

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

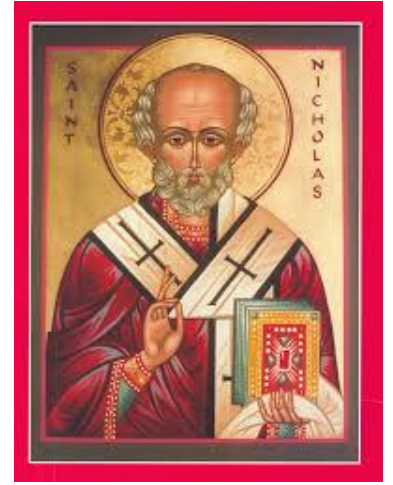
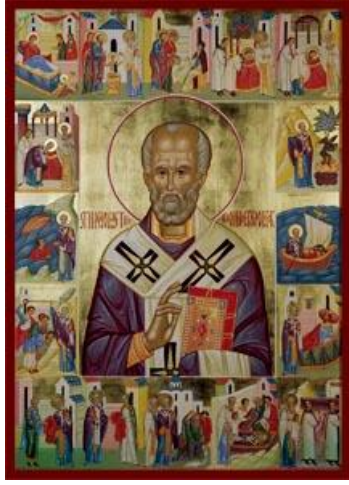
(586) 214-4428 revbaalbaki@yahoo.com

Sub-Dn. Ilyan Baalbaki

Sub-Dn. Tariq Rantisi

Parish Council Chairman: Azar Azar

Parish Council Vice Chairman: Salim Qaru



Sunday, January 2, 2022

Sunday before Theophany of Christ

CHURCH IS OPEN! If you plan to attend, please make sure to wear a mask 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!

HAPPY
New Year

January 6th Celebration of the Great Feast of Theophany

عيد الظهور الالهي (الغطاس)

Matins will begin at 10:30 AM followed by Divine Liturgy at 11 AM.

Service of Water Blessing will take place after Divine Liturgy.

House Blessing Starts on Monday, January 10th.

As the tradition of our Orthodox Church, V. Rev. Fr. George Baalbaki will start his visitation for house blessings on Monday, January 10th. This year, due to current circumstances, if you would like the Priest to bless your home, please call the church office (415-648-5200) or Fr. George's cellphone: (586-214-4428) to schedule a visit.

THE EPISTLE: 2 Timothy (4:5-8)

Timothy, my son, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved His appearing.

الرسالة: ٢ تيموثاوس ٤: ٥-٨

يا ولدي تيموثاوس تيقظ في كل شيء واحتمل المشقات واعمل عمل المبشر وأوف خدمتك. أما أنا فقد أريق السكيب علي وقت انحلاي قد اقترب. وقد جاهدت الجهاد الحسن وأتممت شوطي وحفظت الإيمان. وإنما يبقى محفوظاً لي إكليل العدل الذي يجزييني به في ذلك اليوم الرب الديان العادل، لا إياي فقط بل جميع الذين يحبون ظهوره أيضاً.



THE GOSPEL: Mark (1:1-8)

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." John the Baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes He Who is mightier than I, the strap of Whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

الإنجيل: مرقس ١: ١-١٨

بدء إنجيل يسوع المسيح ابن الله كما هو مكتوب في الأنبياء: ها أنذا مرسل ملاكي أمام وجهك يهتئ طريقك قدامك. صوت صارخ في البرية أعدوا طريق الرب، اجعلوا سبله قويمه. كان يوحنا يعمد في البرية ويكرز بمعمودية التوبة لغفران الخطايا. وكان يخرج إليه جميع أهل بلد اليهودية وأورشليم فيعتمدون جميعهم منه في نهر الأردن معترفين بخطاياهم. وكان يوحنا يلبس وبر الإبل، وعلى حذاه من جلد، ويأكل جراداً وعسلًا برياً. وكان يكرز قائلاً: إنه يأتي بعدي من هو أقوى مني، وأنا لا أستحق أن أنحني وأحلّ سير حذائه. أنا عمدتكم بالماء، وأما هو فيعتمدكم بالروح القدس.

قناديل الهيكل ALTAR CANDLES



Offered by **Khader and Lisa Atwan** in loving memory of, **Naimeh Jaghab, Basem Jaghab, Issam Jaghab, Christopher Issa Ghanem, and Basima Jaghab Atwan.**

May Their Memories be Eternal.

Holy Bread of Oblation is Offered by:

† **David Hanhan and his family**, in loving memory of His Son, **Joseph David Hanhan.**

May His Memory Be Eternal!

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS:

***ST. TIMOTHY ORTHODOX CHURCH BBQ AND SHOOT:**

Saturday, January 8, 2022 from 10 AM- 4 PM. St. Joseph's Retreat Center: 1931 Capell Valley Road, Napa, CA 94558. What to bring: outdoor clothing, favorite lead launcher, favorite main dish or side dish to share, and drinks are provided. RSVP with *Mike Holland (503-646-9324) or Fr. John Christianson (831-566-8861).*

***GENERAL PARISH MEETING:**

Sunday, January 23rd, 2021. More details to follow

***SUNDAY SCHOOL IS NOW IN SESSION!:**

Please encourage your children and teens to join our curriculum. We are also looking for more teachers. If you have any questions reach out to Esther Clemence Azar. *Thank You!*

SOME REMINDERS:

*Parents, don't neglect your duty before God to take an active part: Try your best for your children to not miss Church Services and all of the Youth (children, teens, and young adults) Activities and Events.

*Practice personal evangelism. A sincere welcome shows visitors you are happy they joined us.

*Young adults should be Pledging Members of the parish.

*Notify Father George in advance of your departure, return, those who are sick, and those that need to be visited.

*All enjoy fellowship. Try to offer and sponsor a Coffee Hour after services.

Metropolitan Anthony
A WEEK AFTER CHRISTMAS

In imagination we think ourselves 2000 years back. What wonder should fill us: a week, and the world has become different. The world that had been for thousands of years like the lost sheep was now the sheep found, taken upon His shoulders by the Son of God become the son of man. The unbridgeable gap that sin had created between God and man was now at least incipiently bridged; God had entered into history, God Himself had become man. God had taken flesh and all things visible, what we perceive in our blindness as dead, inert matter, could in His body recognise itself in glory. Something absolutely new had occurred; the world was no longer the same. Moreover, there is another aspect to the Incarnation. God had become man, but God in Christ had spoken words of truth, that was decisive, that gradually like yeast dropped into dough was to change the world; God had revealed to us the greatness of man. Christ becoming man was evidence, is and will remain forever evidence, that man is so vast, so deep, so mysteriously deep, that he can not only contain the divine presence as a temple, but unite himself with God, become partaker of the divine nature, as St. Peter puts it in his Epistle. And again that man is great, and that however far we fall away from our vocation, however unworthy we may become of it, God will never re-establish with us a relationship which is less than that of His fatherhood and our condition of sons and daughters of the Most High. The prodigal son was asking his father to receive him as a hireling now that he was unworthy of being called a son; but the father did not accept it. When the son made his confession, the father stopped him before he could even pronounce those words, because God does not accept our debasement, we are no slaves and no hirelings. Has not Christ said to His disciples, "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know the will of his master, and lo, I have told you everything."

Again, the proclamation in Christ and by Him that what matters supremely is every person, that He lives and dies for every one of us, that it is not collective units that matter, but each of us. Each of us, tells us the Book of Revelation, possesses for God a name, a name which will be revealed to us at the end of time, but a name which no one can know but God and he who receives it, because this name is our relationship to God, unique, unrepeatable. Each of us is unique for Him. What a wonder! The ancient world knew of nations and races, it knew of slaves and owners, it knew of categories of people, exactly in the same way in which the modern world that is gradually becoming not only secular but pagan, distinguishes categories and types and groups; God knows only living men and women.

And then a new justice was introduced, or rather proclaimed by Him, not the distributive and retributive justice of the law, another justice. When Christ says to us, "let your justice be beyond that of the scribes and pharisees," He speaks of the way in which God treats each of us. He accepts each of us as we are. He accepts good and evil, He rejoices in the good, and He dies because of and for the sake of what is evil. And that is what God calls us to remember, and how He calls us to be and to behave - not only within our Christian circle but in the whole world, to look at every person with that kind of justice; not judging and condemning, but seeing in each person the beauty which God has impressed upon it and which we call "the image of God in man". Venerate this beauty, work for this beauty to shine in all glory, dispelling what is evil and dark and making it possible, by the recognition of beauty in each other, for this beauty to become reality and to conquer.

He has taught us also about love which the ancient world did not know, and the modern world, like the old one, is so afraid of: A love that accepted to be vulnerable, helpless, giving, sacrificial; a love that gives without counting, a love that gives not only what it possesses, but

itself. That is what the Gospel, that is what the Incarnation brought into the world, and this has remained in the world. Christ said that "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot comprehend it," but it cannot put it out either. And this light shines and shall shine, but it will conquer only if we undertake to be its heralds and the doers of these commandments of justice and of love, if we accept God's vision of the world and bring to it our faith, that is, our certainty and our hope, which is the only power that can help others to start anew; but to start anew they must see newness in us. The world has become incipiently new by the union of God with man, when the Word became flesh; it is for us to be a revelation of this newness, the resplendence and shining of God in the darkness or the dusk of this world.

May God grant us courage and love and greatness of heart to be His messengers and His witnesses, and may the blessing of the Lord be upon you by His grace and love towards mankind always, now and forever and world without end.

المخاض الأليم والواعد

منذ تجسّد المسيح وبدأ بشارته العلنيّة وضعنا الإنجيل في مخاض أليم وواعد بأن. فقول النبيّ الذي تنبّاه الإنجيليّ مرقس عن شخص المعمدان على ضوء التجسّد: «ها أنا أرسل أمام وجهك ملاكي الذي يهيئ طريقك قدامك» (١: ٢) يضعنا في سياق انتقال من واقع إلى آخر يهيئ فيه المعمدان أترابه لاستقبال المسيح واقتباله مخلصًا.

لا شكّ في أنّ هذا السياق التاريخيّ الذي استهلّ به مرقس إنجيله لم يفقد حيويّته وأنيّته اليوم بالنسبة إلينا، وإن كان الدور التاريخيّ الذي اضطلع به المعمدان حينها انتهى مع ابتداء يسوع بشارته العلنيّة. هذا لأنّه لا يمكن أن نكون تلاميذ المسيح وأخصّاءه إلّا إذا احترمنا الشرط الذي تمثّله دعوة يوحنا المعمدان بالنسبة إلى أترابه: الاعتراف بالخطايا والتوبة عنها، وانتظار استعلان من يسكب نعمة الروح القدس الغافرة والمحركة والمحيية.

أشار مرقس بحقّ إلى هذا الواقع الجديد عندما افتتح إنجيله بهذه العبارة: «بدء إنجيل يسوع المسيح ابن الله» (١: ١). إذا كان «المكتوب يُقرأ من عنوانه»، كما يقول المثل الشعبيّ، فهذا يعني أنّنا أمام بشريّ ما بعدها بشريّ، لأنّ الربّ نفسه هو منطلقها ومضمونها، من جهة، ونحن مداها ومرماها، من جهة أخرى. أمام هذا المُعطى الإلهيّ-الإنسانيّ، الذي لا يمرّ عليه الزمن مهما طال، لا يسعنا سوى أن نأخذ مأخذ مرقس في تنبيّه قول النبيّ في حديثه عن المعمدان: «أعدّوا طريق الربّ اصنعوا سبله مستقيمة» (١: ٣).

أن يطلّ الله على الإنسان بشخص يسوع المسيح هي البشريّ، بامتياز، في التاريخ البشريّ كلّ. فإن شاء المرء أن يذهب إلى هذا اللقاء لا بدّ له من أن يعيد النظر بنفسه. فلقاء كهذا يتطلّب جهوزيّة داخلية تضع المرء في سياق البشريّ المسيحيّة: الحياة الحقيقيّة مع الله ومع القريب. وهذا يعني انتقالًا على مستويات عدّة: من الاعوجاج إلى الاستقامة، من الانحدار إلى النهوض، من الركود إلى الحيويّة، من الغشاوة إلى الوضوح، من الضلال إلى الحقّ، من الإحباط إلى الرجاء، من الهروب إلى المواجهة، من الضياع إلى الوعي، من الشرّ إلى الصلاح، من العداوة إلى المصالحة، من الكذب إلى الصدق. إنّهُ انتقال إلى الإيمان بيسوع المسيح إلهاً ومخلصًا.

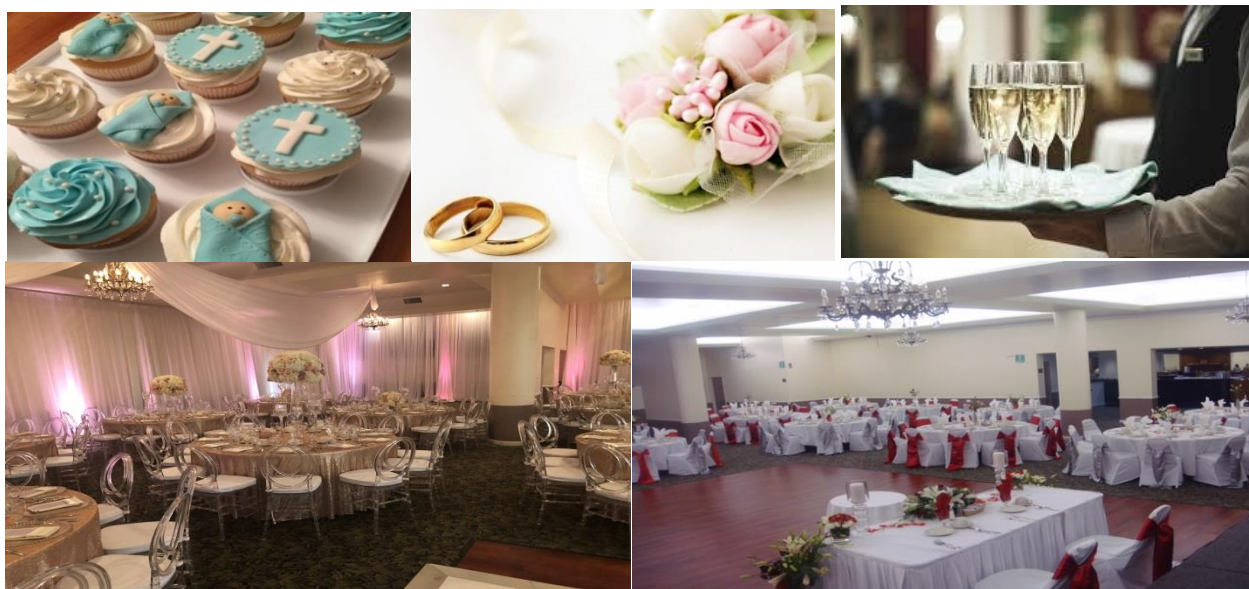
هكذا يصير طريق القلب مفتوحًا لاقتبال الروح القدس وعمله المحيي في حياتنا. هذا هو ما نترجّاه لأنفسنا ونحن على أبواب الاحتفال بعيد الظهور الإلهيّ، حينما نزل الروح بهيئة حمامة على المعتمد في الأردنّ، وسُمع صوت من السماء يقول: «هذا ابني الحبيب الذي به سررت» (مرقس ١: ٩-١١). هذا اقتبلناه في جرن المعموديّة ونحن مدعوّون اليوم إلى أن نعمل على أن يكون واقعًا معيوشًا ومستمرًا فينا. هكذا تصير دعوة المعمدان التاريخيّة تلك دعوة إلينا اليوم تحمل في طياتها ما لم يطاله الزمن: عمل الله المستمرّ لخلاص الإنسان يومًا بعد يوم.

صوت المعمدان صارخ اليوم وهو يدعونا إلى تعرية ذواتنا أمام الربّ لكي يغسلها ويعطينا إيّاها من جديد، فنبرأ من كلّ داء ونتعافى، ونصبح أصحاء وعقلاء، أحرارًا من قيد الأهواء والشرّ والشيطان. اليوم يوم إعلان هذا الإنجيل إلينا، ينقلنا، عبر مخاض أليم، إلى عيش شفافنا وخلصنا منذ الآن. إنّهُ مخاض واعد بتضافر إرادة الإنسان وتواضعه مع عمل الروح القدس. ألا كان نصيبنا كنصيب يسوع في الأردنّ لأنّ هذه هي إرادة الله من جهتنا!

متروبوليت جبل لبنان سلوان

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