

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

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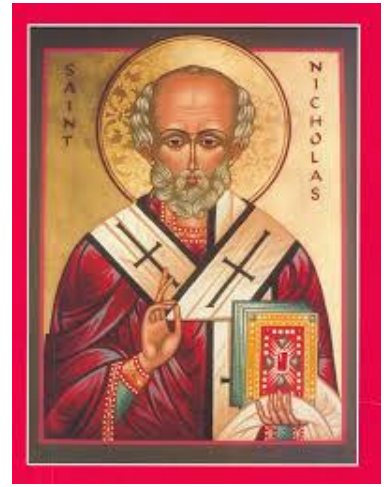
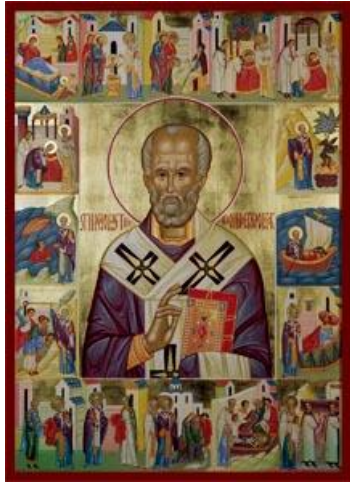
Pastor Emeritus, V. Rev. Fr. **Gregory Ofiesh**

Sub-Dn. **Michel Khoury**

Sub-Dn. **Ilyan Baalbaki**

Parish Council Chairman: **Ramzi Srouji**

Parish Council Vice Chairman: **Salim Qaru**



**Sunday, July 12, 2020**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Based on the ongoing situation regarding COVID-19 (Coronavirus), all Church social events and gatherings are postponed until further notice. **Church is not open to the public. Please do not attend.** All liturgical services will be served with ONLY CLERGY. Please watch the livestream of the service on our social media.

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrDWPPWreLZpVhzVGZkjDIA>

We pray for the good health, well-being, and safety of everyone in these hard times. God bless!

### **THE EPISTLE: Romans. (10:1-10)**

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that it may be saved. I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law, that everyone who has faith may be justified. Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law shall live by it. But the righteousness based on faith says: Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into Heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) or "Who will descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.

الرسالة: رومية ١٠: ١-١٠

يا إخوة إنَّ بُغية قلبي وابتهالي إلى الله هما لأجل إسرائيل لخلاصه، فإنِّي أشهد لهم أنَّ فيهم غيرة لله إلاَّ أنَّها ليست عن معرفة، لأنَّهم إذ كانوا يجهلون برَّ الله ويطلبون أن يقيموا برَّ أنفسهم لم يخضعوا لبرِّ الله. إنَّما غاية الناموس هي المسيح للبرِّ لكلِّ من يؤمن. فإنَّ موسى يصف البرِّ الذي من الناموس بأنَّ الإنسان الذي يعمل هذه الأشياء سيحيا فيها. أمَّا البرِّ الذي من الإيمان فهكذا يقول فيه: لا تقل في قلبك من يصعد إلى السماء؟ أي ليُنزل المسيح؛ أو من يهبط إلى الهاوية؟ أي ليُصعد المسيح من بين الأموات. لكن ماذا يقول؟ إنَّ الكلمة قريبة منك، في فمك وفي قلبك، أي كلمة الإيمان التي نبشِّر نحن بها. لأنَّك إن اعترفت بفمك بالربِّ يسوع وآمنت بقلبك بأنَّ الله قد أقامه من بين الأموات، فإنَّك تخلص لأنَّه بالقلب يؤمن للبرِّ وبالفم يُعترف للخلاص.

## **THE GOSPEL: Matthew. (8:28-9:1)**

At that time, when Jesus came to the country of the Gergesenes, two demoniacs met Him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. And behold, they cried out, "What have we to do to Thee, O Son of God? Art Thou come here to torment us before the time?" Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged Him, "If Thou castest us out, send us away into the herd of swine." And He said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they begged Him to leave their neighborhood. And getting into a boat He crossed over and came to His own city.

الإنجيل: متى ٨ : ٢٨ - ٩ : ١

في ذلك الزمان لما أتى يسوع إلى كورة الجرجسيين استقبله مجنونان خارجان من القبور، شرسان جدًا، حتى إنّه لم يكن أحد يقدر أن يجتاز من تلك الطريق. فصاحا قائلين: ما لنا ولك يا يسوع ابن الله؟ أجننت إلى ههنا قبل الزمان لتُعذبنا؟ وكان بعيدًا عنهم قطع خنازير كثيرة ترعى. فأخذ الشياطين يطلبون إليه قائلين: إن كنت تُخرجنا فأدُنْ لنا أن نذهب إلى قطع الخنازير. فقال لهم: اذهبوا. فخرجوا وذهبوا إلى قطع الخنازير. فإذا بالقطع كلّه قد وثب عن الجرف إلى البحر ومات في المياه. أمّا الرعاة فهربوا ومضوا إلى المدينة، وأخبروا بكلّ شيء وبأمر المجنونين. فخرجت المدينة كلّها للقاء يسوع. ولما رأوه طلبوا إليه أن يتحوّل عن تخومهم. فدخل السفينة واجتاز وأتى إلى مدينته.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS:**

❖ **ST. NICHOLAS ANNUAL FOOD FESTIVAL: October 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>. More info to come.**

### **CHARITY:**

Our church has sent money back home to help those in our community who need assistance, especially during these challenging times. If you would like to make a donation to this noble cause, please mail your check to the church and write "Charity Donation" in the memo. Many thanks to our charity committee. Thank you and God bless!

### **THANK YOU:**

We would like to show our sincere gratitude to this year's Camp THY staff. Thank you very much for making this year's online camp a very successful one. God bless and many years!

### **ALTAR CANDLE OFFERING:**

- ❖ Offered by Michael, Yousef, Tariq, and Rami Rantisi for the good health of **Nadia Rantisi** on the occasion of her birthday. Many Years !!
- ❖ Offered by Nadim, Basma, Janan, Jim, Ivette, Jennifer, Brandon, & Matthew Howell, & Oscar Moran, for the good health of **Jane Moran** on the special occasion of her birthday on July 12<sup>th</sup>. God bless and many years!

### **Metropolitan Anthony: Healing of two possessed in Gergesene**

In one of the Gospels, before the passage which was read today about the healing of two possessed in the country of Gergesene, there is a short story about Christ crossing the sea of Galilee together with His disciples. In the course of their journey a storm broke out. And as the Gospel puts it, Christ was peacefully asleep with His head on a pillow. And the apostles cried out, not in a prayer, but in indignation: Do You not care that we are perishing? Christ awoke, and He stood up, and looked at them sadly, and said: 'O men of little faith! Then He turned to the storm and commanded it to be still.

Isn't that what happens so often to us? We feel that we are in danger, we are in need, we turn to

God, we claim His attention, we want things to be the way we choose - and there is silence; God seems to be asleep; and we suspect that He does not care, that He is like Christ, sleeping peacefully with His head on a cushion, while we, His creatures, cry, wail in our agony.

Isn't there anything that we can learn? Yes, we are not on the sea, we are not in a boat, there is not even a physical storm; there are storms around us and within us; and we turn to God because we want Him to solve our problem. And Christ had said long before that if you have faith as much as a grain of mustard - you could move mountains... Is it that we have no faith, not even as a grain of mustard? Is it that we have no faith, and therefore have neither courage nor understanding - no courage to face the storm, and no understanding to see in it the ways of God? Yes, the Lord said to Isaiah: My ways are not your ways, as My thoughts are not your thoughts! My ways are so much higher than yours, as My thoughts are higher than yours... Haven't we learned anything from the Gospel, from our life within this strange community which we call the Church, in which God and man stand together? Do we not realize that in the power of Christ Who sustains us we can face the storm, we don't need a miracle, we need only our faith? This is the first image.

And then comes another image in today's reading. Christ comes to the land of the possessed; there, He is neither idle, nor passive, nor absent: He acts, He heals the possessed men; and what happens, what is the response of the people? They are in terror because they have seen the power of God manifested in such a way that fills them with fear, not with awe. And they ask Christ to be gone: Leave our realm, go away!.. The fact that Christ has acted, that He has healed, that He has saved the men, matters nothing; what matters, is that they have to pay the cost for it: their pigs.

Isn't it again something which we happen to do? We ask God to come into our lives; and suddenly we discover that God is not coming in the way in which we want Him to be! He is not coming into our lives simply to order things according to our view; He transforms the dead orderliness of our life into a chaos, but a chaos which is pregnant with possibilities - but we don't want this! We want what we had: an orderly life, without problems, without anything great happening, also without anything tragic happening. Last week we read the story of the centurion to whom Christ said, I will come to your house and heal the servant. And he said, No, Lord, there is no need for you to come, I trust you, it's enough for you to say a word - and everything will be right. Christ need not come; and in our lives, how often has He said the word: the whole Gospel is Christ's word addressed to us; the whole Gospel is made of words that can give us life eternal. You remember the passage when Christ has spoken incomprehensible words to those who surrounded Him, and many of His disciples left; and He turned to the twelve, and said, 'Are you also going to leave Me? - and Peter said, No - where should we go? You have the words of life eternal'. Christ has never spoken of life eternal, never given descriptions of it; the words of life eternal were words that awoke eternal life within those who heard, who had ears, good will to hear. 'Say a word - and my servant will be healed, Christ is speaking: why isn't that we, His servants, are not healed? Because we don't want to listen. Earlier, on another occasion, someone else had said to Christ, Leave me - I am unworthy. Having seen the miraculous catching of fish on the sea of Galilee, Peter said, 'Leave my boat, I am not worthy, I am a sinner. Have we ever spoken such words? Have we ever felt that we are unworthy of Christ's coming, dwelling under our roof, being our familiar, being with us, doing for us all we need? Indeed being for us like a servant who will do things because we need them done. Is that the way we respond to the Gospel? Let us think of Peter, his awe because he had seen the act of God; and let us think of these people who have also seen the act of God. Both said, Go, oh Lord!' - but how differently! Who are we: Peter, or the Gadarines?

And again: when we are in agony, in need - have we got faith to say, 'In the power of Christ that sustains me I can face my own agony, or the storm, or do we turn to God and say, 'You - save me!

I am not ready to endure this agony.

Let us reflect on it all; because every word of God is salvation for us if we listen to it, if we respond to it. Let us listen - beyond what I have said, read the passages, think of them, find in them what I have not seen. But then, let us all, according to our understanding, and beyond our strengths, in the spirit and strength of Christ live according to His words.

### يسوع يطرد الشر نهائياً

كان يسوع في كفرناحوم عند الشاطئ الغربي من بحيرة طبريا حيث كان يسكن، ومن هناك ينطلق ليبشر في الجليل. وكأنه أراد أن يجابه الشيطان مجابهة، كبيرة فذهب إلى الشاطئ الآخر فإذا بالمجنونين يظهران أمامه. والشيطان كان يعذب الناس ولا يزال، وفي حالات مرضية كثيرة كان يُعزى المرض للشيطان.

هنا يتعذب المريضان لأنهما كانا يواجهان السيد، والروح الشرير لا يريد أن يستسلم، فيقولان له: «ما لنا ولك يا يسوع ابن الله؟ أجبنا إلى هنا قبل الزمان لتُعذبنا؟» وكأنهما يقولان لم يحن الحين حتى يأتي ملكك، فنحن نريد أن نملك في العالم. غير أن الرب يسوع جاء ليبيد مملكة الشيطان، لينهي الشر، ليمحو الخطيئة. فطرد الأرواح الشريرة من المريضة حتى طلبت أن تُطرد إلى الخنازير، فغرقت في البحيرة. والخنازير حيوانات ممنوع أكلها في شريعة اليهود وكانت رعايتها مُحظرة.

يسوع يطرد الشر نهائياً، ورمز ذلك أن الحيوانات تموت في البحيرة، ثم يعود إلى كفرناحوم ويبشر. كل منا تعشش الخطيئة فيه. ليس أننا أكلنا الشيطان في قلوبنا ولكننا أحياناً نتواطأ معه، وكثيراً ما تحلو لنا شياطيننا. فعشرة الرب ليست طيبة على القلب لأن الرب متطلب وملحاح، يريدنا لنفسه وليس لشياطيننا، ولا يريد أن نشرك به أحداً. ولهذا كثيراً ما نقول للسيد: لماذا جئت لتُعذبنا؟ اذهب إلى سمانك واترك لنا قلوبنا نسلمها للشياطين.

من سلم نفسه للكذب فهو يسلمها للشيطان، ومن سلم نفسه لأي نوع من أنواع الدجل والاعتداء والبغض، فإنما يسلمها للشيطان. كل ما نفعه من سيئات إنما هو تحالف مع الشيطان. ولهذا عندما يبرر الإنسان الأعمال القبيحة فإنما الشيطان يتكلم بلسانه.

من آمن بقلبه واعترف بلسانه بأن يسوع يمكنه أن يقيمنا نحن من بين الأموات، وأن ينفذنا من خطايانا اليوم أمام كل تجربة فهو إنسان مُخلص. أما الذي يدعي المسيحية ويصلي في كنائسها ولكنه يبرر القبائح ويزكي الآثام ويتغنى بالخطايا، فهذا إنسان لا يخلص وليس بمسيحي.

ولهذا إذا أردنا أن نخلص وأن نكون جديين ولسنا على هذه المسيحية الكلامية الجوفاء، فعندئذ نسجد ونقول للسيد «أنت هو المخلص». «لا تتكلموا على الرؤساء ولا على بني البشر فإن ليس عندهم خلاص» (مزمور ٤٦: ١: ٣). هذا ما جاء في الكتاب المقدس. البشر لا يخلصون البشر، السلاح لا يخلص البشر، السياسة لا تخلص البشر. المسيح يخلص البشر.

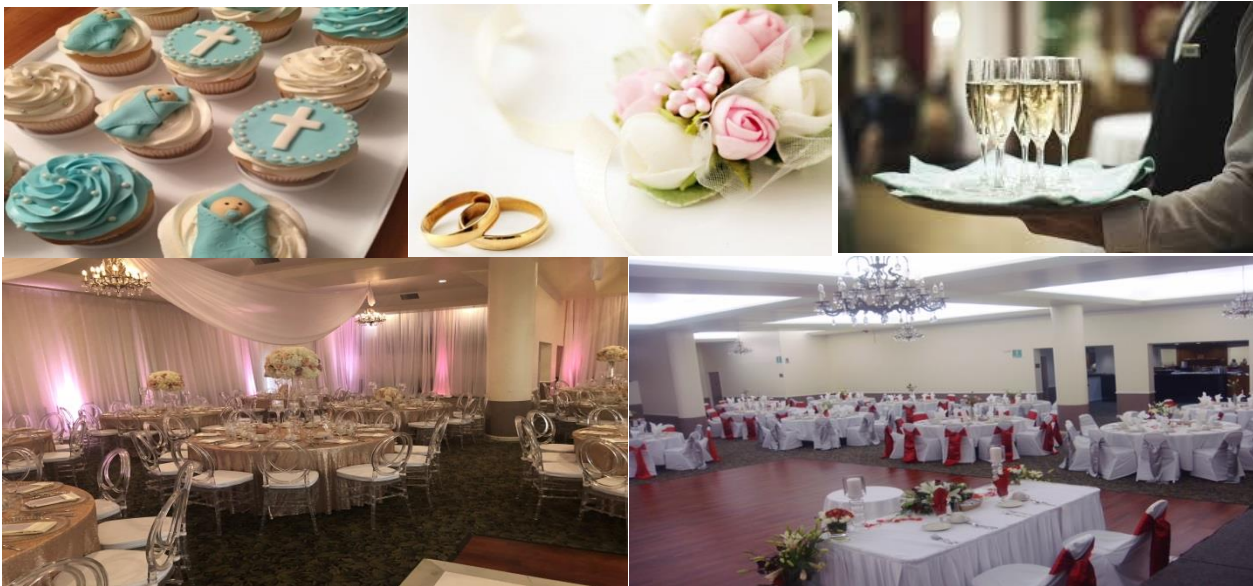
أسلموا أنفسكم للمسيح عندئذ تذهب عنكم شياطينكم وتلقى في البحيرات وفي الخنازير النجسة، وعندئذ أنتم مطهرون. اثبتوا في الحق في طهارة الإنجيل، ولا تنسخ عقولكم بأقوال الناس، ولكن فلتنقض أقوالكم من كلمات السيد ولتأت مشاعركم من مشاعر السيد. فكل من يشعر بخلاف يسوع فهو نجس. الإنسان مسؤول عن شعوره، عما يجري في عقله وفي قلبه. كل من لطخ نفسه بأي شعور مظلم تجاه أي مخلوق ولأي سبب فهو إنسان مدنس. أخرجوا شياطينكم من القلوب وأخرجوها من العقول، ليسكن المسيح وحده عقولكم وقلوبكم وتكونوا أبناء العلي.

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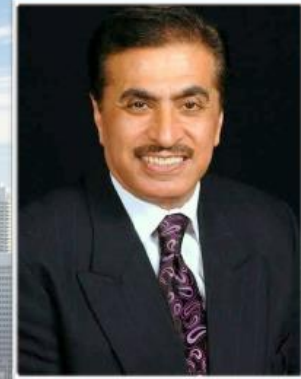


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