

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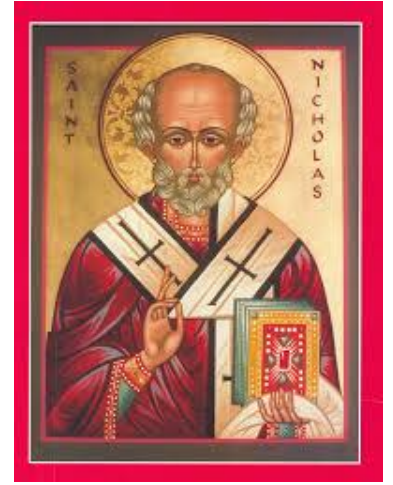
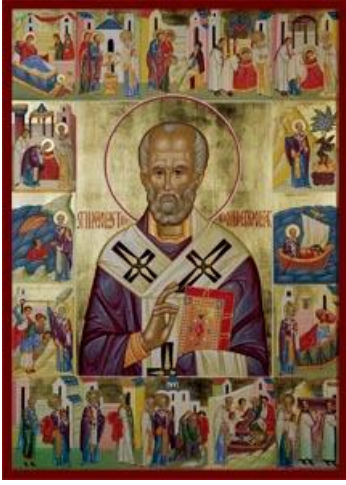
Pastor Emeritus, V. Rev. **Fr. Gregory Ofiesh**

Sub-Dn. **Michel Khoury**

Sub-Dn. **Ilyan Baalbaki**

Parish Council Chairman: **Ramzi Srouji**

Parish Council Vice Chairman: **Salim Qaru**



Sunday, December 13, 2020

Sunday of the Forefathers (Ancestors) of Christ

أحد الأجداد

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.** 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!

Parish Council Elections will take place on ZOOM this Sunday at 1 PM.

Everyone can watch the meeting, but to be eligible to vote you need to be spiritually qualified and current with your pledge (check with the Church office if unsure).

<https://zoom.us/j/97064509757?pwd=S0o0ZG8ybjk3cU9kQOWNsV2tETTdJZz09>

THE EPISTLE: St. Paul to the Colossians. (3:4-11)

Brethren, when Christ, Who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

الرسالة: كولوسي ٣: ٤-١١

يا إخوة، متى ظهر المسيح الذي هو حياتنا فأنتم أيضا تُظهرون حينئذ معه في المجد. فأُميتوا أعضاءكم التي على الأرض: الزنى والنجاسة والهوى والشهوة الرديئة والطمع الذي هو عبادة وثن، لأنه لأجل هذه يأتي غضب الله على أبناء العصيان، وفي هذه أنتم أيضا سلكتم حيناً إذ كنتم عائشين فيها. أما الآن فأنتم أيضا اطرحوا الكل: الغضب والسخط والخبث والتجديف والكلام القبيح من أفواهكم. ولا يكذب بعضكم بعضاً، بل اخلعوا الإنسان العتيق مع أعماله والبسوا الإنسان الجديد الذي يتجدد للمعرفة على صورة خالقه حيث ليس يوناني ولا يهودي، لا ختان ولا قلف، لا بربري ولا إسكِيثي، لا عبد ولا حر، بل المسيح هو كل شيء وفي الجميع.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (14:16-24)

The Lord spoke this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But, one by one, they all began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

الإنجيل: لوقا ١٤: ١٦-٢٤

قال الرب هذا المثل: إنسان صنع عشاء عظيما ودعا كثيرين فأرسل عبده في ساعة العشاء يقول للمدعوين: تعالوا فان كل شيء قد أُعدّ. فطفق كلهم، واحد فواحد، يستعفون. فقال له الأول: قد اشتريت حقلا ولا بد لي أن أخرج وأنظره، فأسألك أن تُعفيني. وقال الآخر: قد اشتريت خمسة فدادين بقر وأنا ماض لأجرّبها، فأسألك أن تُعفيني. وقال الآخر: قد تزوجت امرأة فلذلك لا أستطيع أن أجيء. فأتى العبد وأخبر سيده بذلك. فحينئذ غضب رب البيت وقال لعبده: اخرج سريعا إلى شوارع المدينة وأزقتها، وأدخل المساكين والجُدع والعميان والعرج إلى ههنا. فقال العبد: يا سيد قد قُضي ما أمرت به، ويبقى أيضا محلّ. فقال السيد للعبد: اخرج إلى الطرق والأسيجة واضطررهم إلى الدخول حتى يمتلئ بيتي. فإني أقول لكم انه لا يذوق عشاءي أحد من أولئك الرجال المدعوين، لأن المدعوين كثيرين والمختارين قليلون.

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 **Khader & Basima Atwan and family** in loving memory of **Chris Ganim, Naeemeh, Bassem, and Isam Jaghab**. May their memory be eternal!
- ❖ Offered by **Jarjura family** in loving memory of beloved parents **George & Najla Jarjura**. May their memory be eternal!
- ❖ Offered by **Everett & Rana Jones and family** in loving memory of **Isa and Rifka Martha**. May their memory be eternal!
- ❖ Offered by **Angel Salfiti** in loving memory of parents and brother: **Costandi, Elain & Elias Salfiti**. May their memory be eternal! Also for the good health and blessings of her children, **George, June & Jean and their families, children and grandchildren**. God bless and many years!
- ❖ Offered by **Carlos, Anthony, Zeze, & Julie** for the good health, well-being and speedy recovery of **Caroline Zidek**. God bless and many years!
- ❖ Offered by St. Nicholas Church for the good health and well-being of **Laila Madback**. God bless and many years!

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: BRIDAL FEAST

How often have we heard today's a parable about those people who were called to the Bridal Feast of the King, and who refused to come. The one who had acquired a plot of land; he thought he was in possession of it; in reality, he was so attached to it that he could not detach himself from it: he was a prisoner of what he thought he possessed. And so it is with whatever we imagine we possess; it is enough for us to have the smallest thing in our hand - and this hand is alienated to us; we cannot use it anymore, we cannot use our arm, our whole body is conditioned by what we possess, or imagine we possess: we are held a prisoner by it.

Others refused to come because they had bought five pairs of oxen: they had to try them, they had a task to fulfil, they had work to do, they had perhaps what they believed to be a mission in life, and therefore they had no time for anything except that that was their personal concern.

And the last refused to come because his heart was full of his own joy; having married, how could he be concerned with anyone else's marriage? He was full of his own joy - how could he participate in anyone else's joy? And so, they all turned away from the call.

Doesn't it apply very directly to us? Each of us possesses something that he deems so important that he is prepared to turn away from God - yes, from God: there is no time for prayer, there is no time for worship. At the same time we turn away from other people who need us because we are busy with our own business? And how often happens that we are full of joy or of sorrow - but they are our own, we hug them to our heart, we have no time for anyone else's sorrow or anyone else's joy. But then, what should we do? You hear every Sunday in the Liturgy words that say, 'Let us lay aside all the cares of this life'; does it mean that we must turn away from the earth on which we live, from the tasks which are ours, from the joys and true sorrows that come our way? No!

But there is an answer to it perhaps in the lines that precede the reading from the Epistle which we heard today, where we are told: Are you risen with Christ? Are you where He is? Is your life hid in God with Christ? What does it really mean to us? It means that if we are dead with the death of Christ to everything which is destructive of love, destructive of compassion, which is self-centredness, which is self-love, which leaves no space for anyone but ourselves - if we are dead to all this, and if we have accepted life on Christ's terms, ready to live for others, live for God, live for the joy and life of those who surround us - then we are risen with Christ, and our life is indeed hid with Christ in God, it is at the very depth of God, at the very depth of divine love! And then we can turn to the earth; then, instead of possessing we can serve, instead of overpowering we can try

to bring this earth of ours, in an act of love, in an act of reverence to be free, to be God's earth, to be able to bring fruit, not as it does being raped, being violently possessed by us, but giving us its fruit in an act of responsive love. And the same applies to our tasks; we are called to serve, we are called to make of all our life an act of concern, of love, of service - then, all that we do becomes an act of God, then it becomes meaningful and it does not separate us from God.

And if joy has come into our heart, it is a gift of God; if sorrow has come into our heart, we can carry it to God, for it to be integrated in the mystery of salvation!

Let us reflect on this! Let us truly lay aside all the cares of this life in the sense that let us not be prisoners, but free: Christ has come to set us free. And then the earth, and our labour, and our joys, and our sorrows and everyone on earth will become part of the Kingdom of God. Then indeed, our life will be hid with Christ in God, but a God Who have chosen so to love the world as to be incarnate, to become man among men, to take upon Himself all the human destiny, createdness, life in a fallen world, the consequences of human sin, and even the loss of God which is what kills. And, having accepted it all in an act of saving and redeeming love, He has risen, and anyone can enter into eternal life, the life of the resurrection by uniting himself or herself to Christ.

تعالوا فإن كل شيء قد أُعِدَّ

استعداداً للميلاد المبارك، نُقيم اليوم ذكرى الأجداد الذين سبقوا السيد من آدم إلى مريم، وفي الأحد القادم سنقيم ذكرى الذين سبقوه من العبرانيين أي ابتداء من إبراهيم. السيد متصل بكل الجنس البشري، وبنوع خاص بالأبرار الذين هيأوا مجيئه.

يتحدث إنجيل اليوم عن وليمة أعدّها إنسان فأخذ يُرسل بطلب المدعوين، ولكنهم اعتذروا الواحد تلو الآخر: هذا له حقل اشتراه، وذلك له فداين أراد أن يفلح بها، فاستعفيا، والثالث تزوج امرأة فقال: لا أقدر أن أجيء. غير أن صاحب الدعوة لم يقبل من أحد عذراً لأن الوليمة الإلهية خير من كل شيء آخر.

كما أن الأبرار في العهد القديم كانوا ناظرين إلى مجيء المخلص، هكذا نحن ننظر إلى هذه الوليمة الخلاصية التي تنتظرنا والتي أعدّها لنا يسوع بتجسّده. ولهذا أخذ صاحب الوليمة يجمع المساكين والعُميان والعرج من الطريق ويدخل إلى ملكوته من لم يكن مُعدّاً لهم.

وهذا تحذير لنا لأننا نحن، بعد أن هيأنا الإنجيل لاقتبال الخلاص، نستعفي بسبب أغراض هذا العالم وبسبب حاجاتٍ حقيقية أو مصطنعة. اختلقنا الأعذار التي تُحوّلنا عن رؤية يسوع وعن الانضمام إليه في التوبة والامتنال وتهيؤ النفس. ولذلك يُحذّرنا السيد بقوله إن المدعوين كثيرون والمختارين قليلون، وقد نكون نحن من الذين نُقصي عن وجهه ونُرمى في الظلمة البرّانية.

غير أن يسوع أت لننظر إليه ويكون هو نعيمنا ومائدتنا ووليمتنا وغذاءنا الدائم. فيسوع يغذيّا إن نحن التفتنا إليه كما التفت إليه إبراهيم والأبرار الذين انحدروا من إبراهيم وكانوا لا يعيشون الا لمجيء المخلص.

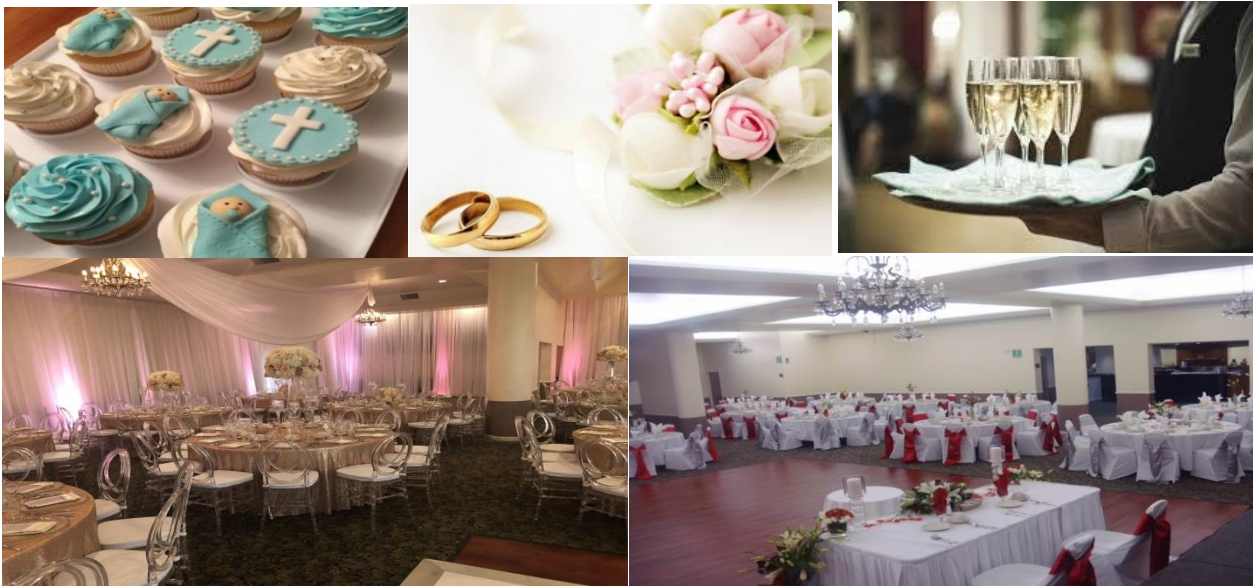
من مَنّا يحيا لمجيء المخلص إلى قلبه بعد أن جاء إلى العالم؟ من طهر قلبه ليصير مذوداً للرب يرحّب بنعمته؟ إن كنّا مرتدّين عن المسيح مُبتعدين عنه بعادات سيئة نُكررها وبخطايا نستطيعها، إن كنّا نافرين من المسيح، أو كان نافريناً منّا بسبب خطايانا، فهذا اليوم يوم مقبول، انه يوم خلاص نتهياً فيه لكي ينبثق منّا المسيح كما انبثق بالجسد من أمّه. كلّ منّا يستطيع أن يكون مريم العذراء، أي أن يُجسّد المسيح في بيته، بين أصدقائه، في قريته، في العالم.

العالم يشتاّق الى من يُنقذه من ويلاته، من سقوطه، من اهترائه. العالم يتمخّض. متى يأتي النور؟ النور هو نحن الذين عُمدنا وليس لنا الا أن نُشعّ اذا استطعنا أن نعود الى السيّد. سوف يأتيّا طفلاً لكي نعود، لكي نبقي، لكي نلزمه في فقره وفي تعبهِ وفي آلامه، لكي نلزمه بالحب الذي أعطانا. وهكذا إذا ذاق الناس المحبة التي نعطيها نحن، يستطيعون أن يعودوا وأن يكون عُمرهم كلّهُ عيداً.

المطران جاورجيوس

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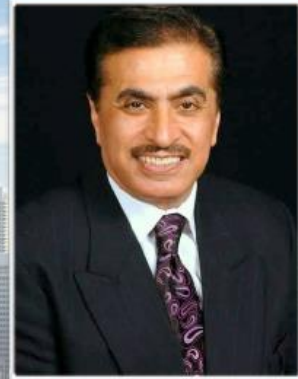
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