

كنيسة مار نقولا الأنطاكية الأرثوذكسية

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

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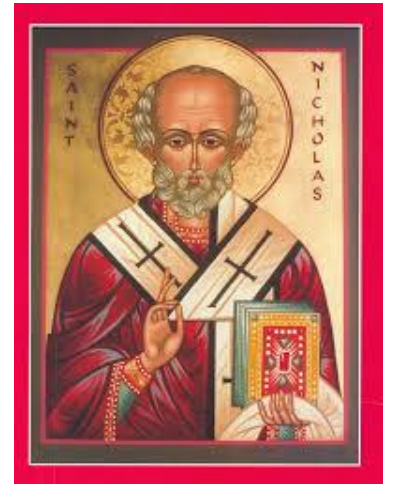
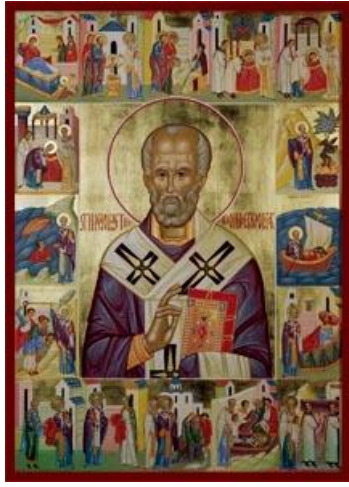
Pastor Emeritus, V. Rev. Fr. Gregory Ofiesh

Sub-Dn. Ilyan Baalbaki

Sub-Dn. Tariq Rantisi

Parish Council Chairman: Azar Azar

Parish Council Vice Chairman: Salim Qaru



Sunday, June 06, 2021

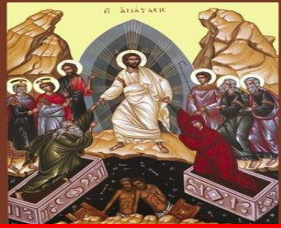
Sunday of the Blind Man // أحد الأعمى

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

Al Maseeh Qam! Haqan Qam!

Kristos Anesti! Alithos Anesti!

المسيح قام! حقا قام كل عام وأنتم بخير



GAZA RELIEF: Our hearts, thoughts and prayers are with the people of GAZA. The people of GAZA need our help! We will be hosting a Humanitarian & Disaster Relief Fundraiser for GAZA. Please help us help those who are in need. All proceeds will be donated to Churches in GAZA and other Humanitarian organizations. To make donations, please mail a check here to St. Nicholas earmarked "For Gaza". You may also donate on our website by choosing "GAZA RELIEF" under "Funds" on our giving website: <https://giving.parishsoft.com/app/giving/stn5200254>



MEMORIAL SERVICE: Memorial Service for the Servant of God, Dr. Elias Kouchakji, offered by his family. May his memory be eternal!

IMPORTANT NOTICE: CHURCH IS OPEN! If you plan to attend, please make sure you wear a mask and use hand sanitizer when you walk inside. Please don't attend if you're feeling sick. We pray for the good health, well-being, and safety of everyone. God bless!

الرسالة: أعمال الرسل ١٦: ١٦-٣٤ في تلك الأيام، فيما نحنُ الرُّسُلُ مُنْطَلِقُونَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ، اسْتَقْبَلْتُنَا جَارِيَةٌ بِهَا رُوحٌ عَرَافَةٌ. وَكَانَتْ تُكْسِبُ مَوَالِيهَا كَسْبًا جَزِيلًا بِعَرَاثَتِهَا، فَطَفَقَتْ تَمْشِي فِي إِثْرِ بُولُسَ وَإِثْرِنَا، وَتَصِيحُ قَائِلَةً: هَؤُلَاءِ الرِّجَالُ هُمْ عِبِيدُ اللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ، وَهُمْ يُبَسِّرُونَكُم بِطَرِيقِ الْخَلَاصِ. وَصَنَعَتْ ذَلِكَ أَيَّامًا كَثِيرَةً، فَتَضَجَّرَ بُولُسُ، وَالتَفَتَ إِلَى الرُّوحِ وَقَالَ: إِنِّي أَمُرُكَ بِاسْمِ يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ أَنْ تَخْرُجَ مِنْهَا. فَخَرَجَ فِي تِلْكَ السَّاعَةِ. فَلَمَّا رَأَى مَوَالِيهَا أَنَّهُ قَدْ خَرَجَ رَجَاءً مَكْسِبِهِمْ، قَبَضُوا عَلَى بُولُسَ وَسَبِيلًا وَجَرَوْهُمَا إِلَى السُّوقِ عِنْدَ الْحُكَّامِ، وَقَدَّمُوهُمَا إِلَى الْوَلَاةِ قَائِلِينَ: إِنَّ هَذَيْنِ الرَّجُلَيْنِ يُبْلِلَانِ مَدِينَتَنَا وَهُمَا يَهُودِيَّانِ، وَيُنَادِيَانِ بِعِبَادَاتٍ لَا يَجُوزُ لَنَا قَبُولُهَا، وَلَا الْعَمَلُ بِهَا إِذْ نَحْنُ رُومَانِيَّوْنَ. فَقَامَ عَلَيْهِمَا الْجَمْعُ مَعًا، وَمَزَقَ الْوَلَاةُ ثِيَابَهُمَا، وَأَمَرُوا بِأَنْ يُضْرَبَا بِالْعَصِيِّ. وَلَمَّا أَتَخَنُوهُمَا بِالْجِرَاحِ أَلْقَوْهُمَا فِي السَّجْنِ، وَأَوْصَاوُ السَّجَّانَ بِأَنْ يَحْرُسَهُمَا بِضَبْطٍ. وَهُوَ إِذْ أَوْصَى بِمِثْلِ تِلْكَ الْوَصِيَّةِ، أَلْقَاهُمَا فِي السَّجْنِ الدَّاخِلِيِّ، وَضَبَطَ أَرْجُلَهُمَا فِي الْمَفْطَرَةِ. وَعِنْدَ نِصْفِ اللَّيْلِ، كَانَ بُولُسُ وَسَبِيلَا يُصَلِّيَانِ وَيُسَبِّحَانِ اللَّهَ، وَالْمَحْبُوسُونَ يَسْمَعُونَهُمَا، فَحَدَّثَتْ بَعْثُهُ زَلْزَلَةٌ عَظِيمَةٌ حَتَّى تَزَعَزَعَتْ أَسُسُ السَّجْنِ. فَانْفَتَحَتْ فِي الْحَالِ الْأَبْوَابُ كُلُّهَا، وَانْفَكَّتْ قُبُودُ الْجَمِيعِ. فَلَمَّا اسْتَبَقِظَ السَّجَّانُ، وَرَأَى أَبْوَابَ السَّجْنِ أَنَّهَا مَفْتُوحَةٌ، اسْتَلَّ السَّيْفَ وَهُمْ أَنْ يَقْتُلَ نَفْسَهُ، لَظَنَهُ أَنَّ الْمَحْبُوسِينَ قَدْ هَرَبُوا. فَناداهُ بُولُسُ بِصَوْتٍ عَالٍ قَائِلًا: لَا تَعْمَلْ بِنَفْسِكَ سُوءًا، فَإِنَّا جَمِيعُنَا هَهُنَا. فَطَلَبَ مُصْبَحًا، وَوُتِبَ إِلَى دَاخِلِ، وَخَرَّ لِبُولُسَ وَسَبِيلَا وَهُوَ مُرْتَعِدٌ، ثُمَّ خَرَجَ بِهِمَا وَقَالَ: يَا سَيِّدِي مَاذَا يَنْبَغِي لِي أَنْ أَصْنَعَ لَكَ أَخْلَصَ؟ فَقَالَا: آمِنْ بِالرَّبِّ يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ، فَتَخَلَّصَ أَنْتَ وَأَهْلُ بَيْتِكَ. وَكَلِمَاهُ هُوَ وَجَمِيعُ مَنْ فِي بَيْتِهِ بِكَلِمَةِ الرَّبِّ. فَأَخَذَهُمَا فِي تِلْكَ السَّاعَةِ مِنْ اللَّيْلِ، وَغَسَلَ جِرَاحَهُمَا، وَاعْتَمَدَ مِنْ وَفْتِهِ، هُوَ وَذَوُوهُ أَجْمَعُونَ. ثُمَّ أَصْعَدَهُمَا إِلَى بَيْتِهِ وَقَدَّمَ لَهُمَا مَائِدَةً، وَابْتَهَجَ مَعَ جَمِيعِ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ، إِذْ كَانَ قَدْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ.

The Acts of the Holy Apostles. (16:16-34)

In those days, while we the apostles were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. She followed Paul and us, and cried out saying: "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." And she did this for many days. But Paul was annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit: "I charge you in the Name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers; and when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said: "These men are disturbing our city, and they, being Jews, are setting forth customs which are not lawful for us to receive or observe, since we are Romans." The multitude then rose up together against them, and the magistrates tore their garments off them, and commanded to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. Having received such a charge, he cast them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and every one's fetters were unfastened. And the jailer, being roused out of sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice saying: "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." And he called for lights and rushed in, and fell down before Paul and Silas trembling with fear, and brought them out and said: "Masters, what must I do to be saved?" And they said: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him, and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and his entire household. Then he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with his entire house, in that he had believed in God.

THE GOSPEL: St. John. (9:1-38)

At that time, when Jesus was passing, he saw a man blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me, while it is day; night comes, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." As he said this, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam," which means "Sent." So he went and washed and came back seeing. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar, said, "Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is he;" others said, "No, but he is like him." He said, "I am the man." They said to him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash'; so I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know." They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. The Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for He does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" There was a division among them. So they again said to the blind man, "What do you say about Him, since He has opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet." The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight, and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age, he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue. Therefore, his parents said, "He is

of age, ask him.” So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, “Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner.” He answered, “Whether he is a sinner, I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see.” They said to him, “What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?” He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you too want to become His disciples?” And they reviled him, saying, “You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where He comes from.” The man answered, “Why, this is a marvel! You do not know where He comes from, and yet He opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, He could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?” And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him He said, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” He answered, “And who is He, Sir, that I may believe in Him?” Jesus said to him, “You have seen Him, and it is He who speaks to you.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped Him.

الإِنْجِيل: يوحنا ٩: ٣٨-١

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ، فِيمَا يَسُوعُ مُجْتَازٌ، رَأَى إِنْسَانًا أَعْمَى مُنْذُ مَوْلِدِهِ. فَسَأَلَهُ تَلَامِيذُهُ قَائِلِينَ: يَا رَبُّ، مَنْ أَخْطَأَ أَهَذَا أَمْ أَبَوَاهُ حَتَّى وُلِدَ أَعْمَى؟ أَجَابَ يَسُوعُ: لَا هَذَا أَخْطَأَ وَلَا أَبَوَاهُ، لَكِنْ لَتُظْهَرَ أَعْمَالُ اللَّهِ فِيهِ. يَنْبَغِي لِي أَنْ أَعْمَلَ أَعْمَالَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَنِي مَا دَامَ نَهَارٌ. يَأْتِي لَيْلٌ حَيْثُ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَحَدٌ أَنْ يَعْمَلَ. مَا دُمْتُ فِي الْعَالَمِ، فَأَنَا نُورُ الْعَالَمِ. قَالَ هَذَا، وَتَقَلَّ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ، وَصَنَعَ مِنْ تَفْلَتِهِ طِينًا، وَطَلَى بِالطِّينِ عَيْنَيِ الْأَعْمَى، وَقَالَ لَهُ: اذْهَبْ وَاغْتَسِلْ فِي بَرْكَةِ سِلْوَامَ (الَّذِي تَفْسِيرُهُ الْمُرْسَل). فَمَضَى وَاغْتَسَلَ وَعَادَ بَصِيرًا. فَالْجِيرَانُ وَالَّذِينَ كَانُوا يَرَوْنَهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنَّهُ كَانَ أَعْمَى قَالُوا: أَلَيْسَ هَذَا هُوَ الَّذِي كَانَ يَجْلِسُ وَيَسْتَعْطِي؟ فَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ هَذَا هُوَ، وَآخَرُونَ قَالُوا "إِنَّهُ يُشَبِّهُهُ". وَأَمَّا هُوَ فَكَانَ يَقُولُ "إِنِّي أَنَا هُوَ". فَقَالُوا لَهُ: كَيْفَ انْفَتَحَتْ عَيْنَاكَ؟ أَجَابَ ذَاكَ وَقَالَ: إِنْسَانٌ يُقَالُ لَهُ يَسُوعُ، صَنَعَ طِينًا وَطَلَى عَيْنَيَّ وَقَالَ لِي "اذْهَبْ إِلَى بَرْكَةِ سِلْوَامَ وَاغْتَسِلْ". فَمَضَيْتُ وَاغْتَسَلْتُ، فَأَبْصَرْتُ. فَقَالُوا لَهُ: أَيْنَ ذَاكَ؟ فَقَالَ: لَا أَعْلَمُ. فَاتَّوَا بِهِ، أَيُّ بِالَّذِي كَانَ قَبْلًا أَعْمَى إِلَى الْفَرِيسِيِّينَ. وَكَانَ حِينَ صَنَعَ يَسُوعُ الطِّينَ وَفَتَحَ عَيْنَيْهِ يَوْمَ سَبْتٍ. فَسَأَلَهُ الْفَرِيسِيُّونَ أَيْضًا، كَيْفَ أَبْصَرَ؟ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ: جَعَلَ عَلَى عَيْنَيَّ طِينًا ثُمَّ اغْتَسَلْتُ، فَأَنَا الْآنَ أَبْصِرُ. فَقَالَ قَوْمٌ مِنَ الْفَرِيسِيِّينَ: هَذَا الْإِنْسَانُ لَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ، لِأَنَّهُ لَا يَحْفَظُ السَّبْتَ. آخَرُونَ قَالُوا: كَيْفَ يَقْدِرُ إِنْسَانٌ خَاطِئٌ أَنْ يَعْمَلَ مِثْلَ هَذِهِ الْآيَاتِ؟ فَوَقَعَ بَيْنَهُمْ شِقَاقٌ. فَقَالُوا أَيْضًا لِلْأَعْمَى: مَاذَا تَقُولُ أَنْتَ عَنْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ إِنَّهُ فَتَحَ عَيْنَيْكَ؟ فَقَالَ: إِنَّهُ نَبِيٌّ. وَلَمْ يُصَدِّقِ الْيَهُودَ عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ كَانَ أَعْمَى فَأَبْصَرَ حَتَّى دَعَا أَبَوِي الَّذِي أَبْصَرَ وَسَأَلُوهُمَا قَائِلِينَ: أَهَذَا هُوَ ابْنُكُمَا الَّذِي تَقُولَانِ إِنَّهُ وُلِدَ أَعْمَى؟ فَكَيْفَ أَبْصَرَ الْآنَ؟ أَجَابَهُمْ أَبَوَاهُ وَقَالَا: نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا وَلَدُنَا، وَأَنَّهُ وُلِدَ أَعْمَى، وَأَمَّا كَيْفَ أَبْصَرَ الْآنَ فَلَا نَعْلَمُ، أَوْ مَنْ فَتَحَ عَيْنَيْهِ، فَنَحْنُ لَا نَعْلَمُ، هُوَ كَامِلُ السَّنِّ فَاسْأَلُوهُ، فَهُوَ يَتَكَلَّمُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ. قَالَ أَبَوَاهُ هَذَا، لِأَنَّهُمَا كَانَا يَخَافَانِ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ، لِأَنَّ الْيَهُودَ كَانُوا قَدْ تَعَاهَدُوا أَنَّهُ إِنْ اعْتَرَفَ أَحَدٌ بِأَنَّهُ الْمَسِيحُ، يُخْرِجُ مِنَ الْمَجْمَعِ. فَلِذَاكَ قَالَ أَبَوَاهُ، "هُوَ كَامِلُ السَّنِّ، فَاسْأَلُوهُ". فَدَعَا ثَانِيَةَ الْإِنْسَانِ الَّذِي كَانَ أَعْمَى وَقَالُوا لَهُ: أَعْطِ مَجْدًا لِلَّهِ، فَإِنَّا نَعْلَمُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْإِنْسَانَ خَاطِئٌ. فَأَجَابَ ذَاكَ وَقَالَ: أَخَاطِئُ هُوَ لَا أَعْلَمُ، إِنَّمَا أَعْلَمُ شَيْئًا وَاحِدًا، أَنِّي كُنْتُ أَعْمَى، وَالْآنَ أَنَا أَبْصِرُ. فَقَالُوا لَهُ أَيْضًا: مَاذَا صَنَعَ بِكَ؟ كَيْفَ فَتَحَ عَيْنَيْكَ؟ أَجَابَهُمْ: قَدْ أَخْبَرْتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تَسْمَعُوا، فَمَاذَا تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَسْمَعُوا أَيْضًا؟ أَلَعَلَّكُمْ أَنْتُمْ أَيْضًا تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَصِيرُوا لَهُ تَلَامِيذٌ؟ فَتَسْتَمُوهُ وَقَالُوا لَهُ: أَنْتَ تَلْمِيزُ ذَاكَ، وَأَمَّا نَحْنُ فَإِنَّا تَلَامِيذُ مُوسَى، وَنَحْنُ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ كَلَّمَ مُوسَى، فَأَمَّا هَذَا، فَلَا نَعْلَمُ مِنْ أَيْنَ هُوَ. أَجَابَ الرَّجُلُ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ: إِنْ فِي هَذَا عَجَبٌ أَنْتُمْ مَا تَعْلَمُونَ مِنْ أَيْنَ هُوَ وَقَدْ فَتَحَ عَيْنَيَّ، وَنَحْنُ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْمَعُ لِلْخَطَاةِ، وَلَكِنْ إِذَا أَحَدٌ اتَّقَى اللَّهَ وَعَمِلَ مَشِيتَتَهُ، فَلَهُ يَسْتَجِيبُ. مُنْذُ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يُسْمَعْ أَنَّ أَحَدًا فَتَحَ عَيْنَيَّ مَوْلُودٍ أَعْمَى. فَلَوْ لَمْ يَكُنْ هَذَا مِنَ اللَّهِ، لَمْ يَقْدِرْ أَنْ يَفْعَلَ شَيْئًا. أَجَابُوهُ وَقَالُوا لَهُ: إِنَّكَ فِي الْخَطَايَا قَدْ وُلِدْتَ بِجُمْلَتِكَ، فَأَنْتَ تَعْلَمُنَا؟ فَأَخْرَجُوهُ خَارِجًا. وَسَمِعَ يَسُوعُ أَنَّهُمْ أَخْرَجُوهُ خَارِجًا، فَوَجَدَهُ وَقَالَ لَهُ: أَتُؤْمِنُ أَنْتَ بِابْنِ اللَّهِ؟ فَأَجَابَ ذَاكَ، وَقَالَ: فَمَنْ هُوَ يَا سَيِّدُ لِأَوْمِنَ بِهِ؟ فَقَالَ لَهُ يَسُوعُ: قَدْ رَأَيْتُهُ وَالَّذِي يَتَكَلَّمُ مَعَكَ هُوَ هُوَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ: قَدْ آمَنْتُ يَا رَبُّ، وَسَجَدَ لَهُ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS:

- ❖ **BOWLING NIGHT: Friday June 18th.** We are hosting a bowling night at Hometown Bowl in South San Francisco. Ages 18-39. Event will start 6:30 PM until 9:30 PM! It will be \$20 for two hours of bowling and shoe rentals. Must RSVP so we are able to rent out the appropriate number of lanes. Please call or send Shadi Azar a text at (415) 279-2533.
- ❖ **CAMP THY 2021: June 20th-25th.** Divine Liturgy, Luncheon, and introductory day on June 20th @ St. Nicholas Church. Monday (6/21), Tuesday (6/22), and Thursday (6/24) to be hosted at Saint Nicholas. Wednesday (6/23) & Friday (6/25), our Sister Churches in Sacramento & Los Altos will be hosting us for activities. Camp Registration also includes a ticket to **Great America** on Thursday, June 17th, 2021. Register Now: <https://form.jotform.com/92868742644168>

CONGRATULATIONS:

And best wishes to the 2021 graduates:

- ❖ **Jamie Msalam**
- ❖ **Brianna Rantisi**
- ❖ **Alexa Christina Dabai**
- ❖ **Adriana Saoud**
- ❖ **Rami Bader**
- ❖ **Andrew Abuyaghi**
- ❖ **John Rantisi**
- ❖ **Yazan Dabit**
- ❖ **Tarik Dabit**
- ❖ **Mallak Zuhair Mukatash**
- ❖ **Anthony Mufarreh**
- ❖ **Nicholas Barksdale**
- ❖ **Jahna Mousa**
- ❖ **Nadia & Issa Keishk**

Good luck and God Bless you all!

TREE OF LIFE:

We have updated our Tree of Life in the back of our Church. If you would like to donate an engraved Leaf to place on the Tree in memory of your loved one, please contact the Church office.



Metropolitan Anthony: SUNDAY OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

At the end of today's reading, words stand that we pass by very often. The blind man says to Christ, "And who is the Son of God?" and Christ answers, "You have seen Him and He is speaking to you".

For us, the first words are so natural; the first event of our life, the first event of a meeting is that we see a person, but what was this wonder of this man who had never seen anything in the world and who, touched by the life-giving hand of Christ, of a sudden saw! And the first person he saw was his Lord and his God, Christ, the Son of Man.

I remember a Romanian writer telling us in his biography what definitive, what profound impression the face of the first man he remembers made. He remembers himself as a child, and over him - the inexpressibly beautiful face of his father who was a priest, looking at him, with all human love, with all the tenderness, and all the depth of a human gaze. And he says that this was a first vision for him in the icon which a human face can be when it is lit from inside by love and by understanding, by depth and by eternity, a vision of God. Here this man saw God in the features of Him who was God and who had become the Son of Man.

I would like to attract your attention also to something different. On another occasion we read the story of a paralytic healed by Christ; and the Church, singing the praises of God on that occasion says, "As this man found no one to show mercy on him, the Son of Mary, God Himself, stooped down and met his need". Because this man had not found another man to show mercy, to show compassion, to show concern, God has come down to him. Now we live in another time, we live in the time with God truly having become man in our midst, and more than this: He has made us to be living members of His body, an incarnate, concrete presence of His Incarnation, the temples of the Spirit, the place of the Presence. Now any man who is in need should at the same time find in each of us a man stirred to compassion, taught mercy and understanding by God become Man, and at the same time, simultaneously, meeting with us, he should be able to see the love of God in our eyes and to perceive the active, imaginative, creative action of divine charity in our words and in our deeds.

Since Christ has come into the world, the time of man has come; but not of man as severed from God, separated from Him, alien to Him, but a wonderful time when in man, in those who have discovered Christ, who have believed in Him, who have become one with Him - those men to whom God has entrusted the care of His world - people can both receive divine and human mercy and see human compassion, human love, human joy.

Is not this a great call, is not that something which should make us capable of great things? The time of God and the time of man is one, not only in the incarnate Son of God, but in this mysterious incarnate presence which each of us represents, the presence of God in the flesh, in human compassion, in human love, and this is an earnest claim and a challenge which the Gospel presents us with. Are we to one another and to those further afield that kind of humanity? New humanity, new creatures, new men with the newness of a renewed life, the life of God. This is what we are called to be.

Let us then reflect on it, make a decision, make a move and become an icon, a vision of God, not only in the shining of love in our eyes, not only in the words we speak, but also in every action and deed, so that the time of man should have become the day of the Son of Man, the day of the Lord.

مشروع الله المستمر

في إنارة ليل العالم

من طالع حادثة شفاء الأعمى منذ مولده، وكانت له بصيرة الإيمان، أدرك كيف يشرق نور المسيح في ليل العالم، وأدرك أن يسوع يعمل باستمرار حتى يبيد الظلام من قلوبنا. هذا أكدّه يسوع بطرائق ثلاث مختلفة. ففي تأكيده: «ما دمت في العالم فأنا نور العالم» (يوحنا ٩: ٥)، لا يقصد أنه كان نور العالم حتى صعد إلى السموات، وأنه من ثم يفقد العالم النور. نعرف أن يسوع حاضر بيننا على الدوام، حيث ترك جسده، أي الكنيسة، حاملة نوره، بنعمة الروح القدس الفاعل فيها. وهذا ترجمه يسوع عندما أرسل تلاميذه ليشرّوا المسكونة بنور قيامته وتعليمه وخلاصه. وهذه الخبرة مستمرة منذ ذلك الحين ونحن معاونون فيها.

أما في تأكيده: «يأتي ليل حين لا يستطيع أحد أن يعمل» (يوحنا ٩: ٤)، فلا يقصد به تعاقب الليالي. فخبرة الكنيسة عبر السهرانيات والصلوات الليلية خير دليل على كيفية استعادة أعضاء جسد المسيح من الجهاد الروحي الليلي، ليخزنوا في ذواتهم طاقة ويعملوا عمل الله طيلة النهار. لعلّه يحذّرنا هنا من ليل آخر، حين يفقد الملح طعمه: «الملح جيد. ولكن إذا صار الملح بلا ملح فبماذا تصلحونه؟ ليكن لكم في أنفسكم ملح» (مرقص ٩: ٥٠)، أو حين يفقد الإيمان على الأرض: «ولكن متى جاء ابن الإنسان أَلَعَلَّه يجد الإيمان على الأرض؟» (لوقا ١٨: ٨). فالمقصود بالملح هو التمييز الذي يجب أن يواكب كل عمل ليكون على حسب قلب الله، وأن يكون عملنا مبنياً على أرضية الإيمان به ليصل إلى غايته التي حددها يسوع: «فليُضئ نوركم هكذا قدام الناس لكي يروا أعمالكم الحسنة ويمجدوا أباكم الذي في السموات» (متى ٥: ١٦)! نعم، نور العالم هو أن يأتي الجميع إلى تمجيد الأب الذي أرسل يسوع وأنار به العالم. حاشى إذاً ألا يبقى الله شاهد في العالم!

وأخيراً، في تأكيده الثالث: «ينبغي أن أعمل أعمال الذي أرسلني ما دام نهار» (يوحنا ٩: ٤)، يطرح علينا يسوع صلب رسالته وأساسها. فهو مرسل لغاية محدّدة وهي خلاصنا، أي «لتظهر أعمال الله» فينا (يوحنا ٩: ٣). فمنذ تجسّده لاح النور وصار نهاراً بعد ليل، ولن تكتمل رسالة يسوع إلّا في مجيئه الثاني، حينما سيُظهر حقيقة أعمال الله الكائنة فيه. ونحن نعاين عربونه منذ الآن في شهادة القديسين عبر العصور والأجيال.

في حادثة الأعمى، يتّضح لنا أن ما يراه يسوع يختلف عمّا يراه التلاميذ بالعين المجردة، وعمّا نراه نحن في حالنا اليوم أيضاً. أمامنا شهادة الأعمى وقوة شكيمته غير الجارحة لأحد، بل المنيرة بتدرّجها وصفائها وحقانيّتها. فالأعمى ابتداءً بتوصيف الأحداث: «إنسان يُقال له يسوع صنع طيناً وطلّى عينيّ، وقال لي: اذهب إلى بركة سلوام واغتسل. فمضيتُ واغتسلتُ فأبصرتُ»؛ ثم عبّر عمّا يعتقد بمن شفاه: «إنّه نبيّ»؛ وبعدها تحاشى الدخول في لعبة الحكم عليه وإدانتته: «أخطئ هو؟ لستُ أعلم. إنّما أعلم شيئاً واحداً: أنّي كنتُ أعمى والآن أبصر»؛ وأخيراً، فسّر ما جرى على ضوء علاقة يسوع بالله: «نعلم أنّ الله لا يسمع للخطاة. ولكن إن كان أحد يتّقي الله ويفعل مشيئته، فهذا يسمع. منذ الدهر لم يُسمع أنّ أحداً فتح عينيّ مولود أعمى. لو لم يكن هذا من الله لم يقدر على أن يفعل شيئاً» (يوحنا ٩: ١١، ١٧، ٢٥، ٣١-٣٣). هكذا ظهر نور عمل الله على أرض الواقع، رغم ليل رفض قبول النور والحقيقة، أي يسوع. هنا يصحّ القول: «وهذه هي الدينونة: أنّ النور قد جاء إلى العالم، وأحبّ الناس الظلمة أكثر من النور، لأنّ أعمالهم كانت شريرة» (يوحنا ٣: ١٩).

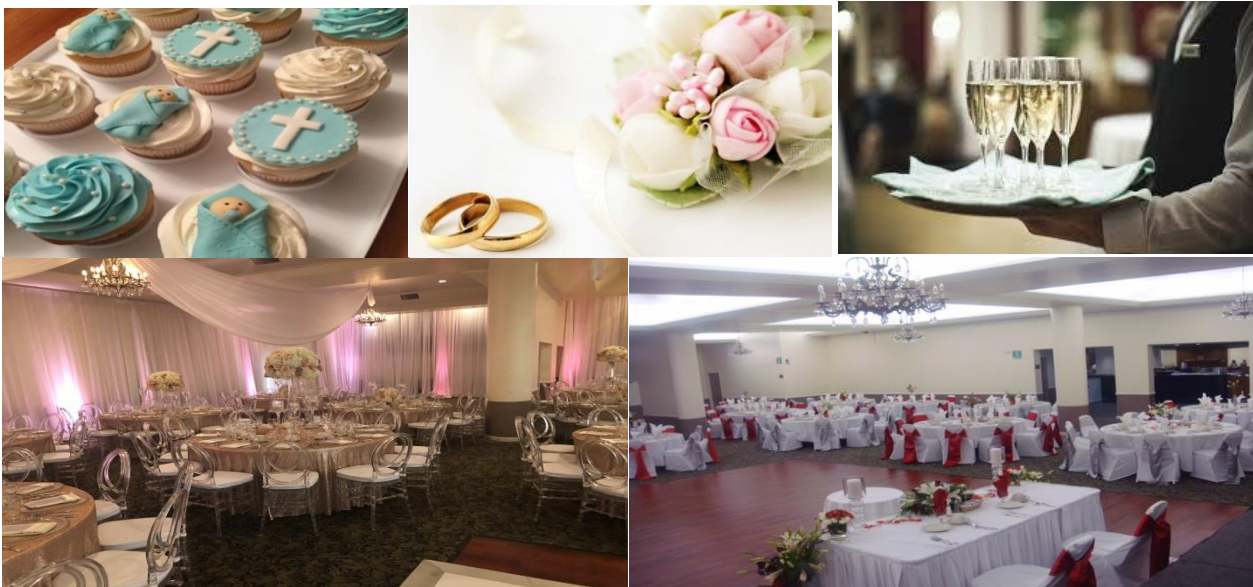
نشكر الله أنّ مشروع إنارة العالم مستمرّ، رغم ما يتعرّض له من تصدّ ورفض ومحاربة. هوذا الله يعمل عبر العميان الكثيرين، على مرّ العصور، الذين تعلموا أن يبصروه ويؤمنوا به ويسجدوا له ويشهدوا له، على مثال الأعمى منذ مولده (يوحنا ٩: ٣٧-٣٨). هذا المشروع مطروح علينا، وهو لا يحتاج إلى مناقصة ليرسي على فلان دون غيره، فالأمر ليس منافسة أو احتكاراً أو بطولة، بل خدمة متواضعة ترفع عن العالم أتعابه ليرتاح في نور المسيح ويُقبل إلى خدمته. مشروع إنارة العالم يطال الكلّ، خصوصاً الذين فقدوا آية إمكانية للرؤية. إليكم كيف أشار يسوع إلى من كانوا في زمانه من عداد فاقد المقتنين: «إنّ العشارين والزواني يسبقونكم إلى ملكوت الله» (متى ٢١: ٣١). إنّها أجمل بشرى سطرها هؤلاء المحرومون من النور بإقبالهم إلى النور. فلا نستكنّن إلى وضعنا إن ظننا أنّنا من أهل البرّ، ولا نياسنّ إن كنّا خطاة، فنور المسيح ينير هؤلاء وأولئك سواسية ليصلوا إلى النور. هلاً أقبلنا إليه معاً لنكون «نور العالم» (متى ٥: ١٤)؟

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