

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**

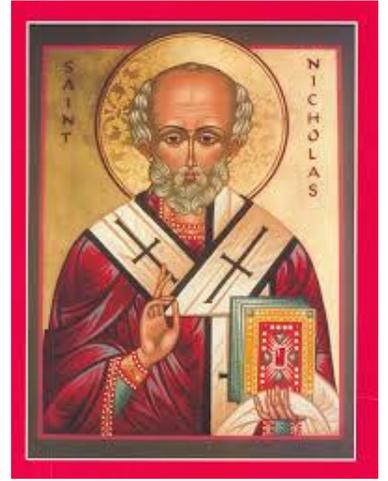
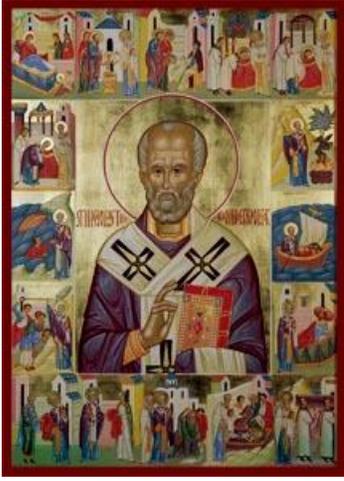
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Pastor Emeritus, V. Rev. Fr. **Gregory Ofiesh**

Sub-Dn. **Michel Khoury**

Sub-Dn. **Ilyan Baalbaki**

Parish Council Chairman: **Maher Shami**



**Sunday, September 02, 2018**

**THE EPISTLE: Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (1:21-2:4)**

Brethren, it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has commissioned us; He has put his seal upon us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith; we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith. For I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

الرسالة: ٢ كورنثوس ١: ٢١-٢٤، ٢: ١-٤

يا إخوة، إنَّ الذي يُنَبِّئنا معكم في المسيح وقد مَسَحنا هو الله الذي ختمنا أيضًا وأعطى عُربون الروح في قلوبنا. وإنِّي استشهد الله على نفسي أنَّي لإشفاقي عليكم لم أت أيضًا إلى كورنثوس. لا لأننا نسود على إيمانكم بل نحن أعوان سروركم لأنكم ثابتون على الإيمان. وقد جزمْتُ بهذا في نفسي ألا أتكم أيضًا في غمِّ لأنِّي إن كنتُ أغمُّكم فمن الذي يسرُّني غير من أسبب له الغمِّ. وإنَّما كتبت إليكم هذا بعينه لئلا ينالني عند قدمي غمٌّ ممَّن كان ينبغي أن أفرح بهم. وإنِّي لو اتق بجميعةكم أن فرحي هو فرح جميعكم. فإنِّي من شدَّة كآبة وكربِ قلب كتبت إليكم بدموع كثيرة لا لتغتموا بل لتعرفوا ما عندي من المحبة بالأكثر لكم.

**THE GOSPEL: Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (22:2-14)**

The Lord spoke this parable: “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.’ But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.’ And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

الإنجيل: متى ٢٢: ٢-١٤

قال الربّ هذا المثل: يشبه ملكوت السماوات إنساناً ملكاً صنع عرساً لابنه، فأرسل عبيده ليدعوا المدعوين إلى العرس فلم يريدوا أن يأتوا. فأرسل أيضاً عبيداً آخرين وقال: قولوا للمدعوين هوذا غدائي قد أعددت. ثيرانني ومسمّاتي قد ذبحت وكلّ شيء مهياً فاهلموا إلى العرس. ولكنهم تهاونوا فذهب بعضهم إلى حقلة وبعضهم إلى تجارته والباقون قبضوا على عبيده وشتموهم وقتلوه. فلما سمع الملك غضب وأرسل جنوده فأهلك أولئك القتلّة وأحرق مدينتهم. حينئذ قال لعبيده: أما العرس فمعدّ وأما المدعوون فلم يكونوا مستحقين. فاذهبوا إلى مفارق الطرق وكلّ من وجدتموه فادعوه إلى العرس. فخرج أولئك العبيد إلى الطرق فجمعوا كلّ من وجدوا من أشرار وصالحين فحفل العرس بالمتكئين. فلما دخل الملك لينظر المتكئين رأى هناك إنساناً لم يكن لابساً لباس العرس. فقال له: يا صاح، كيف دخلت إلى ههنا وليس عليك لباس العرس. فصمت. حينئذ قال الملك للخدّام: أوثقوا يديه ورجليه وخذوه واطرحوه في الظلمة البرّانية. هناك يكون البكاء وصريف الأسنان لأنّ المدعوين كثيرين والمختارين قليلين.

### **CHURCH FOOD FESTIVALS:**

- ❖ Church of the Redeemer (Los Altos Hills, Fr. Samer Yousif): **September 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>**
- ❖ Holy Virgin Mary (West Sacramento, Fr. Paul Baba): **September 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>**
- ❖ St. John the Evangelist (Orinda, Fr. Nicholas Borzghol): **September 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>**
- ❖ **St. Nicholas Church (San Francisco, Fr. George Baalbaki): September 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>.**

### **SAVE THE DATE:**

- ❖ **ST. NICHOLAS ANNUAL FOOD FESTIVAL: Saturday and Sunday September 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup>.** Food, Dancing, Raffle to win a 2018 Nissan. Raffle Donation: \$50. A lot of items are needed for our festival. We would appreciate your generosity to donate and help us with purchases. Thank you for your continuous support. **We need your help:** Preparations for the Annual Church Food Festival have begun. We need all the help we can get to make it as successful as possible.
- ❖ **ST. NICHOLAS TARAB NIGHT: Saturday October 20<sup>th</sup> featuring NABIL EL SAFE with the maestro RADWAN SHAKHSHIR.** For further information please contact Gladys Maalouf @ 415-832-0316.

### **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 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018 by 5 PM. For more information please visit <https://www.stnicholas-sf.com/scholarship/>

### **Father Bernard Poggi Farewell Dinner:**

On Thursday September 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM we will have an evening Divine Liturgy service for the Great Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross followed by a farewell dinner honoring our dear friend **Father Bernard Poggi** of St. Thomas More. Fr. Bernard was an active member of our ECOBA gathering and he is going to be a teacher and scholar at Bet-Jala seminary in Palestine. I would like to invite you to be our guests on this night. The dinner will start around 7:15 PM at St. Nicholas Hall. Donation: \$25. Please reserve by calling our church office.

### **HOLY BREAD OF OBLATION:**

Offered by **Nadia Shatara** for the good health of her and the **Shatara family**. God bless and many years!

## **Metropolitan Anthony: The Eucharist**

When the Lord instituted at the Last Supper that mystery of our faith which we call the Holy Liturgy or the Eucharist, He gathered round Himself His Disciples, both those who were later to be faithful even unto death, and also the one who was already prepared to betray his Master. And He confronted him together with the others, with the extraordinary love of God, because to be admitted to a man's table means that he, our host, consider us to be his equals, his companions in the old sense of this word, those who are entitled to break the bread with him, to share with him the substance of life. Equals in the love of God, equals of God through His love to us, - this is one of the aspects of this extraordinary event which we call the Last Supper.

But we have given it also another name, we call it the Eucharist, from a Greek word which means simultaneously "gift" and "thanksgiving". Indeed we can see that communion to the Body and Blood of Christ is the greatest gift which the Lord can grant us: companionship and equality, becoming the co-workers of God. And through the incredible, unfathomable action and power of the Spirit, because this bread is no longer bread only and this wine is no longer only wine, but have truly become the Body and the Blood of the Giver, we become incipiently and increasingly partakers of the divine nature, Gods by adoption, Gods by participation, so that together with the One Who is the Incarnate Son of God, we became the total revelation of man as well as the total revelation of God's presence, the total Christ of whom St Ignatius of Antioche spoke. And beyond this, higher, deeper even than this, in this community of nature and of life with the Only-Begotten Son of God in the words of St Irenaeus of Lyon, we become truly with regard to God Himself the only begotten son.

This is the gift, but where is the thanksgiving? What can we bring to the Lord? Bread and wine, they belong to Him; our own lives? Are we not His? He has called us out of naught, He has brought us into being, He has endowed us with all that we are and all that we possess. What then can we give which is really ours? St Maxim the Confessor says that God can do all things, save one: He cannot compel the smallest of His creatures to love Him, because love is supreme freedom. This is the only gift which we can bring to God: the gift of a trusting heart.

But why is this mysterious Supper of the Eucharist called the thanksgiving more than any other service, more than any action of ours? What can be given to God? This is a question which the Psalmist was asking himself centuries before Christ appeared and revealed the divine love, and his answer was so unexpected and so true. He says "What reward shall I give to the Lord for all His benefits?" and he replies "I shall take the Cup of salvation, I will give thanks unto the Lord, I will sing praise in the courts of the Temple of the Lord". The supreme act of thanksgiving is not to give back, because one who receives and pays back, repays the gift and in some sort of way, destroys the gift; both indeed become equal, both have given, both have been at the giving end of the chain, but this reciprocal giving has destroyed both joy up to a point. If we wish, if we are capable of receiving, of receiving whole-heartedly, then we are expressing truly our total trust, our assurance that the love of the giver is perfect and it is in receiving whole-heartedly in all simplicity that we bring joy to the one who has given from all his heart.

This is true even in human relationship; we wish to repay a gift only to make ourselves free from gratitude and from a certain enslavement in which we are put when we receive from one who does not love us enough to give whole-heartedly and whom we do not love enough to

receive whole-heartedly. And this is why the Eucharist is the supreme thanksgiving of the Church and the supreme thanksgiving of our earth: people who trust the love of God open-heartedly, without any thought of repaying the gift, only rejoicing in the love it expresses, receive from God not only what He can grant but also what He is, participation to His life, to His nature, to His eternity, to His love divine. Only if we are capable of receiving with perfect gratitude and perfect joy can our participation in the Eucharist be true, only then does the Eucharist become for us also the supreme act of gratitude. But gratitude is difficult because it requires both a loving heart capable of rejoicing when it receives and a perfect trust and faith in the love of the one who gives, trust that this gift is not meant as an humiliation or as an act of enslavement. And this is why we must grow from day to day into the ability to love and to be loved, into the ability to be grateful and to rejoice, and only then does become the Last Supper of the Lord the perfect gift of God and the perfect response of the earth.

### اللسان

تجارب اللسان من أفسى التجارب لأنّ الكلمة تنقل كلّ الهوى وعترات اللسان تفصح عن عترات النفس أبلغ إفصاح. لذلك من عصم لسانه عن الزلّة كان إنساناً كاملاً. قال القديس الرسول يعقوب في رسالته الجامعة: «اللسان عضو صغير ويفتخر متعظماً... اللسان نار، عالم الإثم... جعل في أعضائنا اللسان الذي يدنس الجسم كلّهُ ويضرم دائرة الكون وتضرمه جهنم» (٣: ٥-٦).

أدنى مراتب السلوك الإحجام عن الأذى. «إنّ كلّ كلمة بطّالة يتكلّم بها الناس سوف يعطون عنها حساباً يوم الدين لأنّك بكلامك تُبرّر وبكلامك تُدان» (متّى ١٢: ٣٦-٣٧). وقد تكون الكلمة خدشاً لطهارة السمع أو جرحاً للسمعة أو نيمية أو افتراء. والكلمة هذه سمّ لصاحبها أولاً، وعند الغير تلوّث أو إثارة حقد أو تقلص كيان. الإنسان مسؤول عن كلّ كلمة يبيّنها فإنّه لا يغالي أبداً بين اللفظة والعقل فنطابقه ما أمكنها وكأنّها لا تزيد عليه شيئاً. والمرء في أصغريه (القلب واللسان) على قدر ما يكون القلب منسكباً على الشفتين. ضرورة التلاحم بين الباطن والظاهر تنشئ سهرًا على الكلمة المقولة سهرًا على الكلمة المقولة هو بحقيقته صون رائع للحياة الروحية. إلى جانب الكذب الكلام الذي لا نفع له. ونحن نقوله للترفيه عن نفس فرغت من كلّ شيء وليس فيها ما تستطيه لتحفظه في تأمل صامت، ولذلك كانت الثرثرة رغبة منّا في أن نوجد في أذان الناس لأننا غير موجودين في أعيننا. فنلقي الألفاظ لنلّا نواجه واقعاً داخلياً خالياً. وبعد أن انكبّ العالم على القراءة انكبّاً سطحياً ثمّ ركّز على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعيّ، أعطينا وسيلة معرفة ولم نفتح له سبيل اكتشاف النفس ومحبة الحقيقة التي تخلّص، فصار علينا أن نغذي فضوله، والفضول ثرثرة داخلية بدون تعبير. فحشرنا في الصحف والكتب وكلّ وسائل الإعلام والاتصال كلمات باطلة. ولذا كان الصمت في العالم الحديث ضرورة لتطهيره. فكان علينا ليس فقط أن نلتزم بالإيجاز فضيلة، بل أن نتعهد أوقاتاً نتمرّس فيها على الصمت لنلّا تتناثر النفس في العدم. الزهّد والمتصوفة أثروا السكوت طريقاً إلى السكينة، تلك السكينة الكبرى التي يرتقي الإنسان فيها فوق الشهوة والانفعال. في نفوس هؤلاء المظمنّين إلى ربّهم يتكلّم الله وحده. وإذا نطقوا أرسلوا في العالم أفكار الله. المطران جاورجيوس

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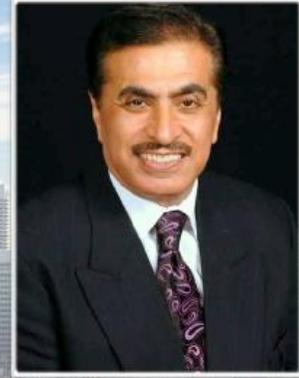
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