

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**

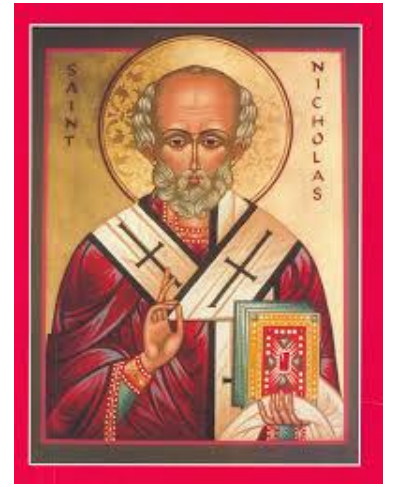
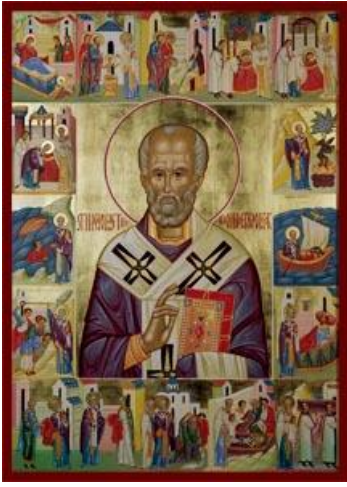
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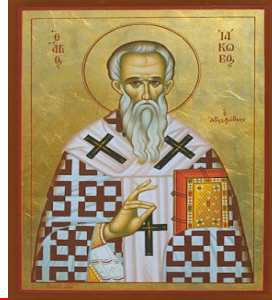
Parish Council Chairman: **Azar Azar**

Parish Council Vice Chairman: **Salim Qaru**



Sunday, October 23, 2022

The Holy Apostle James the "Brother of God"



THE EPISTLE: Galatians (1:11-19)

Brethren, I would have you know that the Gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the Church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people; so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when He Who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through His grace, was pleased to reveal His Son to me, in order that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were Apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other Apostles except James the Lord's brother.

الرسالة: غلاطية

يا إخوة، أعلمكم أن الإنجيل الذي بشرت به، ليس بحسب الإنسان. لأنني لم أتعلمه أو أتعلّمه من إنسان، بل بإعلان يسوع المسيح. فإنكم قد سمعتم بسيرتي قديماً في ملة اليهود أنني كنت أضطهد كنيسة الله بإفراط وأدمرها. وأزید تقدماً في ملة اليهود على كثيرين من أترابي في جنسي، بكوني أوفر منهم غيراً على تقاليدات آبائي. فلما ارتضى الله، الذي أفرزني من جوف أمي ودعاني بنعمته. أن يعلن ابنه في لأبشر به بين الأمم، لساعتي لم أضغ إلى لحم ودم. ولا صعدت إلى اورشليم إلى الرسل الذين قبلي، بل انطلقت إلى ديار العرب، وبعد ذلك رجعت إلى دمشق. ثم إنني بعد ثلاث سنين، صعدت إلى اورشليم لأزور بطرس، فأقمت عنده خمسة عشر يوماً. ولم أر غيره من الرسل سوى يعقوب أخي الرب.

THE GOSPEL: Luke (8:26-39)

At that time, Jesus arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And as He stepped out on land, there met Him a man from the city who had demons; for a long time he had worn no clothes, and he lived not in a house but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out

and fell down before him, and said with a loud voice, "What hast Thou to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech Thee, do not torment me." For Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. [For many a time it had seized him; he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters, but he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the desert.] Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. And they begged Jesus not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside; and they begged Jesus to let them enter these. So, He gave them leave. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country. Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. And those who had seen it told them how he who had been possessed with demons was healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gadarenes asked Jesus to depart from them; for they were seized with great fear; so He got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with Jesus; but Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your home, and declare all that God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city all that Jesus had done for him.

الإنجيل: لوقا

في ذلك الزمان، أتى يسوع إلى كورة الجرّجسيين، فاستقبله رجلٌ من المدينة به شياطينٌ منذ زمانٍ طويلٍ، ولم يكن يلبس ثوباً ولا يأوي إلى بيت، بل إلى القبور. فلما رأى يسوع، صاح وخرّ له، وقال بصوتٍ عظيم: "ما لي ولك يا يسوع ابن الله العليّ؟ أطلب إليك ألاّ تُعذّبيّ." فإنه أمر الروح النجس أن يخرج من الإنسان، لأنه كان قد اختطفه منذ زمانٍ طويلٍ، وكان يُربط بسلاسل، ويحبس بقيود، فيقطع الربط ويساق من الشيطان إلى البراري. فسأله يسوع قائلاً: "ما اسمك؟" فقال له: "أجيون"، لأن شياطين كثيرين كانوا قد دخلوا فيه. وطلبوا إليه أن لا يأمرهم بالذهاب إلى الهاوية. وكان هناك قطع خنازير كثيرة ترعى في الجبل. فطلبوا إليه أن يأذن لهم بالدخول فيها، فأذن لهم. فخرج الشياطين من الإنسان، ودخلوا في الخنازير. فوثب القطيع عن الجرف إلى البحيرة فأختنق. فلما رأى الرعاة ما حدث، هربوا وأخبروا في المدينة وفي الحقول. فخرجوا ليروا ما حدث وأثوا إلى يسوع، فوجدوا الإنسان الذي خرجت منه الشياطين جالساً عند قدمي يسوع لابساً صريح العقل، فخافوا. وأخبرهم الناظرون أيضاً كيف أبرئ المجنون. فسأله جميع جمهور كورة الجرّجسيين أن يتصرف عنهم لأنه اعتراهم خوفٌ عظيم. فدخل السفينة ورجع. فسأله الرجل الذي خرجت منه الشياطين أن يكون معه. فصرفه يسوع قائلاً: "ارجع إلى بيتك وحدث بما صنع الله إليك." فذهب وهو ينادي في المدينة كلها بما صنع إليه يسوع.

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES to Shadi and Amanda Massad for the Churching of their baby boy, Samer Shadi Massad. And to the Grandparents, Samer & Lamis Massad and Jeries & Suhair Hanhan. May God grant them many years!

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!

October is Youth Month in our Archdiocese. During this month, we encourage our youth to Read the Epistles, Take the Collections, Usher, Chant and Sing, and Take Part in Church Activities. Please encourage and help our youth participate in the life of the Church during October and throughout the year. **Please contact Church office or Ilyan Baalbaki** if you'd like your teen to participate in any of the roles listed: Epistle reader, chanter, usher, and sermons.

☞ **YOUNG ADULTS AT THE EXPLORATORIUM: For 18+ : Thursday, October 20th from 6PM-10PM.** We will meet out front by the entrance at the Exploratorium @ 6 PM. Purchase your tickets from the Exploratorium website. We hope to see you there!

☞ **TEEN SOYO BOWLING NIGHT: Friday, October 21st at 7 PM @ Classic Bowl .** Please contact Claudine Batarse or Ilyan Baalbaki for more information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS:

- **ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH MEN'S FELLOWSHIP: October 25th at 6 PM.** Every fourth Tuesday of every month, the Men's Fellowship get together at Church Banquet Hall. Please join us for dinner and gathering with good company and Bible discussion.
- **ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH LADIES AUXILIARY ARABIAN NIGHT: Friday, October 28th, 2022 at 6PM.** Ladies, come join us for dinner, dancing and fun at Tannourine Restaurant: 120 W 25th Ave, San Mateo, CA 94403. Cost \$65- seats are limited. Come dress to impress in your best Arabian outfit for a chance to win best dressed! To RSVP, please contact Inam Shami (650) 270-3369 or Randa Shatara (415) 871-1043.
- **ST. NICHOLAS ANNUAL THANKSGIVING FAMILY NIGHT: Saturday, November 19th, 2022 at 6 PM.** All you can eat buffet: 20 types of mezze, 13 hot buffet menu and assorted desserts. Featuring live music by Nader Zaki, Ashur Dawood and Maestro Radwan Shakshir & his Ensemble. You don't want to miss this! \$60 Adult | \$30 for 12 and under. For tickets, contact Church (415)648-5200, Jeries Tannous (650)740-9263 or Janet Baqleh (650)438-7371.
- **SAVE THESE DATES FOR OUR UPCOMING EVENTS OF 2022:**
 - December 11th: Parish Council Elections
 - December 17th: St. Nicholas Christmas Party

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh The healing of the man of Gergesene

How familiar is this story to us. Yet every time we read it we rediscover something in it which touches our heart, or gives a new light to our mind. And to-day I would like to attract your attention to three features of this passage.

The first is the attitude of the devils, of the powers of evil, to their victims. The powers of evil have no other intention or desire than to take possession of a living creature and to make it both a sufferer and one that will fulfil their will. The Fathers of the Church teach us that the devils can have no direct action in this world; all they can do is enslave human beings and through them work the evil within them. So this is what these powers of evil had intended: to enslave these men and to make them instruments of destruction, but at the same time to make them suffer for it.

When Christ commanded them to leave their victims they cried, shall I say, for a place of refuge, a place where they could dwell and work destruction. And Christ allowed them to in-dwell the pigs. Pigs, in the eyes of Jews, were a symbol of impurity; the request to be lodged in their bodies was a sign for all who could understand - and every Jew could - that they were as impure as the impurest of the animals. But what happened next was a demonstration to people of what happens when we allow ourselves to be possessed of evil, when we allow passions to have power over us - hatred, lust, jealousy, and all the passions of body and soul. Being possessed by them we are doomed to destruction, as this herd ended in death.

We should remember this because we do not always realise how much we are in the grip, in the power of those things which rule our life: likes and dislikes, hatreds, resentments and so on. We are not only possessed, but we are also working evil through our subjection to the power of evil. And the warning is clear: if we only allow evil to take possession of us completely, it will mean death; not physical death, but a total, tragic alienation from all that is life: from God, from love, from beauty, from meaning. We cannot fall out of existence but we can be possessed of an existence which is a ghostly one, an existence without life, without content - a shell that is empty, and yet a torment And in contrast to this we see the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God become Man. He is the Creator, He is the Lord, He is the Saviour of the whole world; and He

forgets everything, as it were, the whole of creation to pay attention to nothing but these two men who are in need of salvation, indeed He is prepared to leave ninety-nine righteous, whole people who do not need Him at that moment alone in order to give all His attention, all His life, indeed all His power to save these two men. In the face of all the need of the world He can see every individual need and respond to it with all His love, all His compassion, all His understanding and all His divine power to save and to heal.

There is a third group of people whom we see in action in this Gospel story; it is the inhabitants of the country. They had known of the desperate condition of these two men; they were told of what Christ did for them; they were told who their master was, who was their tormentor; should they not have come to give glory to God and thank Him for delivering the two men from the power of evil? NO! All they saw in the act of Christ was that they were deprived of their herd of swine.

What mattered to them the wholeness and the life and the salvation of these two men? They were deprived of what was important to them, what mattered to them more than a human life, and they asked Christ to leave their borders, to go because they did not want to risk another miracle that would be costly to them. What a tragic - not monstrous, but just tragic contrast between the attitude of God and the attitude of these people.

Let us give thought and ask ourselves, where do we stand? Of course, the first movement we shall have is to say, 'On God's side' - it is not true. When there is a tragic need, and the cost of helping would be perhaps not a disaster but a pain or loss to us, what would we choose? Let us reflect on this: are we really on the side of Christ Who can forget the whole world because His Heart is pierced, transfixed with compassion, or - do we allow our heart to be moved one moment, and then recalculate the cost and turn away from the need?

Let us reflect - because every one of these stories, every parable, every image, every act of God is challenging us: Where do you stand? Who are you? The person possessed, to whatever extent? A disciple of Christ ready to forget everything for the sake of a desperate need? Or rather one of those who say to Christ: Go, go away - you are disturbing our peace, the harmony of our life and our security?

Let us reflect deeply; but not only reflect, take a decision and act.

رسول الغربة المزدوجة:

غربة الإنسان وغربة يسوع

في شفاء الرجل من كورة الجرسيين، الذي سكنته شياطين كثيرة، تتكشف لنا الحال التي وصلت إليها خليقتا الله، الشيطان والإنسان على حد سواء، وتأثير الأول على الثاني، وحياة الثاني من دون تأثير الأول وتسلمته عليه. خرج الرجل الممسوس من الشركة الطبيعية مع أترابه، فبات غصباً عنه معزولاً عنهم. اتخذ مكان إقامة غريباً عن مظاهر الحياة، حيث سكن القبور. حتى شكله ما كان يدعو إلى الاطمئنان، إذ كان عرياناً. هذا كله أتى بداعي غربته عن الله، وليس من أجله. فالغربة التي أقام فيها، والفقر الذي كان يعيشه، ما كانا بدافع الاستعداد والتهيئة للقاء الله واحتضان المخلوق على صورته، بل تأكيداً على غياب الألفة مع الله والتآخي مع أترابه. نعم، كان مسلكه مصدر خطر على الآخرين فكان يُربط بسلاسل لدرء شره عنهم.

على مقلب آخر من الحادثة، نرى يسوع في تلك الكورة يُظهر لنا وجهين مميزين للإنسان الجديد، تواضعه ومحبته، وما يعني ذلك من سلطة وقدرة وفعل وحياة جديدة. هذا برز في تعاطيه مع الإنسان الممسوس ومع الشياطين التي كانت تسكنه. أذن يسوع للشياطين بأن تغادر الممسوس إلى قطيع الخنازير، فقد أثرت ألا تذهب إلى الهاوية منذ تلك الساعة، بينما لمست في حضور يسوع مصدر عذاب لها. بالفعل، انفصل الشيطان عن الله، ففقد التواضع والمحبة. ما عاد يلتمس الله، وما عادت حضرة الله مصدر فرح، ولا اللقاء به مصدر حياة. باتت محبة الله له مصدر عذاب أليم. في سياق تدبيره الإلهي، هكذا تصرف يسوع في هذه الحادثة مع خليقته، الشيطان.

من جهة أخرى، يرفع تواضع يسوع ومحبته الإنسان الممسوس إلى مستوى الوجود الطبيعي لكل إنسان، حيث يوضح النص أنه بات مرتدياً لباساً، وصار صحيح العقل، وأصبح بإمكانه أن يجالس أترابه. هذا كان من وجهة نظر اجتماعية وإنسانية. وفي هذا دخول في معركة التآخي الطويلة والمحبية مع الإنسان أخيه. ولكن النص يشي بأمر آخر، وهو أن ما جرى لهذا الإنسان كان له

انعكاس على الكيان. والمقصود بالطبع خبرته الجديدة مع يسوع نفسه، وطبيعة الحياة الجديدة التي أخذها منه بعد أن تحرّر من فعل الشياطين وتسلّطها عليه.

ربّ قائل إنّها أعجوبة باهرة، فنتوقّف عند هذه الصفة، أي صفة ما هو باهر، ولا ننفذ إلى ما تشير إليه وتكشفه بأن. من السهل أن نبقى على مستوى قدرة الله وما يمكن لهذه القدرة أن تفعله لصالحنا ومن أجلنا. هكذا نبقى أسرى أنفسنا في التعاطي مع ذواتنا. ولكنّ الرجل الصحيح العقل انطلق إلى مكان أبعد من ذاته عندما طلب إلى يسوع أن يصحبه معه وأن يكون معه. بالفعل، قادنا إلى ما هو أبعد من ذواتنا، إلى ما هو أبعد من الاحتفال بقدرة أو انتصار أو حرّية أو فرصة جديدة، إلى أبعد من نصير أو بطل أو مقتدر. قادنا إلى حيث يسوع موجود، إلى حيث يرغب يسوع في أن يكون موجوداً، إلى حيث يسوع ما يزال غريباً ومنسياً ومتروكاً. نعم، قادنا إلى تلك الغربة التي يقيم فيها يسوع طالما اخترنا سكنى القبور، والعري، والعنف، والعزلة، وأشكال الموت في الحياة، والانقياد إلى الشيطان وأعماله وغاياته.

هكذا سريعاً ما اختفت الأعجوبة من مجال انتباهنا لتتركز على رسول يسوع الجديد وما لديه ليخبرنا به من عظام الله التي صنعها به. فهذا أرسله يسوع إلى خاصّته وبيته ليكون رسوله إليهم، رسوله في بيئة حاضنة للخنازير والشياطين، أي لما يمثّل الوجهة المعاكسة لأمر الله والصلة به والتعاطي معه. إنّ إرسال إلى المكان، لا بل إلى الجماعة وإلى كلّ إنسان غريب عن الله، ليصيروا أقرباء وأحراراً بفعل هذه القربى من الله. ما كان هذا ممكناً لو أنّ هذا الإنسان لم يلمس في كيانه تواضع يسوع ومحبّته حتّى تكون لديه البوصلة الصحيحة والحقيقيّة في تعاطيه مع أتراكه، الذين عادوه لمّا كان ممسوساً بالأمس وبات عليه أن يكون خادمهم اليوم وكلّ يوم.

أوليس في هذا الاستعداد تكمن الأعجوبة الحقيقيّة في هذه الحادثة: أن يعود الإنسان الجديد الذي يرسله المسيح إلى من جعلوا أنفسهم أعداء ليصيروا إخوة له وأصدقاء لله؟ هلّا رجعنا إذاً إلى بيوتنا على هذا الأساس، بحال كان هذا الاستعداد موجوداً فينا، وحدّثنا بما صنع الله بنا؟ هلّا طلبنا إلى الله أن يقودنا إلى أن يتكوّن فينا هذا الاستعداد بحال خلا منا؟ في كلتا الحالتين، فلنشكر الله الذي أعطانا هذه الفرصة، ولنشكر الذين قادونا من العداوة لله ولأخينا إلى الشركة الأخويّة بالمسيح.

+ سلوان متروبوليت جبيل والبترون



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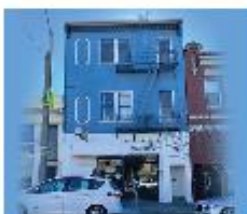
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