرح عندما عاد الابن الذي شطر مال أبيه. فلنذبح له العجل المسمّن. هاتوا خاتما وضعوه في يده ولنشرب ونفرح. كلّ من فكّر بالعودة إلى الله إنما يجد دائما أفضل مما كان له في الخطيئة. هذه هي خبرة العائدين. العائد يجد الفرح، والخطي لا يفرح ولكنه يتمرر.

ثم كان الابن الذي لم يضلّ. أخذّه الحسد لأن الضالّ استقبل استقبالا طيبا - كثيرا ما يحدث هذا في ما بيننا. لو نظرتم إلى أخلاقنا لرأيتم انها أخلاق قاسية. نحن لسنا شعبا حنوناً. هذا هو الواقع. نحن نعرف الجرم كما تعرفه كل الشعوب، ولكني أتمنى ان نكون مسيحيين حسب الإنجيل، لطفاء بعضنا ببعض، غفورين اذا عاد إنسان.

اذا عاد سارق كبير إلى بيته، فهل تستقبله عائلته؟ وهل تزورونه كما كنتم تزورونه قبلا، أم تقولون انا طاهر ولا أريد أن أتصل بهذا الانسان؟ ان كنا مسيحيين فشريعتنا شريعة الغفران واللطف الدائم بالخطائين. نستقبلهم، ننتبههم ونلقت في كل حين. لا تتعجبوا اذا شدّ بنوكم وبناتكم اذا أنتم شدّدتم. الأب الكاذب أو الأم الكاذبة يُعلّمان بنيهما الكذب، والضارب والشتم والنمّام يُعلّم أولاده كل هذه الأشياء.

نحن لم ندخل بعدُ باب المسيحية، لا نزال على العتبة. ادخلوا فرح ربكم واجعلوا المسيح في قلوبكم. فلنلنّ القلب تجاه الناس أجمعين، ولا نقطع العلاقة بيننا وبين إنسان. ليكن الحوار سائرا بيننا وبين كل الناس. فلنكلمهم، ولنصفح ونقبل العائدين إلى بيوتنا حتى نكون أبناء الأب. جاورجيوس مطران جبل لبنان

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10TH

★
مهند المشلح

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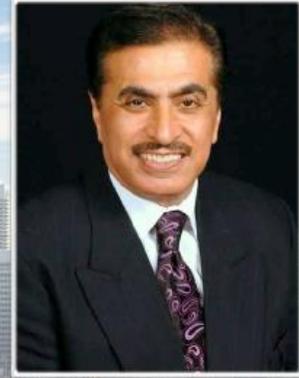
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