

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**

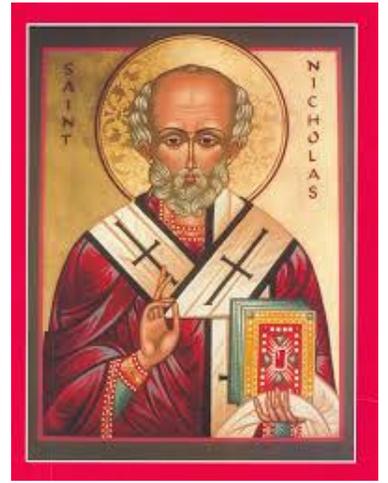
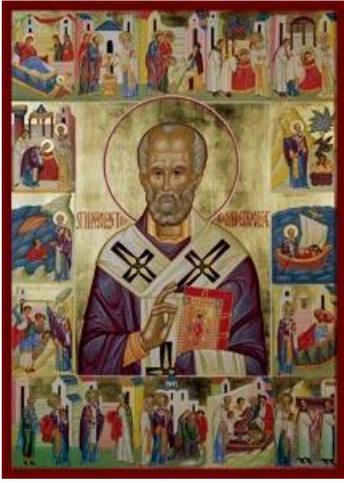
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Parish Council Chairman: **Maher Shami**



**Sunday, September 23, 2018**

**Conception of the Forerunner and Baptist John**

الحَبَلُ بالنَّبِيِّ الكَرِيمِ يُوْحَنَّا المَعْمَدَانِ

**Sunday September 23<sup>rd</sup>:**

Please make sure to join us on this Sunday September 23<sup>rd</sup> as we welcome **Father Nicholas Dahdal** of St. George of Cicero (Chicago). He will be serving the Divine Liturgy with us.

**THE EPISTLE: St. Paul to the Galatians. (4:22-27)**

Brethren, Abraham had two sons, one by a slave and one by a free woman. But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, the son of the free woman through promise. Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery; she is Hagar. Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia; she corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice, O barren one who does not bear; break forth and shout, you who are not in travail; for the children of the desolate one are many more than the children of her that is married."

الرسالة: غلاطية ٤: ٢٢-٢٧ يا إخوة إنّه كان لإبراهيم ابنان أحدهما من الجارية والآخر من الحرّة. غير أنّ الذي من الجارية وُلد بحسب الجسد، أمّا الذي من الحرّة فبالوعد. وذلك إنّما هو رمز لأنّ هاتين هما العهدهان أحدهما من طور سيناء يلد للعبوديّة وهو هاجر. فإنّ هاجر بل طور سيناء جبل في ديار العرب ويناسب أورشليم الحاليّة، لأنّ هذه حاصلّة في العبوديّة مع أولادها. أمّا أورشليم العليا فهي حرّة وهي أمنا كلّنا. لأنّه كُتِب: افرحي أيّتها العاقر التي لم تلد، اهتفي واصرخي أيّتها التي لم تتمخض، لأنّ أولاد المهجورة أكثر من أولاد ذات الرجل.

الإنجيل: لوقا ٥: ١-١١ في ذلك الزمان فيما يسوع واقف عند بحيرة جنيسارت، رأى سفينتين واقفتين عند شاطئ البحيرة وقد اندحر منهما الصيادون يغسلون الشباك. فدخل إحدى السفينتين وكانت لسمعان، وسأله ان يتباعد قليلاً عن البرّ، وجلس يعلم الجموع من السفينة. ولما فرغ من الكلام قال لسمعان: تَقَدّمْ إلى العمق وألقوا شباككم للصيد. فأجاب سمعان وقال له: يا معلّم إنّنا قد تعبنا الليل كلّه ولم نُصب شيئاً، ولكن بكلمتك ألقى الشبكة. فلما فعلوا ذلك احتازوا من السمك شيئاً كثيراً حتّى تحرّقت شبكتهم. فأشاروا إلى شركانهم في السفينة الأخرى أن يأتوا ويعاونوهم. فأتوا وملأوا السفينتين حتّى كادتتا تغرقان. فلما رأى ذلك سمعان بطرس خرّ عند ركبتي يسوع قائلاً: اخرج عني يا ربّ فإنّي رجل خاطئ، لأنّ الانذهال اعتراه هو وكلّ من معه لصيد السمك الذي أصابوه، وكذلك يعقوب ويوحنا ابنا زبدي اللذان كانا رفيقين لسمعان. فقال يسوع لسمعان: لا تخف فإنّك من الآن تكون صانداً للناس. فلما بلغوا بالسفينتين إلى البرّ تركوا كلّ شيء وتبعوه.

### **THE GOSPEL: St. Luke. (5:1-11)**

At that time, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And He saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, Jesus asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when Jesus had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at Thy word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish, which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

### **CHURCH FOOD FESTIVALS:**

- ❖ 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.

### **Metropolitan Anthony: ON FOLLOWING CHRIST**

Addressing the man who wanted to attain perfection, the Saviour said, "Follow me." These words were simple: at that time they meant leave all your cares, your family, your work, your calling, your habits and go with Christ along the roads of the Holy Land witnessing His miracles, listening to His words, becoming one of His disciples to your very depths; and awaiting that which was yet in the future and was known only to the Son of God who had come into the world in order to give His life for this world.

But when these words are addressed to us, what do they mean? They cannot mean the physical following of Christ along the highways and byways; but Christ calls us to follow Him into eternal life. When the disciples of John the Baptist asked Christ where He lived, He answered, "Come and see." In the earthly sense He was living in a hut not far from Jordan, but in another sense, in the sense that captivated the disciples once and for all and is mentioned in the Old and the New Testaments, He lived in the unapproachable light, in the depths of the Godhead, in that light which illumines every man who comes into the world.

And so the Lord calls us to come after Him into the depths of the knowledge of God, the depths of eternity and life. He Himself said that eternal life consisted in knowing God and His Son Jesus Christ; that eternal life was uniting ourselves with God so inseparably, to grow together with Him so deeply, to become one, that we should be able to say, "My life is Christ; His teaching, His ways, His thoughts and feelings, His will, and indeed His destiny - are mine; I take them on myself as the Cross, as the Resurrection, as death and life, and as the way.

This is what it means to follow Christ now; it means to listen attentively to His divine word which outlines, which points the way of life, and on this path to be Christ's disciples to the limits of our strength, with all our might. To achieve this now, as in the old days, we must free ourselves of everything that would otherwise enslave us, bind us, keep us out of eternal life. We must each one of us consider this for ourselves, because each one of us has something, maybe unexpressed in words, maybe unconscious, that he prefers to God.

To find out we must look deeply into ourselves and put this question: if the Saviour were to appear before us at this moment and say, "Leave that, it is the only barrier between you and eternal life," what would we answer? Would we leave it or would we say, "I can't, Lord, I'm sorry." This is what we must ponder over, because we are all called to follow Christ into the glory of eternal life; that is our vocation, to come to life in the spirit before we are, in due time, raised in the body, and to enter into the mystery of the God-Head, to know God, as St. Paul says, as we are known by Him, to worship Him with our whole life and spirit, with all truth.

**لا تخف:** نرى يسوع في إنجيل اليوم يدخل إلى حياة تلاميذه كما هي، حياة صيد سمك، ثم يأمر بطرس ان يعود للصيد، ويلقي الرسل الشباك ويصطادون سمكا كثيرا حتى كادت الشباك أن تتمزق والسفينتان أن تغرقا. الانسان في مقاومة لله لأنه متمسك بمنطقه، بما كان يألفه من أمور الحياة. اما كلمة الله فخالقة فينا حياة جديدة نتجاوز بها كل منطق وكل مأمول. "تعَبْنَا الليل كله ولم نُصَب شيئا". أي ان أحوالنا بقيت على ما كانت عليه من سقوط وانحدار وتأخر. تعَبْنَا في الليل عندما تخرج منا النعمة، عندما نغض النظر عن نعمة الله ولا نتقبلها، عندما نُسكت صوت الضمير. هذا ما يرمز اليه الليل عندما يغيب عنه الضوء. ومع ذلك يقول الرسول: "بكلمتك أُلقي الشبكة". أي ان كلمتك أفضل من الليل لأنها نهار. ومع أن خبرتنا تقول اننا سوف لا نلقى شيئا، سنتجاوز هذه الخبرة لأنك أنت قلت، لأنك تريدنا في السلام والاطمئنان. لأنك أنت تكلمت يستطيع العالم أن يتحول. لهذا أيها السيد نتكلم عليك ونمشي فلعَلَّ الليل يصبح نورا، ولعل المتعبين جميعا يسيرون اليك. هذه هي البداية أن نسلك على الطريق التي يريد.

ثم تأتي صرخة بطرس عند قدمي يسوع وقد اعتراه الذهول: "ابعد عني يا رب لأنني رجل خاطئ". أنا رجل خاطئ ومع هذا أنا مُعجب بالمسيح، ذاهل، منجذب العقل والشعور اليه لأنه أعطاني ما أعطى. اعترف بطرس بمعاصيه فجذبه الرب بقوته فذهل بما صنعه فيه من تحويل. "اني رجل خاطئ". ومع هذا أنا سائر وراء الرب، يسحرني فيه انه دائما أعظم مني وأعظم من قلبي الذي يُخطئ وأعظم من عقلي الذي يتردد. ذُهل بطرس والذين كانوا معه، ولأنه ذُهل جعله الرب صيدا للناس، أي انه، بعد الجلجلة وبعد قيامة المعلم، سوف يذهب إلى العالم ويخطف الناس للمسيح.

الله هو الذي يحولنا من أناس خائفين إلى أناس ذوي جرأة. لا جرأة لنا الا بالاستناد إلى الإيمان وبالانطلاق منه. الانسان الذي يخاف ضعيف الإيمان. ولذلك يقول الرسول: "لا تخف فأنك من الآن تكون صائدا للناس". اذا كنت جريئا تُجابه الناس لأن الناس معرقلون بخطاياهم كما أن السمكة معرقلة بالشبكة لا تستطيع الخروج منها من نفسها.

ويتابع الإنجيل: "تركوا كل شيء وتبعوه". ان صائد الأسماك يترك بيته وأهله، يترك البرّ إلى البحر غير المستقرّ، واحتمال العاصفة، يعرض نفسه للخطر لكي يأتي بسمك. وكذلك الانسان الذي اختاره الله ليصبح صائدا للناس، معرّض للعواصف. جميع الذين يعيشون بالتقوى بالمسيح يسوع، بعد ان يتركوا كل شيء، يُعرّضون لعواصف الحياة اليومية.

ماذا نترك في النهاية لكي نتبع المعلم ونفقد الناس اليه؟ نترك هذا الحصن الأخير الذي لا يُترك بسهولة. نترك الأنا، نترك الأهواء كلها لكي نلتصق بصليب المسيح. اذا كان الفادي الذي نشخص اليه في كل حين، واليه فقط، اذا كان هو الذي يهتَمنا دون سواه، عند ذلك نكون قادرين على إصلاح الناس، على أن ننتشلهم من خطاياهم ومن الضلال. عند ذلك نكون شقّاقين للرب، ناقلين نوره للعالمين، متحولين من التعب في الليل، في ظلمات النفس، إلى ضوئه العظيم، ويكون الله وحده سيّدا في الكون.

المطران جاورجيوس

## **Metropolitan Anthony: On Confession**

I have been asked to give a couple of sermons on Confession. This is my second sermon on the subject. When we come to Confession we come to meet a friend face to face. We are not coming to be judged and condemned. We do not come in terror of what will happen. We come to the One who, being God, beyond suffering, beyond death, has chosen, for the love of us, to become Man, to take upon Himself all our human destiny and to give His life for us. His life, His death are to us evidence that we are so loved of God that we can come up to Him whether we are good or bad with hope that He will receive us with open arms; that if anyone is to cry over our unworthiness and our sins it is Him, for compassion, for pity, for love - with a readiness, as He said in a vision to one of the saints, that if there was only one sinner in the world He would again become Man and again die for him, because He cannot endure the thought of anyone perishing.

This is the God, the Christ, to Whom we come when we come to Confession - to the One who is open to us with all His life and death; One who waits for us to come to be healed, to be consoled, to be supported - not to be condemned, not to be judged.

And then, what is the role of the priest? In the prayer which is read before Confession we are told, 'I am but a witness'. What does it mean? A witness to what? To the fact that you have come? That would not be enough. But if you think of what witnesses are: there are accidental, occasional witnesses. You are present in the street when an accident takes place. You are asked: what did happen? You are neither in favor of the ones or the others. You are just telling what your eyes have seen. It's for others to judge and to know. There are other forms of witness. At times a friend of ours is brought to judgment. And we come to defend him, to testify for him, to save him. That's another kind of witness.

And then there is the witness which the Holy Gospel mentions speaking of St. John the Baptist: as the friend of the Bridegroom, the one who comes to the wedding, invited both by the bride and the bridegroom, because he is the nearest, the closest, to them both. And he is there to share their joy, the miracle of their encounter, the miracle of a blessing that will come upon them and out of two make one, unite them so that they are inseparable forever in the mystery of eternal love, of divine love shared with them.

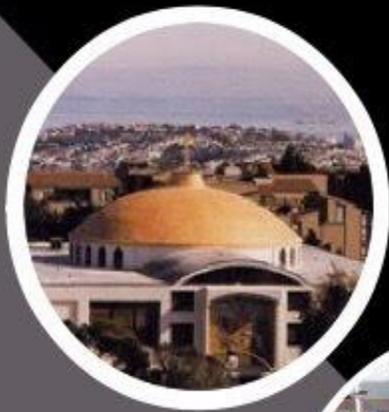
This is the position of the priest. He is called by Christ to be before the person, the sinner, a witness to the fact that he, the sinner, is loved, that Christ is there, that He has no other desire or intention but the salvation and the joy eternal of the one who has come today. And the priest comes also in the name of the sinner saying: Christ, my God, our Lord, this person has sinned, yes, but look, he trusts in You, he believes in You, we all love him with the same love as You possess. We are prepared to give our lives for him to be reconciled and find peace and joy and be at one with You, our Lord, our God, our Saviour, our Lover.

When you come to Confession next time, think of these things. Think of the way you come: not with fear of punishment or of rejection but with open heart to pour out everything evil or doubtful there is in this heart. And Christ will receive you. Your confession may be to Him a new crucifixion but He accepts it. He doesn't reject it. He does not reject you. Come, open your heart, speak in all truth to Him, knowing that you are loved beyond judgment, to the point of sacrifice and death: His death, and your life - life in time and life eternal.

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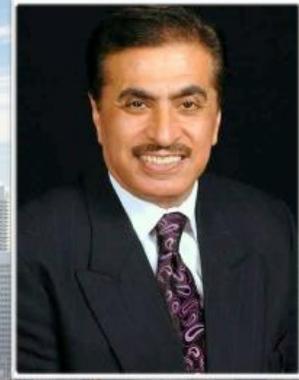
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