

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**

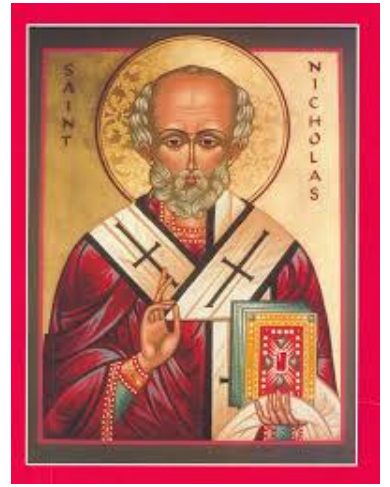
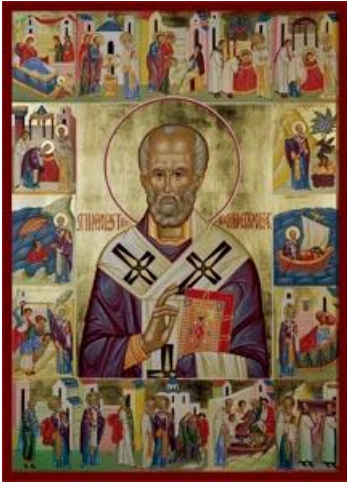
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Pastor Emeritus, V. Rev. Fr. **Gregory Ofiesh**

Sub-Dn. **Michel Khoury**

Sub-Dn. **Ilyan Baalbaki**

Parish Council Chairman: **Maher Shami**



Sunday, August 19, 2018

THE EPISTLE: First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (15:1-11)

Brethren, I would remind you in what terms I preached to you the Gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He rose on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. Then He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the Apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared also to me. For I am the least of the Apostles, unfit to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God, which is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

الرسالة: اكورنثوس ١٥: ١-١١

يا إخوة أعرفكم بالإنجيل الذي بشرتكم به وقبلتموه وأنتم قائمون فيه، وبه أيضاً تخلصون بأيّ كلام بشرتكم به إن كنتم تذكرون إلا إذا كنتم قد آمنتم باطلاً. فإنّي قد سلّمتُ إليكم أولاً ما تسلّمته أنّ المسيح مات من أجل خطايانا على ما في الكتب، وأنّه قُبر وأنّه قام في اليوم الثالث على ما في الكتب، وأنّه تراءى لصفاء ثمّ للاثني عشر، ثمّ تراءى لأكثر من خمس مئة أخ دفعة واحدة أكثرهم باقٍ حتّى الآن وبعضهم قد رقدوا، ثمّ تراءى ليعقوب ثمّ لجميع الرسل، وآخر الكلّ تراءى لي أنا أيضاً كأنّه للسقط، لأنّي أنا أصغرُ الرسل ولستُ أهلاً لأن أسمى رسولاً، لأنّي اضطهدتُ كنيسة الله، لكنّي بنعمة الله أنا ما أنا. ونعمته المعطاة لي لم تكن باطلة، بل تعبّت أكثر من جميعهم، ولكن لا أنا بل نعمة الله التي معي. فسواء كنت أم أولئك، هكذا نكرز وهكذا آمنتم.

الإنجيل: متى ١٩: ١٦-٢٤

في ذلك الزمان دنا إلى يسوع شابّ وجثا له قائلاً: أيّها المعلّم الصالح ماذا أعمل من الصلاح لتكون لي الحياة الأبدية؟ فقال له: لماذا تدعوني صالحاً وما صالح إلا واحد وهو الله؟ ولكن إن كنت تريد أن تدخل الحياة فاحفظ الوصايا. فقال له: أيّة وصايا؟ قال يسوع: لا تقتل، لا تزني، لا تسرق، لا تشهد بالزور، أكرم أباك وأمّك، أحبب قريبك كنفسك. فقال له الشابّ: كلّ هذا قد حفظته منذ صباي، فماذا ينقصني بعد؟ قال له يسوع: إن كنت تريد أن تكون كاملاً فاهب وبع كلّ شيء وأعطه للمساكين فيكون لك كنز في السماء وتعال اتبعني. فلمّا سمع الشابّ هذا الكلام مضى حزيباً لأنّه كان ذا مال كثير. فقال يسوع لتلاميذه: الحقّ أقول لكم إنّه يعسر على الغنيّ دخول ملكوت السموات؛ وأيضاً أقول لكم إنّ مرور الجمل من ثقب الإبرة لأسهل من دخول غنيّ ملكوت السموات. فلمّا سمع تلاميذه بهتوا جداً وقالوا: من يستطيع إذاً أن يخلص؟ فنظر يسوع إليهم وقال لهم: أمّا عند الناس فلا يُستطاع هذا، وأمّا عند الله فكلّ شيء مستطاع.

THE GOSPEL: Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (19:16-26)

At that time, a young man came up to Jesus, kneeling and saying, "Good Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" And He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to Him, "Which?" And Jesus said, "You shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, honor your father and mother, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to Him, "All these I have observed; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." When the disciples heard this they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

HELP NEEDED:

- ❖ **We are looking for a group of energized and motivated people, ages 5 to 31 years old, to join our Dabkeh group!** The group will be performing at our annual festival on September 29th and 30th. Practice will start on Sunday August 26th after church service. If you or anyone you know is interested or if you have any questions please contact Gladys Maalouf at 415 832 0316.

SAVE THE DATE:

- ❖ **TEEN SOYO BIBLE STUDY AND CAR WASH:** Saturday August 18th at 11 AM.
- ❖ **TEEN SOYO BARBECUE:** Sunday August 26th after Sunday service. More info to come.
- ❖ **ST. NICHOLAS ANNUAL FOOD FESTIVAL:** Saturday and Sunday September 29th & 30th.
More info to come.
- ❖ **FOLK AND CULTURE DANCE:** Saturday October 20th we will have a Folk and Culture dance at St. Nicholas. More info to come.

ST NICHOLAS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM:

- ❖ **We will be awarding four students with a \$500 scholarship each.** This scholarship is for incoming high school seniors and incoming college freshman. The deadline for the scholarship is September 20th, 2018 by 5 PM. For more information please visit <https://www.stnicholas-sf.com/scholarship/>

Altar Candle Offering:

- ❖ Offered by **Abdallah and Clemence Shami and Family** in loving memory of **Anthony, Anna, Jasmin, and Jamilah Shami.** May their memory be eternal!
- ❖ Offered by **Basma, Janan, Jim, Ivette, Jennifer, Brandon, and Matthew Howell, Jane and Oscar Moran** for the good health of **Nadim Howell** on the occasion of his 90th birthday on August 17th. God bless and many years!
- ❖ Offered by St. Nicholas Church family for the good health of **Nabil Khoury and David Habeeb.** God bless and many years!
- ❖ Offered by St. Nicholas Church family for the good health of **Father Gregory Ofiesh** on the occasion of his birthday. God bless and many years!

LADIES:

- ❖ It is that time of the year again and we are getting ready for the 2018 festival. Ladies, please we need your help. **This Wednesday August 22nd the ladies will be making the “kibbeh”.** The cooking will be at the church and will start at 10 am. All ladies are encouraged to come and help. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Congratulations:

- ❖ Congratulations and best wishes to the proud parents **Junior Segura and Tania Martha Segura** for the birth of their baby boy **Isaiah Segura**. This Sunday the churching will take place. God bless and many years!

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh: Sermon on Commandments

Christ gave us, or reminded us, of two basic commandments: that we should love God with all our heart, all our mind, all our strength, which means with all the power we have to love, and our neighbour as ourselves.

When we hear the word 'commandments' we always think of receiving orders what we should do, short of which we shall bear a punitive responsibility. But the word which is used has a wider connotation; it means that this is what God bequeathed to us, when having created us He launched us into freedom, into independence, gave us power to choose and gave us power to follow our vocation or to turn away from it. And so this is not an order which we receive from God; it is, as it were, the last words or a Will, in the sense in which a person who dies leaves a Will behind for his heirs to follow.

How much I wish I could love God with mind and heart, with all the power of love there may be in me; and yet I know that I don't even desire to love Him with such perfection, with such totality of giving. How strange, and how sad to be loved as God loves us and to respond so half-heartedly. He loves us to the point of calling us into existence - at a risk, because He gives His love to us and He knows that we may reject it. And we all know what it means to open our heart to a person and to be rejected, "I need you not; you may love me - what does it matter to me! I want to be free, I want to be myself, I care not for your love".

We can measure God's love for us by His gift of Himself in Christ. He became man, He became one of us, He calls us His brothers and sisters, He gives His life for us! If someone gives his, her life for a friend, for a person deeply loved, moreover for a person who is not even aware of this sacrifice, we would be startled, we would stop to think, we would ask ourselves questions: How is it that I have nothing, nothing to give in response to what is given - not only offered but given at such a cost. And yet, I am aware in myself, and I doubt that anyone of you is not aware that he has not truly even the desire to love God with all his mind, all his heart, all the power of love he has!

And then there is this word, this warning of St. John the Divine in one of his Epistles: One who says 'I love God' and does not love his neighbour is a liar; because who can love, speak of loving God Who is invisible, intangible when he cannot even love his neighbour who is concrete, real, whose need cries to him, or whose love is offered so generously at times, so timidly at other times?

And so, the second commandment of Christ, the second word of life He offers us is this, 'If you want to learn how to love God, however incipiently, learn to love your neighbour'; but how? We immediately in our arrogance think of loving our neighbour with great generosity, heroically, sacrificially; what He says to us is, 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself'. What does it mean? It means first of all, on the simplest material level, that however much you possess, however much you can enjoy of life - make sure that at least one person receives from you as much as you are taking from life. That may lead us so far, so far, because we do not do any such thing. If we thought of the way in which we take, and take, and claim and claim again, and thought 'All right! Every claim of mine is a claim of my neighbour; everything I take is to be given in the same measure to my

neighbour', at least one person! - how generous life would be! And if we learn to do this, then we might well learn how to love God.

And today's Gospel gives us an indication of it. What prevents me - and each of us - from loving our neighbour, from loving even the dearest of our neighbours wholeheartedly, generously, is our concentration on our own selves. There is no other way of learning to love anyone than letting go of self.

And this is what Christ says: Turn away from yourself! 'Renounce yourself' means exactly this: it means, instead of living for yourself, looking at nothing else, concentrating on nothing else - turn away, see how vast life is, how deep, how rich! Turn away from yourself and look: look into human faces, look into human circumstances, into human needs, and indeed, into human joys! Look and see! Detach yourself from your own self; then you will be able to see others as they are, to see their need, to see their hunger, their joys, their misery - and you will be able to give. To give? to begin with, a little, and then the more you see, the more you will be able to give and to love as you love yourself, to the same measure; each of us wants fullness of life, fulfillment, the wonder of life - let us give to others.

When we have learned by turning away from ourselves to give to others, we shall discover that our heart has become capable of turning to God with openness, with love, with gratitude, with joy - this is the beginning. This commandment of Christ 'Love your neighbour as yourself' is given to the weakest of us, because each of us, ultimately, loves no-one better than himself. So we have a simple measure! We know what we have to do! We know how, how much, how completely - let us then do it. And then, having freed ourselves from enslavement to our own self, our own desire, our own greed, we will be able suddenly to see how vast our heart is, how much and how many we can love, and how we can begin to love God truly, with all our mind, with all our heart, with all the power of love in our frailty, because it is not strength which is the substance of love - it is the frailty of one who gives himself generously, shyly, joyfully.

إنجيل بولس:

عندما يتكلم بولس عن إنجيله لا يريد به طبعاً الأناجيل الأربعة لأنها لم تكن مكتوبة. يقول لأهل كورنثوس انهم قبلوا هذا الإنجيل وأنهم قائمون فيه وأنهم به يخلصون. هو حياة كاملة وفيه تقويم سلوكنا. ثم يعطي مضمون هذا الإنجيل بعد قوله انه تسلّمه من الرعيل الأول. المضمون هو هذا "أن المسيح مات من أجل خطايانا على ما في الكُتب". الكُتب تعني هنا العهد القديم لأن العهد الجديد لم يكن قد انسكب في كُتب. وجوه البشارة أن المسيح مات وقبر وقام في اليوم الثالث وأنه تراءى لصفاء (اي بطرس) ثم للاثني عشر. لا يذكر متى هذا الظهور. مرقس قال انه ظهر للأحد عشر ولا يذكر بطرس. ربما يوحنا يوافق هذا الكلام في الإصحاح الأخير من إنجيله. أما الخمس مئة الذين ظهر لهم حسب الرسالة فلم يُذكروا في الإنجيل ولم يُذكر يعقوب. عندنا إذاً ظهورات الرب في روايات مختلفة كان الرعيل الأول يتداولها. بعد هذا يقول بولس: "ثم تراءى لي كأنه للسبقت"، والسبقت هو الولد الذي يولد ميتاً. سبب تسميته نفسه هكذا انه اعتبر نفسه أصغر الرسل "لأنني اضطهدتُ كنيسة الله". وهو يشير هنا الى شراكته في قتل استفانوس وذهابه الى دمشق ليُلقي القبض على المؤمنين.

غير أن بولس لم ييأس من حياته السابقة ولو كانت تُحزنه فأكد: "بنعمة الله أنا ما أنا". الحنان الإلهي يمحو كل خطيئة ويجعل التائب إنساناً جديداً. ثم لا يكتفي بالقول بأن النعمة خلّصته ولكن دفعته الى العمل أكثر من الجميع. ولكن بعد أن رأى نفسه عظيم الانتاج اي عظيم البشارة منتقلاً بين الكثير من المدن الهامة حول البحر المتوسط أخذ تعبير التواضع فقال: "فسواء كنتُ أنا أم أولئك، هكذا نكرز وهكذا آمنتم". هو واحد مع الرسل لأن عندهم مضمونا تعليميا واحداً وبنتيجته آمن من آمن. هذا يقودنا الى القول ان التقليد الرسوليّ او التراث الرسوليّ واحد يعبر عنه كل واحد حسب موهبته. فهذا يتكلم هكذا، وذاك هكذا، فتأتي كل الرسائل واحدة في عمقها بفضل من الروح القدس الواحد الذي يُلهم هذا تعابير وذاك تعابير حسب استعداد كل رسول وحسب مستواه العقليّ وخبرته الحياتية.

نحن ليس عندنا تنزيل اي إملاء إلهيّ بكلمات. عندنا إلهام اي تقوية من الروح القدس، والرسول يتكلم بشرياً بكلماته وإلهياً بإلهامه. من هذا أن متى له كلماته ويوحنا له كلماته، وأنت لك الحق أن تحبّ أشياء كثيرة عند متى، وأشياء أخرى عند يوحنا، وأن تتذوق هذا الإنجيليّ حسب مواهبك، وذاك الإنجيليّ حسب مواهبك. من هنا نفهم أن المسيحيين متعدّدو الأذواق اللاهوتية،

فهذا المؤمن عميق في اللاهوت، وذاك يفضّل التعليم الأخلاقي. وهذه مواهب تتكامل فتأتي الكنيسة متنوّعة وواحدة بأن، ويتمجّد الرب بتعدّد المواهب ووحدتها في الروح القدس. **المطران جاورجيوس**

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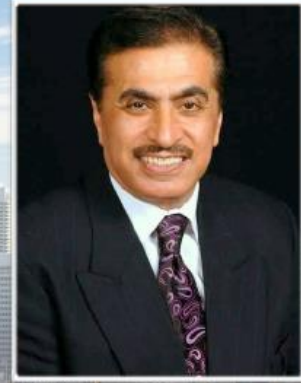


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