

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
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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, December 06, 2020

Nicholas the wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia

القديس نيقولاوس العجائبي

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/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 **Khoury and Bajalia families** for the passing of our dearly beloved Brother in Christ, **Sub-Deacon Michel Khoury**.
May his memory be eternal!
- ❖ Deepest sympathy & condolences to the **Halteh** family for the passing of our dearly beloved Brother in Christ, **Salim Halteh**. May his memory be eternal!

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

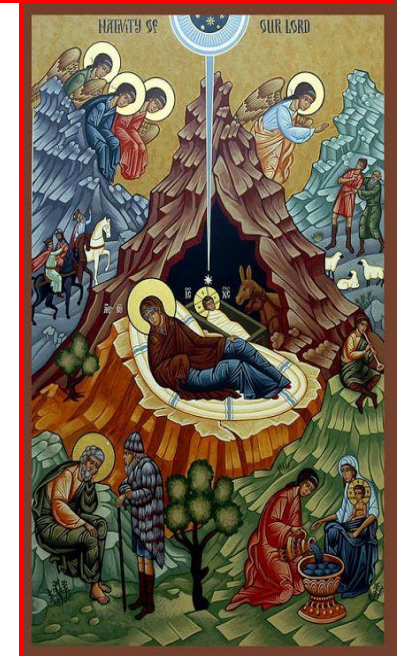
Nativity Fast (Advent) is the period preceding the Christmas season in which we abstain from meat and dairy products. Eating fish is allowed except Wednesdays and Fridays, and we can eat all the regular meals like breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. The purpose of this fast is seeking the spirituality 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 صباحاً، 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 Hebrews. (13:17-21)

Brethren, obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now may the God of peace Who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

الرسالة: عبرانيين 13:17-21

يا إخوة أطيعوا مدبريكم واخضعوا لهم فإنهم يسهرون على نفوسكم سهر من سيُعطي حسابًا حتى يفعلوا ذلك بسرور لا آئين، لأن هذا غير نافع لكم. صلّوا من أجلنا فإننا نثق بأن لنا ضميرًا صالحًا فنرجو في أن نُحسن التصرف في كل شيء. وأطلب ذلك بأشدّ إلحاح حتى أرَدَ اليكم بأسرع وقت. وإله السلام الذي أعاد من بين الأموات راعي الخراف العظيم بدم العهد الأبدي ربنا يسوع يكملكم في كل عمل صالح حتى تعملوا بمشيئته عاملاً فيكم ما هو مرضي لديه بيسوع المسيح الذي له المجد الى أبد الأبد، آمين

THE GOSPEL: St. Luke. (13:10-17)

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrite! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" As Jesus said this, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him.

الإنجيل: لوقا 13:10-17

في ذلك الزمان كان يسوع يعلم في أحد المجامع يوم السبت. وإذا بامرأة بها روح مرض منذ ثماني عشرة سنة، وكانت منحنية لا تستطيع أن تنتصب البتّة. فلما رآها يسوع دعاها وقال لها: إنك مُطلقة من مرضك. ووضع يديه عليها، وفي الحال استقامت ومجّدت الله. فأجاب رئيس المجمع وهو مغتاظ لإبراء يسوع في السبت، وقال للمجمع: هي ستة أيام ينبغي العمل فيها. ففيها تأتون وتتشفون لا في يوم السبت. فأجاب الرب وقال: يا مرائي، أليس كلّ واحد منكم يحلّ ثوره أو حماره في السبت من المذود وينطلق به فيسقيه؟ وهذه، وهي ابنة إبراهيم التي ربطها الشيطان منذ ثماني عشرة سنة، أما كان ينبغي أن تُطلق من هذا الرباط يوم السبت؟ ولما قال هذا خزي كل من كان يقاومه، وفرح الجمع بجميع الأمور المجيدة التي كانت تصدر منه.

Parish Council Elections will take place in person or on ZOOM on Sunday, December 13th, 2020. Anyone who would like to vote may request a mail-in ballot, **which must be returned to the Church office no later than December 13th, 2020.** For any special accommodations, please contact 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).

HOLIDAYS: As we gather with our families this Advent season 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.

ALTAR CANDLE OFFERING:

- ❖ Offered by St. Nicholas Church for the good health of **Jeries & Janet Azar** on the special occasion of their birthdays. God bless and many years!
- ❖ Offered by **Jason & Grace Nahm** in loving memory of **Jamil Howell**. May his memory forever be eternal!
- ❖ Offered by **Paul Nassif and family** in loving memory of **Charles Nassif** on the occasion of his 3 year memorial. May his memory be eternal!
- ❖ Offered by St. Nicholas Church for the good health of all who are named Nick, Nicholas, Nicole, Nicola after the **feast of Saint Nicholas on December 6th** on the occasion of their Names' Day! **Fr. Nicholas Borzghol, Nicholas Baalbaki, Nicholas Habeeb, Nicholas Haddad, Nicholas Katout, Nicholas Houli, Nicholas Nabil Hanhan, Nicholas Tannous, Nicholas Qaqish, Nicola Mogannam, Nicole Aho, Nicole Hanhan, Nicole Jadelrab, Nicole Wahab, Nicole Bekhit, Nick Nichola, Nicola Akik, Nick John Saba, Nicholas Maalouf, Nick Baba,** and in loving memory of **Fr. Nicholas Habib and Nichola Saba**. God Bless!
- ❖ Offered by St. Nicholas Church for the good health of all who are named Andrew, Andrew, Andrawes after the **feast of Saint Andrew** on the occasion of their Names Day! **Andrew Yaser, Andre Hawit, Andrawes Husary, and Andy Azar**. God bless!
- ❖ Offered by St. Nicholas Church for the good health of all who are named Saba after the **feast of Saint Saba** on the occasion of their Names Day! **The Saba family, Saba Shatara, Saba Sahouria,** and in loving memory of **Nicholas Saba and George Nichola Saba**. God bless!

CHURCH HALL REMODEL:

We would like to let you know that we've started the remodel of the bar and the bathrooms in our church hall. We are very excited about this project and can't wait to share the updates with you when it's completed.

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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Youtube: [youtube.com/channel/UCrDWWPWreLZpVhzVGZkjDIA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrDWWPWreLZpVhzVGZkjDIA)

Metropolitan Anthony: Miracles of Christ on the Sabbath Day

Time and again we read in the Gospel of the anger which the Lord Jesus Christ provoked by performing an act of mercy, a miracle of healing on a Sabbath day. And we cannot help asking ourselves a question: Why did He do it so constantly, so persistently, with such insistence? Could it be to challenge those who surrounded Him? Could it be to provoke them? Could it be simply a pedagogical action?

I believe that there is a great deal more in His action. The Lord created the world in six days; on the seventh day He rested of His toils and labours. But what happened to the world then? The

seventh day was the day when the world came into the hands of man to be brought to its fulfillment and to its completeness; the seventh day, the Sabbath of the Lord is the day of man. The whole of human history falls in that day. But God did not leave man to work alone; as the Lord Jesus Christ says in the Gospel, as reported by Saint John, 'My Father still works, He shows His work to His Son for Him to fulfill them'. And in another passage He teaches us, He tells us that His judgment is true because it is not His judgment; He hears the words of the Father and that is the judgment He pronounces.

And so, History is the day of man, but man is called to be guided by the wisdom, by the love of God. It is because we are so often seeking for our own ways, it is because we do not ask ourselves what is God's way in one situation or the other that the world has become so ugly, and so frightening, and so tragic. There is a Hebrew poem that describes the misery of this world into which man does not bring the love of God; it says, 'Man has ceased to believe in God and love has departed this world. Men have hanged themselves in forests, have drowned themselves in lakes, in rivers. Heaven is no longer mirrored in the lakes, in the woods; the bird does no longer sing songs of paradise, and the Prophet himself on his pedestal has become a mere statue.'

Is this not what we have become? Not statues, but so much alike the wife of Lot who turned back and who became a statue of salt. We have remained salt, and yet, we are petrified, immobile, we do not fulfill on earth this function of ours. And Christ shows us, by working His miracles, His acts of love and of compassion on Sabbath day, time and again, He Who is the only true Man, the only Man who is in total, ultimate oneness with God, what our part should be: take on the history of mankind, take every situation in which we or others find themselves, and carry them on our shoulders, in an act of mercy and of love. A Western writer has said that a Christian is one to whom God has committed the care of His world and of other people. Are we discharging this basic central commission of ours, do we care? We may care with tenderness, we may care sternly, but we must care. And then, this seventh day when God in His mercy and love has committed this world to our care, still can yet become the day of the Lord. And the City of man which is been built without God, which so often is like the Tower of Babel, may still unfold and attain the greatness and the holiness of the City of God in which the Lord Jesus Christ, true God but also true Man, is called to be a citizen, the heart of it, but also one of us.

Is not this call great enough? Is not God's faith in us sufficiently inspiring? Are we going to defeat His hope, to reject His love for ourselves or for others? Or are we going to learn from the ways in which Christ fulfils His human vocation in the day of the Lord? Shall we not learn from Him, and together with Him build the world which God has dreamed, has willed and is still loving in His distress and so often in our betrayal of Him!

Let us learn to love one another actively, bear one another's burdens, listen to the Living God when He speaks, listen with all our energy, look into His ways and be those who fulfil His will and bring the world to the perfect beauty He has willed for it!

تبشير المولودين أرثوذكسيين

هناك أرثوذكسيون وهناك مولودون أرثوذكسيين وهم ليسوا بشيء. الأرثوذكسي الذي يجيء الى الكنيسة يوعظ وعضا مؤسسًا على الإيمان الذي يعترف به وقرأ عنه شيئًا في المدرسة. اما المعمّد بالماء ولم ينل فهمًا مسيحيًا فيجب أن تلده من جديد بالتبشير المنطلق من فراغ القلب من الإيمان.

هذا المسمّى أرثوذكسيًا يتّصل بالكنيسة عند موت أحد أقربائه أو في جنّاز الأربعين أو السنة لواحد منهم كما يقصد مناسبة لمسيحيّ من كنيسة أخرى. هذه أقرب الى الاجتماعيات منها الى الإيمان. فإنك إن سألته عن مصير هذا الميت لا يعرف، وإذا سألته عن القيامة يجيبك غالبًا أن الروح باقية ولم يسمع بقيامة الأجساد. وإذا سألته هل المسيح كان موجودًا قبل أن يولد من العذراء، غالبًا ما لا يعرف.

تسأله اذا كان أرثوذكسيًا يجيب بنعم. أما إذا قلت له: هل يفرض عليك ذلك الانتماء شيئًا كالمناولة مثلاً، غالبًا ما لم يسمع بأن الانتماء يعني مسؤولية والتزامًا.

نحن مسؤولون عن كل هؤلاء، ولعلّهم هم الأكثرون بيننا. مرّات يدعون المعرفة، وعند السؤال تلاحظ أن هذا غير دقيق. أكاهنّا كنت أم علمانيًا فأنت مبشّر لهذه الشريحة. ربما بدأت بتذكير هذا الشخص بالمعمودية وتسأله عمّا فهم منها. ربما كان الأفضل أن تسأله عن زواجه إذا حصل أو الذي سيحصل. ماذا يعني لك زواجك؟

أنت لا تقول له انه ليس من الكنيسة. تدعوه الى معرفة المسيح الذي تصفه الأنجيل. بالتأكيد إذا أقنعت هذا الإنسان أنه لا يستطيع الزعم أنه مثقّف ولم يقرأ هذا الكتاب مرة واحدة. ربما كان عليك أن تصطاده من جهة الثقافة. ربما تُقنعه أن يذهب مرة واحدة الى القديس ليُشاهد ما يجري ويفهم ثقافة الناس الذين يقول هو انه منهم، ثم تشرح له القديس.

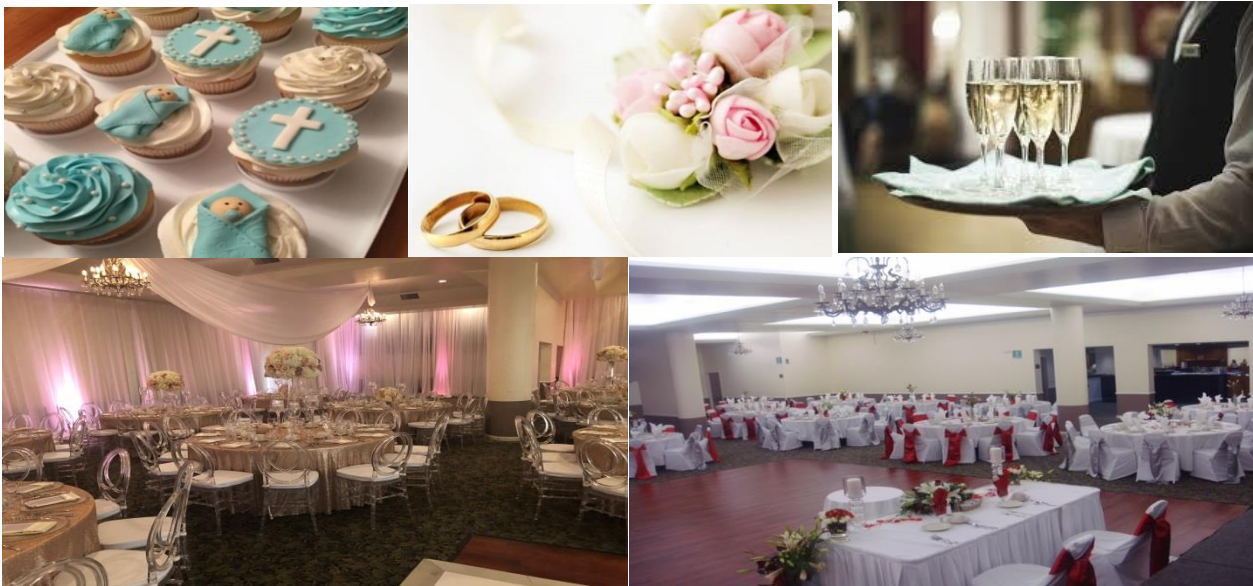
لا تقل له انه وثنيّ، فهو معمّد ولو لم يكمل معمديته بالإيمان. عليك أن تستدرجه حسب ذهنه وحسب قلبه. لا تصدمه بجدل عن الإلحاد، ولا تُكلّمه البتة عن تقصيره. هذا يصدمه. اصعد معه تدريجيًا من المستوى الذي وصل اليه. هو لا يريد أن يُقرّ أنه مسيحيًا لا شيء. ولكن لا تغشّه بقولك له انه مسيحيّ عظيم. أوضح له أنه ابنُ الله، وأن الرب يريد ابنًا إلا اذا رأيتَه ملحدًا كليًا. هذا لا أظنه موجودًا في الشرق. المهم أن يجعل اعترافه بوجود الله عبادة حبّ لله. شيء من الفهم أو الفهم التدريجيّ أساسيّ حتى يصل هذا الأخ الى الصلاة. بها وبحرارتها يتعمّق فهمه.

هذه الشريحة من الأرثوذكسيين مسؤوليتنا الخاصة وإن كان كل البشر مسؤوليتنا. لا نستطيع أن ندعهم معمّدين بالماء. بلا إيمان لا يخلّصون.

المطران جاورجيوس

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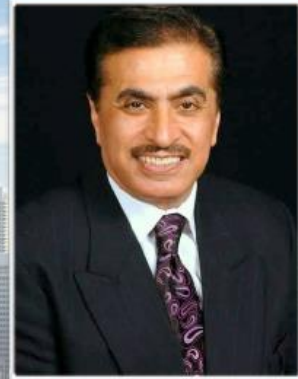
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