

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**

(586) 214-4428 [revbaalbaki@yahoo.com](mailto:revbaalbaki@yahoo.com)

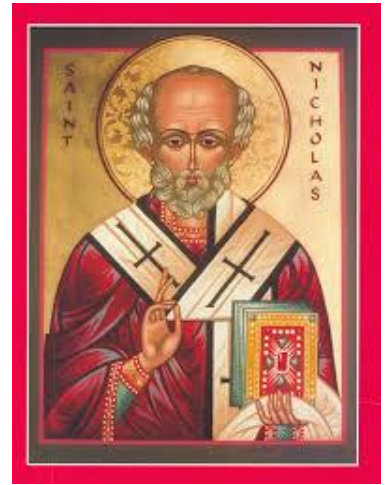
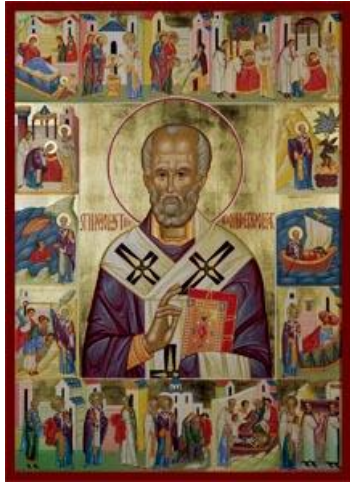
Pastor Emeritus, V. Rev. Fr. **Gregory Ofiesh**

Sub-Dn. **Michel Khoury**

Sub-Dn. **Ilyan Baalbaki**

Parish Council Chairman: **Ramzi Srouji**

Parish Council Vice Chairman: **Salim Qaru**



**Sunday, September 13, 2020**

### **Forefeast of and Sunday before Elevation of the Cross Consecration of Resurrection Church in Jerusalem**

#### **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 watch the livestream of the service on our social media.

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

The goal for San Francisco is to reopen at the end of September for indoor church services. Here is the mayor's announcement: <https://sfmayor.org/article/mayor-london-breed-announces-san-franciscos-plan-further-reopening-businesses-and-activities>

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

**COMMUNION:** As you know, it is very important in our faith to regularly take Communion. Many of us have not had the blessing of taking it since the pandemic started. For those who'd like to take it, Communion will be available this Sunday and every Sunday, **AFTER CHURCH BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.** Please call Father George at 586 214 4428 to set up your appointment. God bless!

#### **THE EPISTLE: Galatians. (6:11-18)**

Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the Law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all, who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

### الرسالة: غلاطية 6: 11-18

يا إخوة، انظروا ما أعظم الكتابات التي كتبها اليكم بيدي. ان كل الذين يريدون ان يُرضُوا بحسب الجسد يُلزمونكم ان تَخْتَنُوا، وانما ذلك لئلا يُضطهدوا من أجل صليب المسيح، لأن الذين يختنون هم أنفسهم لا يحفظون الناموس بل إنما يريدون أن تختنوا ليفتخروا بأجسادكم. اما أنا فحاشي لي أن أفتخر الا بصليب ربنا يسوع المسيح الذي به صُلب العالم لي وأنا صُلبت للعالم؛ لأنه في المسيح يسوع ليس الختان بشيء ولا القلف بل الخليقة الجديدة. وكل الذين يسلكون بحسب هذا القانون فعليهم سلام ورحمة، وعلى اسرائيل الله. فلا يجلب عليّ أحد أتعابا في ما بعد فإنني حامل في جسدي سِمَاتِ الرب يسوع. نعمة ربنا يسوع المسيح مع روحم أيها الإخوة، آمين.

### THE GOSPEL: St. John. (3:13-17)

The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

### الانجيل: يوحنا 3: 13-17

قال الرب: لم يصعد احد إلى السماء إلا الذي نزل من السماء، ابن البشر الذي هو في السماء. وكما رفع موسى الحية في البرية، هكذا ينبغي ان يُرفع ابن البشر لكي لا يهلك كل من يؤمن به بل تكون له الحياة الأبدية، لأنه هكذا أَحَبَّ الله العالم حتى بذل ابنه الوحيد لكي لا يهلك كل من يؤمن به بل تكون له الحياة الأبدية. فإنه لم يرسل الله ابنه الوحيد إلى العالم ليدين العالم بل ليخلص به العالم.

### To the Faithful of St. Nicholas Church:

These past few months have been unprecedented in the history of our parish. While we have not been physically present in church, we have, thanks to Clemence Batarse and her team, still been able to participate in the Divine Liturgy on Sunday through Live Streaming. As of this time, we do not know when we can return to "normal." We want to thank those who have continued to be current on their pledge. We still have our financial responsibilities and your support enables us to meet our obligations. The most convenient way to send your donation is through Online Giving. Go to our website: [stnicholas-sf.com](http://stnicholas-sf.com) and you will see "Click here to donate online" or mail a check to the church office. May our Lord continue to watch over you and your loved ones, protect us and keep us safe from every adversary.

**FOOD CATERING FOR PICKUP:** We would like to thank all the ladies who donated and worked on the food during the month of August: Khoureh Eman Baalbaki, Inam Shami, Mona Mansour, Sue Rantisi, Suha Rantisi, Janet Baqleh, Leila Paolina, Odette Najjar, Elham Azar, Rana Abuyaghi, Noura Abuyaghi, Juliette Najjar, and Randa Shatara. Thank you for your hard work! **Today is the last day to place your orders for pickup on Sunday September 13<sup>th</sup>.** Naheel Hanhan will be offering Tahal (Stuffed Spleen) for \$5/piece. Janet Azar will be offering Hilbeh (Dessert) for \$2/piece or \$7/quarter of a sheet. Thank you and God bless.

Tahal (Stuffed spleen):



Hilbeh (Dessert):



### **Holy Bread of Oblation:**

Offered by **Senait Abraha** and family in loving memory of **Rozina Gebremedhin** for her 3 year memorial. May her memory be eternal!

### **Altar Candle Offering:**

Offered by **Nadim, Basma, Janan, Jim, Ivette, Jennifer, Brandon, and Matthew Howell, and Jane Moran** for the continued good health of **Oscar Moran** on the special occasion of his birthday. God bless and many more years!

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS:**

- ❖ **Teen SOYO Movie Night Under the Stars: Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup> @ 6PM.** This is a joint event with Church Of The Redeemer in Los Altos. Bring your own blankets and snacks. Sign up sheet and flyer will be shared.
- ❖ **Teen SOYO Elections: Sunday September 13<sup>th</sup> @ 2PM.** Live via zoom and/or Instagram.

### **Metropolitan Anthony: Exaltation of the Cross**

We have been keeping these days the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. There is a passage in the Gospel in which the Lord says to us, No one has greater love than he who gives his life for his neighbour. And these words resolve the antinomy between the horror of the Cross and the glory of it, between death and the Resurrection. There is nothing more glorious, more awe-inspiring and wonderful than to love and to be loved. And to be loved by God with all the life, with all the death of the Only-Begotten Son, and to love one another at the cost of all our life and, if necessary, of our death is both tragedy and mainly victory. In the Canon of the Liturgy we say, Holy, most Holy art Thou and Thine Only-Begotten Son and Thine Holy Spirit! Holy and most Holy art Thou because Thou hast so loved Thy world that Thou hast given Thine Only-Begotten Son that those who will believe in Him do not perish but have life eternal, Who hath come and hath fulfilled all that was appointed for our sakes, and in the night when He was betrayed - no! - when He gave Himself up, He took bread, and brake it and gave it to His disciples ...

This is the divine love. At times one can give one's own life more easily than offer unto death the person whom one loves beyond all - and this is what God, our Father has done. But it does not make less the sacrifice of Him who is sent unto death for the salvation of one person or of the whole world. And so when we think of the Cross we must think of this strangely inter-twined mystery of tragedy and victory. The Cross, an instrument of infamous death, of punitive death to which criminals were doomed, because Christ's death was that of an innocent, and because this death was a gift of self in an act of love - the Cross becomes victory.

This is why Saint Paul could say, It is no longer I, it is Christ Who lives in me ... Divine love filled him to the brim and therefore there was no room for any other thought or feeling, any other approach to anyone apart from love, a love that gave itself unreservedly, love sacrificial, love crucified, but love exulting in the joy of life.

And when we are told in today's Gospel, Turn away from yourself, take up your Cross, Follow Me (St Mark VIII: 34) - we are not called to something dark and frightening; we are told by God: Open yourself to love! Do not remain a prisoner of your own self-centeredness. Do not be, in the words of Theophane the Recluse, like a shaving of wood which is rolled around its own emptiness. Open yourself up! Look - there is so much to love, there are so many to love! There is such an infinity of ways in which love can be experienced, and fulfilled and accomplished... Open yourself and love - because this is the way of the Cross! Not the way which the two criminals trod together with Christ to be punished for their crimes; but the wonderful way in which giving oneself unreservedly, turning away from self, existing only for the other, loving with all one's being so that

one exists only for the sake of the other - this is the Cross and the glory of the Cross.

So, when we venerate the Cross, when we think of Christ's crucifixion, when we hear the call of Christ to deny ourselves - and these words simply mean: turn away from yourself! take up your cross! - we are called to open ourselves to the flood of Love Divine, that is both death to ourselves and openness to God, and to each, and to all.

In the beginning of the Gospel of Saint John we are told, «And the Word was with God». The Greek version says «Godwards». The Word, the Son had no other love, no other thought, no other movement but towards the Beloved One, giving Himself to Him Who gave Himself perfectly to Him. Let us learn the glory of crucified Love, of this Love sacrificial which is in the words of the Old Testament, stronger than death, stronger than hell, stronger than all things because it is Divine Life conquering us and poured through us onto all those who need to be loved in order to come to Life, to believe in Love and themselves to become children of Love, children of Light, inherit the Life eternal.

### حماقة الله

في رسالة اليوم يقول الرسول بولس الى أهل غلاطية: «حاشا لي أن أفخر إلا بصليب ربنا يسوع المسيح الذي به صُلب العالم لي» (٦: ١٤).

أيريدنا الرسول أن نفتخر بخشبة؟ طبعاً لا، ليست الخشبة هي المقصودة. ما يوصينا به بولس الرسول هو أن نفتخر بمحبة سُكبت على الخشبة، بمحبة ليست كمحبة الناس للناس. محبة الناس للناس هي في أحسن حال متبادلة. نحَبُّ على أن يبادلنا الآخرون المحبة. لكن هناك محبة وحيدة مجنونة هي محبة الله للناس.

الناس لا يستحقّون الشيء الكثير. الانسان أكثر انحطاطاً مما نرى. كل انسان أسخف مما نحتسب. مع هذا أحبّ الله الانسان فبذل نفسه.

لم يبذل الله مالا كما يفعل الناس، لم يبذل مجاملات كلها كلام بكلام. محبة الله للانسان كلفته دمه، كلفته ان يتصل بهؤلاء البشر الذين هم أنا وأنتم. جاء لا ليدين بل ليخلص.

الناس يحبّون ويدنّون ويحاكمون ويحاسبون ويفتنّون ويعاتبون. يريدون دائماً مبادلة، التصاقاً بعاطفة الآخرين مما يجعلهم دائماً متربصين بعضهم البعض. لا يتنازلون عن شيء لأن العالم في نظرهم كله لهم. محبة الله تختلف كلياً عن هذه المحبة. يقول الله لنا بالصليب: العالم ليس لي، العالم للعالم. الانسان لنفسه. أنا جئت لأخدمه وأخلصه كما هو على فقره وسخافته وانحطاطه.

بهذا يريدنا الرسول أن نفتخر، وبانعكاس سرّ المحبة المصلوبة علينا وفي حياتنا اليومية. وبعبارة أخرى يريدنا ان نشكر من أجل كل ضعف وكل مرض وكل تقهقر ونحن على يقين أن الله يفتقدنا بذلك ويرفق بنا.

يريدنا الرسول ان نفتخر بالضبط بما لا يفخر به العقل البشريّ والشهوة البشرية. يريدنا أن نفتخر بالصليب وكأننا مجانين كما قال في الرسالة الأولى الى أهل كورنثوس: «ان كلمة الصليب عند الهالكين جهالة. اما عندنا نحن المخلصين فهي قوة الله» (١: ١٨). هذا الجنون المسيحي هو الحكمة الحقيقية والذكاء الحقيقي «جهالة» (أي حماقة) الله أحكم من الناس» (١ كورنثوس ١: ٢٥).

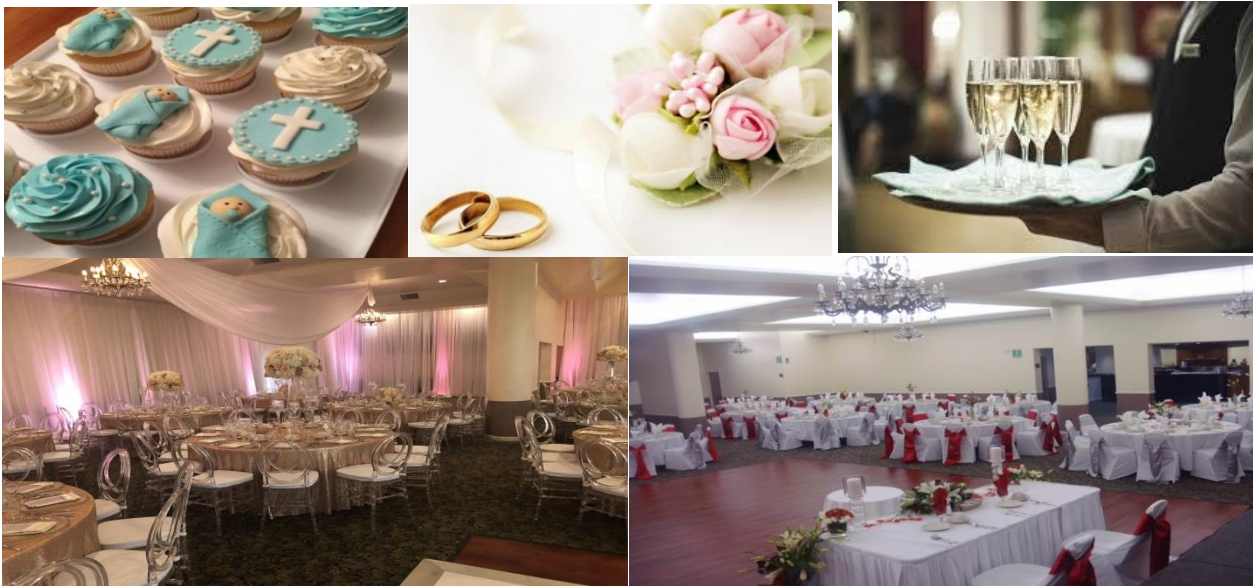
ينبغي للانسان أن يتنازل عن الكثير من انتفاخه وعن كل ما يتباهى به. عليه أن يتّضع، أن يصبح بسيطاً، لا يتربّص ولا يعاتب ولا يفتن ولا يحاكم ولا يدين. عليه ان يصنع كل هذا ليكون الصليب الذي نعيّد له في هذا الأسبوع مرفوعاً، ليس فقط على تلة اورشليم، بل في قلوبنا.

المطران جاورجيوس



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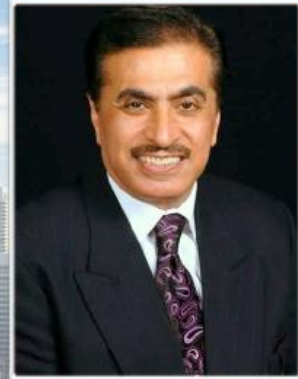
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