

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: **Ramzi Srouji**

Parish Council Vice Chairman: **Salim Qaru**

Sunday, November 22, 2020

After-feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

CHURCH IS OPEN!

If you plan to attend, please wear a mask and use hand sanitizer when you walk inside.

Please don't attend if you're feeling sick or have any symptoms of sickness.

You can still watch the livestream of the services on our social media.

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

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

NATIVITY FAST: November 15th - December 24th We would like to wish you a happy Advent season!

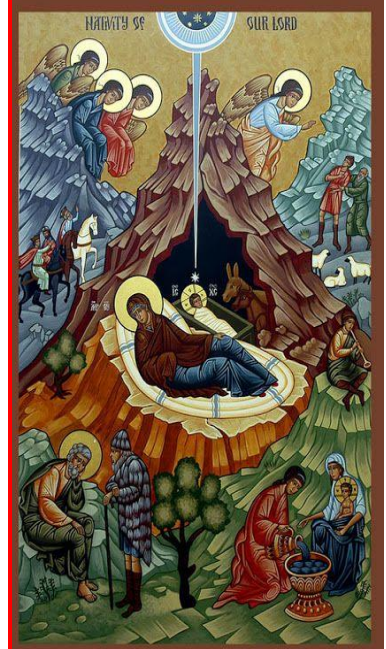
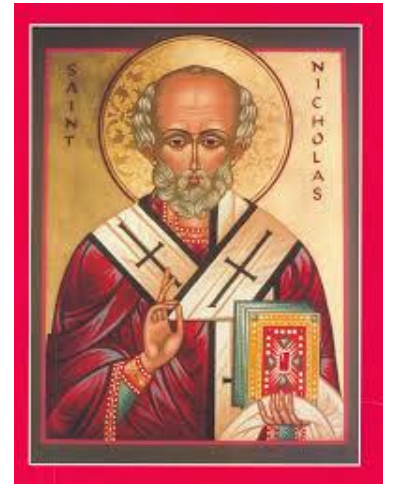
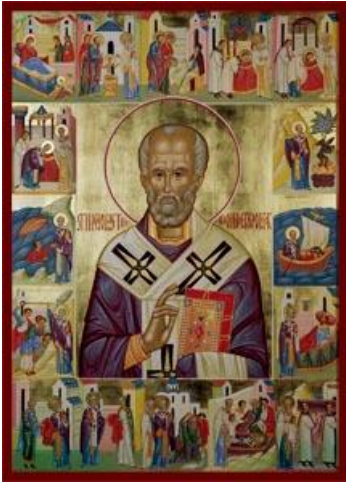
Nativity Fast (Advent) is the period preceding the Christmas season in which we abstain from meat and dairy products. Eating fish is allowed except Wednesdays and Fridays, and we can eat all the regular meals like breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. The purpose of this fast is seeking the spirituality and the preparation for the feast of the advent of our Lord on December 25th.

بدء صوم الميلاد: أبناء الرعية الأحباء: كل عام وأنتم بألف خير.

في كنيستنا الأرثوذكسية المقدسة، يبدأ صوم الميلاد هذا العام الجمعة الواقع فيه ١٥ تشرين الثاني، وسيستمر حتى ٢٤ كانون الأول.

وهذا الصوم لا يوجد فيه "صوم انقطاعي". أي لا يوجد صوم للساعة ١٢:٠٠، فهو صوم خفيف. أي نستطيع أن نتناول وجبة افطار صباحا، من مواد صيامية.

وفي ٢٥ كانون الأول سنحتفل بعيد "الميلاد" الذي فيه أتى ابن الله إلى العالم ليدلنا على طريق الخلاص، الطريق إلى الله الأب. صوم مبارك



THE EPISTLE: St. Paul to the Ephesians. (2:14-22)

Brethren, Christ is our peace, Who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the Cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And He came and preached peace to you, who were far off, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in Whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in Whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولُسَ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى أَفَسُسَ. يَا إِخْوَةُ، إِنَّ الْمَسِيحَ هُوَ سَلَامُنَا، هُوَ جَعَلَ الْإِثْنَيْنِ وَاحِدًا، وَنَقَضَ فِي جَسَدِهِ حَائِطَ السِّيَاحِ الْحَاجِزِ، أَيَّ الْعَدَاوَةِ وَأَبْطَلَ نَامُوسَ الْوَصَايَا فِي فَرَايِضِهِ، لِيَخْلُقَ الْإِثْنَيْنِ فِي نَفْسِهِ إِنْسَانًا وَاحِدًا جَدِيدًا بِإِجْرَائِهِ السَّلَامِ وَيُصَالِحَ كِلَيْهِمَا فِي جَسَدٍ وَاحِدٍ مَعَ اللَّهِ فِي الصَّلِيبِ، بِقَتْلِهِ الْعَدَاوَةَ فِي نَفْسِهِ فَجَاءَ وَبَشَّرَكُمْ بِالسَّلَامِ، الْبَعِيدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالْقَرِيبِينَ لِأَنَّ بِهِ لَنَا كَلِينًا التَّوَصَّلَ إِلَى الْآبِ فِي رُوحٍ وَاحِدٍ فَلَسْتُمْ غُرَبَاءَ بَعْدَ وَتُرُلَاءَ، بَلْ مُوَاطِنِي الْقَدِيسِينَ وَأَهْلَ بَيْتِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ بُنِينُمْ عَلَى أُسَاسِ الرُّسُلِ، وَالْأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَحَجَرِ الزَّائِيَةِ هُوَ يَسُوعُ الْمَسِيحُ نَفْسُهُ* الَّذِي بِهِ يُنْسَقُ الْبُنْيَانُ كُلُّهُ، فَيَنْمُو هَيْكَلًا مُقَدَّسًا فِي الرَّبِّ وَفِيهِ أَنْتُمْ أَيْضًا تُبْنَوْنَ مَعًا مَسْكَنًا لِلَّهِ فِي الرُّوحِ.

THE GOSPEL: St. Luke. (12:16-21)

The Lord spoke this parable: "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." As He said this, Jesus called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ لُوقَا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتَّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ- قَالَ الرَّبُّ هَذَا الْمَثَلُ: إِنْسَانٌ غَنِيٌّ أَخْصَبَتْ أَرْضُهُ فَفَكَرَ فِي نَفْسِهِ قَائِلًا "مَاذَا أَصْنَعُ؟ فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لِي مَوْضِعٌ أَخْزَنُ فِيهِ أَثْمَارِي" ثُمَّ قَالَ، "أَصْنَعُ هَذَا: أَهْدِمُ أَهْرَائِي وَأَبْنِي أَكْبَرَ مِنْهَا، وَأَجْمَعُ هُنَاكَ كُلَّ غَلَاتِي وَخَيْرَاتِي وَأَقُولُ لِنَفْسِي، يَا نَفْسُ إِنَّ لَكَ خَيْرَاتٍ كَثِيرَةً فَاسْتَرِيحِي وَكُلِّي وَاشْرَبِي وَافْرَحِي" فَقَالَ لَهُ اللَّهُ: "يَا جَاهِلُ! فِي هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةِ تُطْلَبُ نَفْسُكَ مِنْكَ. فَهَذِهِ الَّتِي أَعْدَدْتَهَا لِمَنْ تَكُونُ؟" فَهَكَذَا مَنْ يَدَّخِرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَلَا يَسْتَعْنِي بِاللَّهِ. وَلَمَّا قَالَ هَذَا نَادَى: مَنْ لَهُ أُذُنَانِ لِلْسَّمْعِ، فَلْيَسْمَعْ.

THANKSGIVING: As we gather with our families this Thanksgiving to thank God for the many blessings He has bestowed on us, we also need to be mindful of the needs of others. If you know of anyone in need, please contact Father George Baalbaki at revbaalbaki@yahoo.com or 586 214 4428.

THANK YOU: We would like to give a special thank you to the **Rantisi families** for their donations to the Charity committee to help with donations this Thanksgiving. God bless you all.

Parish Council Election will take place on Sunday December 6th (SAINT NICHOLAS DAY)

There will be a parish council election meeting for the sole purpose of electing some members of the Parish Council for the upcoming term. Three are to be elected and one to be appointed by the Pastor.

Anyone interested in serving or nominating someone to serve on the Parish Council must be fully pledged and spiritually qualified. *Please submit your candidate's name to Father George as soon as possible.* In order to vote in the elections, members must be in spiritual and financial good standing with the church.

ALTAR CANDLE OFFERING:

- ❖ Offered by St. Nicholas Parish for the good health and speedy recovery of **Sub-Deacon Michel Khoury**. God bless and many years!
- ❖ Offered by **Basma, Janan, Jim, Ivette, Jennifer, Brandon, & Matthew Howell, Jane & Oscar Moran**, for the continued good health of **Nadim Howell**. God bless and many years!
- ❖ Offered by **Salameh Azar & family** in loving memory of his mother **Olga Azar** on her three year memorial. May her memory be eternal!

CONGRATULATIONS:

- ❖ Congratulations from **Jeries, Janet, Shadi, and Ramzi Azar** for **Hanna & Claudia Azar** on the birth of their baby boy **Gabriel Azar**. God bless and many beautiful years!

T-SHIRTS & POLOS FOR SALE: The money raised from this fundraiser will go toward the Young Adult Ministry. In the past, we were able to do some very amazing things with the funds we've been allocated. For example; volunteer and donate over 500 sandwiches to the homeless in the tenderloin, rent spaces to have social gatherings like last year's Christmas party and the two previous visits to Spark Social, or just donate to a cause in need. Sign up here before we sell out of your size! <https://forms.gle/P9G7r3uy1c7iJW4c6>

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Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh: Sermon on Fasting

In the Gospel we hear the Lord saying to each of us that our neighbour is not the one whom we like, not even the one whom we love; it is the one who needs us, whether he likes us or not, and it is to him that we must turn in compassion, in charity, as indeed the Lord God Himself turned to us at the moment when the whole of mankind was alien to Him; and again, turns to each of us at the moment when we are at rock bottom, when we are as far away from Him as we can imagine, indeed, much farther, because only God can measure the distance that separates us from our being in Him, with Him, the distance which measures His absence from our life.

On November 15th is the beginning of fasting time that prepares us for Christmas; many will turn to fasting, eating those things which are appointed by the Church; but is that the fast which God wishes us to keep? Listen to what the Lord said to the Hebrews, from the lips of Isaiah the Prophet [Isaiah 58:3-8]:

"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgressions ... Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways, as though they were a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God. ... Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and Thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and Thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure and exploit all your labourers! Behold, you fast for strife and debate and to smite with the fist of wickedness! You shall not fast as you do this day, to make your voice heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast I have chosen to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, to break every yoke! Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him? and that thou hide not thyself from thine own

flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of thy Lord shall be thy rearguard." Let us remember these words, because more than ever in our time we must not fast hypocritically, not fast with false piety, but fast by turning away from every evil, from all evil, put right in our lives everything that has gone wrong.

Are we going to meet the day when the Lord our God took flesh in order to enter into the realm of death, He Who is the Eternal One, the day when He chose to enter into the realm of suffering for our sakes — are we going to meet this day by accepting to continue in our estrangement from Him? And we are estranged from Him when we hate our neighbour, when we reject our neighbour, when we refuse to forgive, when we turn away from him or her who is in need of our mercy — not only of bread, not only of shelter — indeed, that also counts! — but in need of forgiveness, of the mercy of the heart! Are we going to meet the Lord who came to save sinners by rejecting those whom we consider as sinners, those who have offended us, those against whom we have fought? Can we meet the Lord on such terms?

Let us think of the shepherds: they were simple people, unsophisticated, uncomplicated, but their hearts were open to the extent to which it was possible to them, they were clean, pure of heart, and therefore, they could hear the news of the Incarnation; they could hear and receive the news as the most wonderful thing that changed everything in their lives. We have been listening to the good news day-in, day-out, year after year — has it come to us as good news that has transformed our lives, made us into people beyond compare, people who are prepared to live and to die for those who hate, who reject, who ignore, who offend us? If we are not — it is in vain that we speak of being Christian; he who does not love his brother is a liar when he says that he loves his God — these are the Apostle's words.

Let us therefore enter into this period of fasting in earnest, stand in judgement before God to be judged by Him, and ask ourselves whether we could stand side by side with Him when others come to be judged, and step forward and say, 'Lord! I have forgiven — Thou hast no grudge against him, against her, any more!'

أن نستغني بالله

يروى إنجيل اليوم قصة رجل غني. مشهد بسيط عاديّ إن قيس بمقاييسنا الاجتماعية: «إنسان غني أخصبت أرضه ففكر في نفسه قائلاً: أهدمُ أهرائي وأبني أكبر منها وأجمع هناك كلّ غلاتي وخيراتي». هذا انسان انشغل بغناه، فقال لنفسه: استمتعي في هذه الحياة وكلي واشربي، فالحياة كلها طعام ولذة، والحياة كلها أموال. هكذا قال هذا الرجل الذي وصفه الكتاب بأنه غبيّ، والغباء هنا أن هذا الرجل أقبل فقط على اللذات ولم يستلذّ بالله، لم يحب الخالق. كانت نفسه فارغة من ربه مليئة بالشهوة، اي انها كانت بالحقيقة لا شيء، كانت تتلاشى بتلاشي الشهوات، تنحطّ بانحطاط الذات.

يبين لنا يسوع في هذا المثل أن الذي جعل قلبه في المال لا يبقى في قلبه موضع لشيء آخر. وعلى العموم اذا جعلنا في القلب اي شيء او اي شخص يتحكم بنا لا يبقى مكان لشيء آخر. ويصرّح الإنجيل تصريحاً واضحاً: مَنْ يَدَّخِرْ لنفسه ولا يستغني بالله ليس غنياً فعلاً. لكن لا بدّ لنا أن نستخرج من النص أعمق من مجرد الغنى المادّي والفقر المادّي.

الدنيا ليست موزّعة فقط بين أغنياء وفقراء بالمعنى المادّي من الكلمة، ولكنها موزّعة الى أغنياء وفقراء بمعنى آخر: غنيّ استغنى عن الله والناس واعتبر نفسه كاملاً، ولهذا يتظاهر، يتبجّج، يدّعي؛ وفقير عرف انه بحاجة الى الله بين الناس، بحاجة الى أن يُرحم وأن يتعاون مع الآخرين.

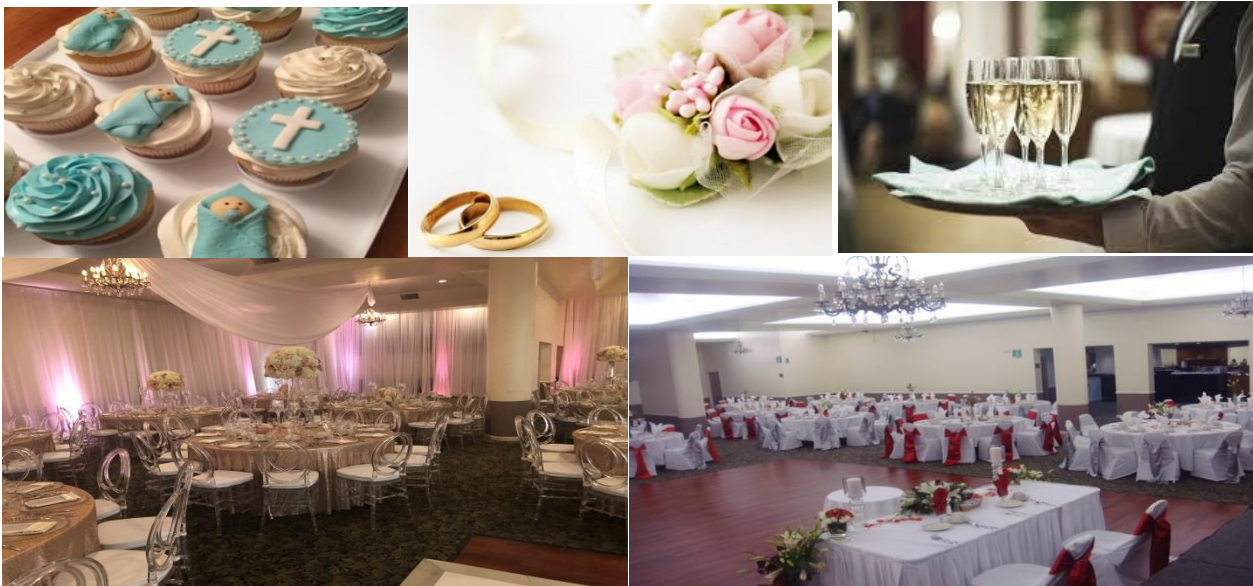
يأتينا الغنى من أسباب كثيرة. فالإنسان الجميل غنيّ إذ إنه يملك شيئاً عظيماً في الدنيا وهو الجمال. المثقف غني اي انه يملك ثروة كبيرة، الذكي غني بذكائه. أنواع كثيرة من الناس أغنياء. ولكن الجميل يتقرب من الله اذا ظنّ جماله من تراب، والمثقف يقترب من الله اذا ظنّ أن الله صاحب العلم وأن ما عنده من معرفة إنما هو القليل القليل. والذكيّ من آمن أن الله أذكى، وأن ما عنده هو من حكمة وفطنه ما هو الا إشعاع ضئيل من حكمة الله. هكذا يستطيع الجميل والمثقف والذكيّ أن يقترب الى الله بالتواضع. من كان فقيراً الى الله هو الغنيّ فعلاً: أن يشعر الانسان رغم جماله وذكائه وثقافته أنه بحاجة الى غيره او انه بحاجة الى ان يحب سواه، بحاجة الى ان يسمع، الى ان ينتبه، الى ان يخدم.

الخدمة الحقيقية للناس، التي بها نصعد الى السماء، هي التي لا نتقاضى عليها أجراً، اي اننا لسنا فقط لا نأخذ مالا ولكننا لا نأخذ تقديراً ولا مدحاً. الانسان الخادم للإنسان هو من لا يطلب تعظيماً. انه فقير الى الله وتكفيه نعمة ربّه. الخادم الحق المتواضع لا يتبجّج ولا يقول ابي كان كذا وكذا، ولا يقول أنا عملت هذا وذاك. انت إن عملت فهذا فضلُ الله عليك وليس لك فضل على ربّك. ولهذا إن عملت فاسكت. هذا جزاؤك من الله أن تسكت حتى يرضى الله عنك، والله سوف يقول في الدينونة لكل الناس ان هذا عمل او لم يعمل. الله يكشف نيات الناس. لماذا تريد أن يظهر اسمك في الجريدة او على حجر في الكنيسة او على اي شيء يزول؟ لماذا تريد أن يعترف بك الناس؟ أنت تخدم مجاناً إذ تسعى الى أن يظهر عملك أمام الله وتبقى في صمت وشكر.

المطران جاورجيوس

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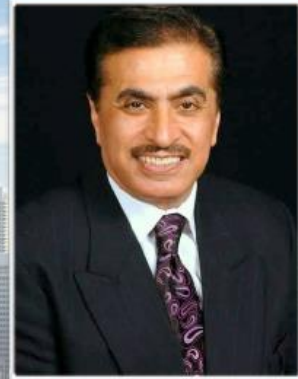
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