

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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Sub-Dn. Michel Khoury

Sub-Dn. Ilyan Baalbaki

Parish Council Chairman: Ramzi Srouji

Parish Council Vice Chairman: Salim Qaru

Sunday, November 29, 2020

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

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!

SYMPATHY & CONDOLENCES: Deepest sympathy & condolences to the **Katout and Azar families, especially Gabby and Sylvia Katout**, for the passing of our Brother in Christ, **Essa Azar** in Ramallah. May his memory be eternal!

MEMORIAL SERVICE: Six Month Memorial Service for the Servant of God, **Salim Yousef Rantisi** offered by his family. May his memory be eternal!

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

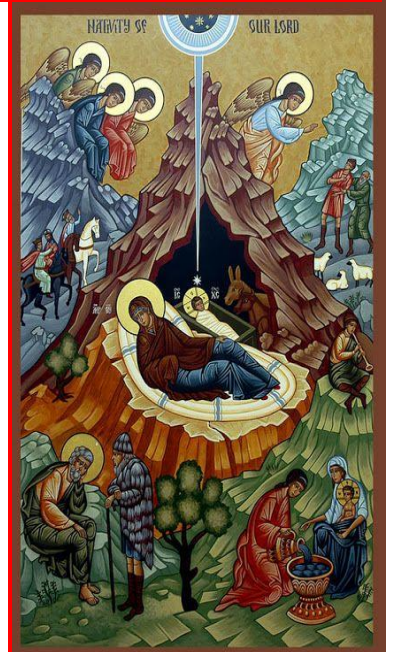
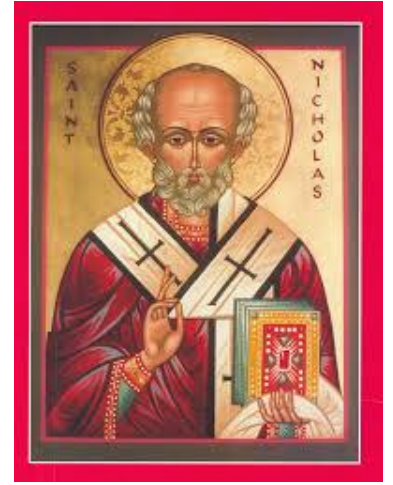
Nativity Fast (Advent) is the period preceding the Christmas season in which we abstain from meat and dairy products. Eating fish is allowed except Wednesdays and Fridays, and we can eat all the regular meals like breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. The purpose of this fast is seeking the spirituality 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. (4:1-7)

Brethren, I, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, Who is above all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولُسَ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى أَفَسُسَ.
يَا إِخْوَةَ، أَطْلُبُ إِلَيْكُمْ أَنَا الْأَسِيرُ فِي الرَّبِّ أَنْ تَسْلُكُوا كَمَا يَحِقُّ لِلدَّعْوَةِ الَّتِي دُعِيتُمْ بِهَا بِكُلِّ تَوَاضُعٍ وَوَدَاعَةٍ وَبَطُولِ أَنَاةٍ، مُحْتَمِلِينَ
بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا بِالْمَحَبَّةِ وَمُجْتَهِدِينَ فِي حِفْظِ وَحْدَةِ الرُّوحِ بِرِبَاطِ السَّلَامِ فَإِنَّكُمْ جَسَدٌ وَاحِدٌ وَرُوحٌ وَاحِدٌ، كَمَا دُعِيتُمْ إِلَى رَجَاءِ دَعْوَتِكُمْ
الوَاحِدِ، رَبِّ وَاحِدٌ، وَإِيمَانٌ وَاحِدٌ، وَمَعْمُودِيَّةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ، وَإِلَهُ أَبٌ لِلْجَمِيعِ وَاحِدٌ، هُوَ فَوْقَ الْجَمِيعِ وَبِالْجَمِيعِ وَفِي جَمِيعِكُمْ. وَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِمَّنَا
أُعْطِيَتِ النِّعْمَةُ عَلَى مِقْدَارِ مَوْهَبَةِ الْمَسِيحِ.

THE GOSPEL: St. Luke. (18:18-27)

At that time, a man came testing Jesus and asking, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother.'" And the man said, "All these I have observed from my youth." And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the man heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. Jesus, seeing him sad, said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ لُوقَا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتَّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ-
فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ، دَنَا إِلَى يَسُوعَ إِنْسَانٌ مُجَرَّبًا لَهُ وَقَائِلًا: أَيُّهَا الْمُعَلِّمُ الصَّالِحُ، مَاذَا أَعْمَلُ لَأَرِثَ الْحَيَاةَ الْأَبَدِيَّةَ؟ فَقَالَ لَهُ يَسُوعُ: لِمَاذَا
تَدْعُونِي صَالِحًا؟ وَمَا صَالِحٌ إِلَّا وَاحِدٌ وَهُوَ اللَّهُ. إِنَّكَ تَعْرِفُ الْوَصَايَا: لَا تَزْنِ، لَا تَقْتُلْ، لَا تَسْرِقْ، لَا تَشْهَدْ بِالزُّورِ، أَكْرِمِ أَبَاكَ وَأُمَّكَ.
فَقَالَ: كُلُّ هَذَا قَدْ حَفَظْتُهُ مِنْذُ صِبَايَ. فَلَمَّا سَمِعَ يَسُوعُ ذَلِكَ، قَالَ لَهُ: وَاحِدَةٌ تَعُوزُكَ بَعْدُ. بَعْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لَكَ وَوَزَّعْهُ عَلَى الْمَسَاكِينِ،
فَيَكُونَ لَكَ كَنْزٌ فِي السَّمَاءِ، وَتَعَالَ أَنْتَعْنِي. فَلَمَّا سَمِعَ ذَلِكَ حَزَنَ لِأَنَّهُ كَانَ غَنِيًّا جَدًّا. فَلَمَّا رَأَى يَسُوعُ قَدْ حَزَنَ، قَالَ: مَا أَعْسَرَ عَلَى دَوِي
الْأَمْوَالِ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوا مَلَكُوتَ اللَّهِ. إِنَّهُ لَأَسْهَلُ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَمَلُ فِي ثَقْبِ الْإِبْرَةِ مِنْ أَنْ يَدْخُلَ غَنِيٌّ مَلَكُوتَ اللَّهِ. فَقَالَ السَّامِعُونَ: فَمَنْ
يَسْتَطِيعُ إِذَنْ أَنْ يَخْلُصَ؟ فَقَالَ: مَا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ عِنْدَ النَّاسِ، مُسْتَطَاعٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ.

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 this Thanksgiving. God bless you all.

Parish Council Elections will take place in person on Sunday, December 6th, 2020

(SAINT NICHOLAS DAY): Anyone who would like to vote but can't attend in person due to special circumstances may request a mail-in ballot or make special arrangements with the Church office. To be eligible to vote you need to be spiritually qualified and current with your pledge (check with the Church office if unsure). **Anyone interested in serving or nominating someone to serve on the Parish Council must be fully pledged and spiritually qualified.** Nominee submittal deadline is Dec 1, 2020. ***Please submit your candidate's name to Father George as soon as possible.***

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 the **Hanhan** family in loving memory of **Fouad Hanhan** on the occasion of his 3 year memorial. May his memory be eternal!
- ❖ Offered by **Marina Khalaf** in loving memory of **Shawki Khalaf** on his one year memorial. May his memory be eternal! Also for the good health of her family. God bless and many

CONGRATULATIONS: Congratulations to **Hanna, Claudia and George Azar**, on the new addition to their family, **Gabriel Salim Azar**. From the **Azar and Rantisi families**, God bless you all.

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: The Rich Young Man

The Lord warns us today of how difficult it is for a man who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God. Does it mean that the Kingdom of God is open only to destitute, to those who are materially poor, who lack everything on earth? No. The Kingdom of God is open to all who are not enslaved by possessions. When we read the first Beatitude, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven', we are given a key to this saying: the poor in spirit are those who have understood that they possess nothing which is their own. We have been created as an act of God, loved into existence; we are offered by God communion with Him to which we have no rights. All we are, all we possess is not our own in the sense that we have not made ourselves, we did not create what is seemingly ours - everything which we are and which we have is love, the love of God and the love of people, and we cannot possess anything because everything is a gift that escapes us the moment we want to have possession of it and say, "It is mine".

On the other hand, the Kingdom of God is really the kingdom of those who are aware that they are infinitely rich because we can expect everything from love divine and from human love. We are rich because we possess nothing, we are rich because we are given all things; and so, it is difficult for one who imagines that he is rich in his own right to belong to that kingdom in which everything is a sign of love, and nothing can be possessed, as it were - taken away from others; because the moment we say that we possess something which is not given us either by God or by human care, we subtract it from the mystery of love.

On the other hand, the moment we cling to anything we become slaves of it. I remember when I was young, a man telling me: Don't you understand that the moment you have taken a copper coin in your hand and are not prepared to open your hand to let it go, you have lost the use of a hand, the use of an arm, the use of your body, because all your attention will be concentrated on not losing this copper coin, - the rest will be forgotten.

Whether we keep in our hand a copper coin, or whether we feel rich in so many other ways - intellectually, emotionally, materially is irrelevant, - we are prisoners, we have lost the use of a limb, the use of our mind, the use of our heart; we can no longer be free, and the Kingdom of God is a kingdom of freedom.

On the other hand also, how difficult it is to one who has never lacked anything, who has always possessed more than he needs, to be aware of the poverty or the need of another: poverty - material, emotional or intellectual, or any other lack. It requires a great deal of understanding and sympathy, it requires from us that we should learn to be attentive to the movements of other people's hearts and to their material needs in order to respond to them. One says in Russian 'A satisfied person no longer understands a hungry one'; which of us can say that we are hungry in any respect? And this is why we do not understand the needs of people - of one another here, or of people beyond the confines of our congregation.

So, let us reflect on that; poverty does not mean destitution; it means freedom from enslavement to an illusion that we are self-sufficient, self-contained, the creator of what we are and what we possess. And also free from enslavement to what is given us to make husbandmen of God.

Let us reflect on this; because if we learn this, if we learn what Saint Paul said that whether he is rich, whether he is destitute, he is equally rich because his richness is in God and in the human love. Then we will be able, whether we possess material things or not, to be free of them, and to belong to God's Kingdom which is a Kingdom of mutual love, or mutual solidarity, of compassion for one another, of giving to one another what we were given freely.

دروب العطاء

شاب غني يسأل يسوع: ماذا أعمل لأرث الحياة الأبدية، والسيد يجيب: لتدخل ملكوت السموات، لك ان تحفظ الوصايا، وعدّد له بعضاً منها. فقال الشاب: هذه أتممتها منذ صباي، وكأنه يبحث عن شيء آخر ليدخل إلى ملكوت ربّه هذا الذي جاء المعلم الجديد ليعلنه في الجليل والسامرة وإلى أقاصي الأرض. إذ ذاك أجابه يسوع: واحدة تُعوزك: أن تبيع كل ما لديك وتعطيه للمساكين ثم تعال واتبعني.

ما معنى هذا القول: بع كل ما لك وأعطه للمساكين؟ هل يعني انه على الأغنياء أن يبيعوا بيوتهم وأملاكهم؟ ماذا يعني هذا الكلام؟ يسوع لم يُسأِر أحداً. صدع الشاب الغني بقوله انه عسير على الأغنياء أن يدخلوا ملكوت الله. ثم تابع بشدة: «انه لأسهل أن يدخل الجمل في ثقب الإبرة من أن يدخل غني ملكوت الله». وضعنا السيد أمام صعوبة كبرى لا نستطيع ان نُهوّنّها. الإنجيل ليس هيئاً ولكنه صعب، وعلينا نحن ان نقتحم الصعوبة وان نفهم كيف نستطيع ان نخلص بالرغم من الصعوبة. الإبرة تعني الإبرة ولا تعني شيئاً آخر. ولهذا بادر السيد بالتشبيه وقال ان الجمل - ويمكن أن نقرأها الجمل أي الحبل الغليظ الذي يشدون به السفن- لا يدخل في ثقب الإبرة. مهما فسرناها ومهما قرأناها باليونانية أو بالعربية، فإنها تعني بأقل تعبير الصعوبة الكبرى التي للأغنياء ان يدخلوا إلى ملكوت الله.

ماذا نفعل إذا؟ لقد قال الله على لسان داود: «بَدَّدْ، أعطى المساكين، فيدوم برّه إلى الأبد» (مزمور ١١١: ٩)، أي انك لا تستطيع ان تبقى غنياً بلا مشاركة. القصد الأول للسيد هو ان نجعل الناس شركاء في المال الذي نحن وكلاء عليه. المسيحية أعطت تفسيراً واضحاً لهذا على لسان آبائنا عندما قالت ان المال الذي لديك هو أصلاً لكل الناس، «للرب الأرض بكمالها، الدنيا وكل الساكنين فيها» (مزمور ٢٣: ١). والمال الذي لديك أنت فوّضت لإدارته من أجل الناس ومن أجل مصلحتهم. ولكن لا تحتكره من أجل الترف والبذخ، فهذا مرفوض لأنك بالتلف لا تستطيع ان تجعل الناس شركاء لك.

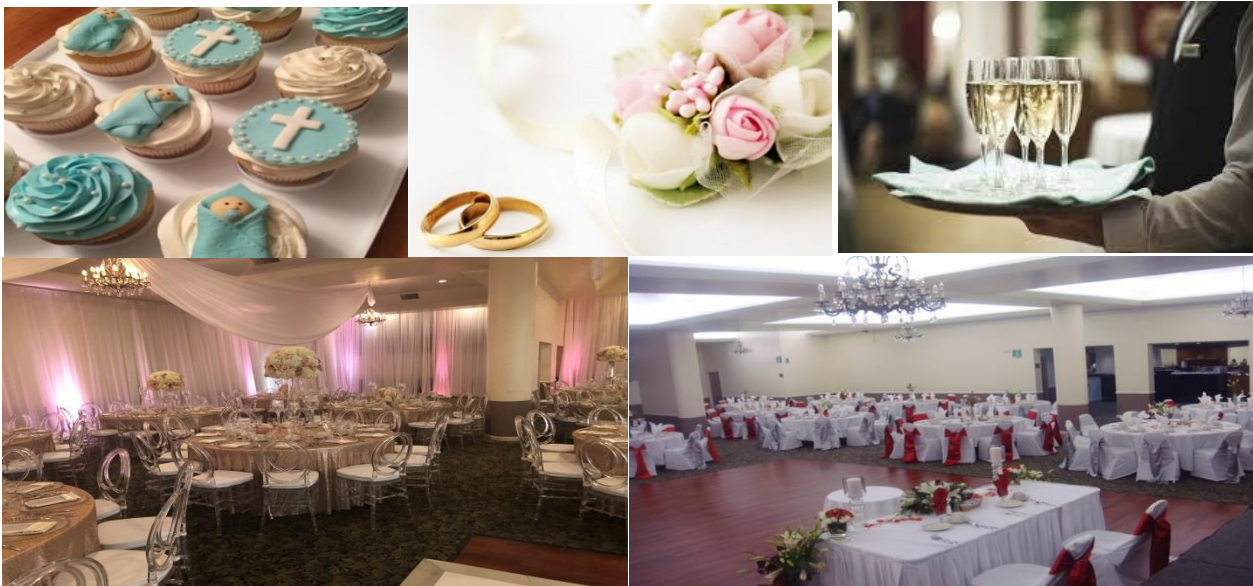
هذا يعني بأقل تعبير أن الغني من حيث المأكّل والأثاث والمظهر يعيش كبقية الناس، لا يتمتع بالدنيا أكثر من سواه، ولا يتمتع بصورة تؤذي الفقير. بالأقل إذن لا نجرّح الفقير بمظاهر مُتَرَفّة، بالأقل لا نعيش بصورة فاحشة. يمكنك ان تملك، ولكن لا يمكنك ان تستمتع، ان تتمتع بما يفوق التصوّر. في المجتمع الذي تعيش فيه، لك أن تُشارك الناس الذين حولك بالعطاء الجسيم. يوصي العهد القديم المؤمن بأن يُعطي عُشْرَ أرباحه للفقراء. هذا لم يبقَ أمراً في العهد الجديد. في الكنيسة ليس العطاء رقماً مُعيّناً لا لنُخفف ما فُرض على العبرانيين بل لنزيد عليه. وليس صحيحاً انه يُفرض على كلّ نفس ما تشتهي أن يُفرض عليها.

لذلك كانت القضية أمراً، أمراً نهائياً لا نصيحة. كانت أمراً إلهياً لكي نشعر بأن الآخرين شركاؤنا في ميراث الله وبأنهم واحد معنا. لذلك تعال وافتح جيبك وافتح قلبك وأعط ووزّع وأحب البشرية التي تعطيها، وأحب الناس الذين تمدهم بالعطاء. لا تُمنن أحداً بل اعتبر ان الفقير سيّد عليك لأنه أعطاك فرصة لكي تعطي. وإذا أنت مشيت هكذا على دروب العطاء الكبير الواسع، إذا أنت أعطيت وبددت، فلا تعتبر نفسك شيئاً ولكن ارتجف لأن الله قال انه عسير على الأغنياء دخول ملكوت الله.

المطران جاورجيوس

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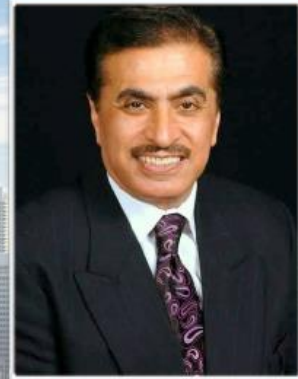
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