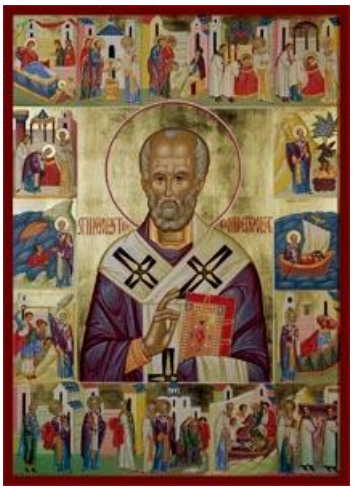

كنيسة مار نقولا الأنطاكية الأرثوذكسية

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

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Diocese of Los Angeles and the West
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Sub-Dn. **Ilyan Baalbaki**
Sub-Dn. **Tariq Rantisi**
Parish Council Chairman: **Azar Azar**
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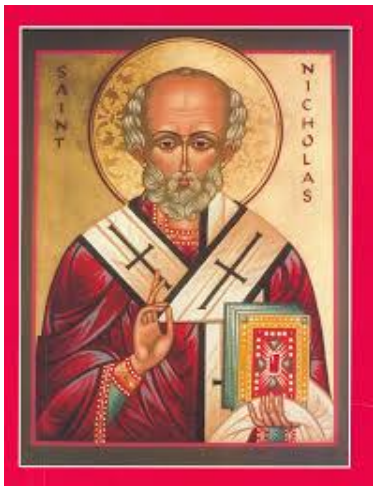

December 25
The Nativity of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ
ميلاد ربنا ومخلّصنا يسوع المسيح بالجسد

MEMORIAL SERVICES:

✞ Memorial Service for the Servant of God, **Audie John Dudum** will be held on **Sunday, January 8th**, offered by the Dudum families. *May His Memory be Eternal!*

✞ Fourth Year Memorial Service for the Servant of God, **Abdallah Hanna Shami** will be held on **Sunday, January 8th**, offered by his family. *May His Memory be Eternal!*

✞ One Year Memorial Service for the Handmaiden of God, **Leila Ghandour Khoury** will be held on **Sunday, January 15th**, offered by her family. *May Her Memory be Eternal!*

THE EPISTLE: Galatians (4:4-7)

Brethren, when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

الرسالة: غَلاَطِيَة

يا إِخْوَةُ، لَمَّا حَانَ مِلْءُ الزَّمَانِ، أَرْسَلَ اللهُ ابْنَهُ مَوْلُودًا مِنِ امْرَأَةٍ، مَوْلُودًا تَحْتَ النَّامُوسِ، لِيَفْتَدِيَ الَّذِينَ تَحْتَ النَّامُوسِ، لِنَنَالَ التَّبَنِّي. وبِمَا أَنَّكُمْ أَبْنَاءٌ، أَرْسَلَ اللهُ رُوحَ ابْنِهِ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ صَارِخًا: «يَا أَبَا الآبُ». فَلَسْتَ بَعْدُ عَبْدًا بَلِ ابْنٌ، وَإِنْ كُنْتَ ابْنًا فأَنْتَ وَارِثٌ لِلهِ بِالْمَسِيح.

THE GOSPEL: Matthew (2:1-12)

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard

this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: ‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, are by no means least among the rulers of Judea; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern My people Israel.’” Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found Him bring me word, that I too may come and worship Him.” When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

الإنجيل: مَتّى

لَمّا وُلِدَ يَسوعُ في بَيْتَ لَحْمَ اليَهودِيَّةِ في أَيامِ هِيرودُسَ المَلِكِ، إذا مَجوسٌ قَدْ أَقْبَلوا مِنَ المَشْرِقِ إلى أورَشليم قائِلين: أَيْنَ المَوْلودُ مَلِكُ اليَهود؟ فإنّا رَأَيْنا نَجْمَهُ في المَشْرِقِ، فَوافَيْنا لِنَسْجُدَ لَهُ. فَلَمّا سَمِعَ هيرودُسُ المَلِكُ اضْطَرَبَ هُوَ وكُلُّ أورشَليمَ مَعَهُ. وجَمَعَ كُلَّ رؤَساءِ الكَهَنَةِ وكَتَبَةِ الشَّعْبِ، واسْتَخْبَرَهُمْ أَيْنَ يُولَدُ المَسيح. فَقالوا لَهُ "في بَيْتَ لَحْمَ اليَهودِيَّة، لأَنّهُ هَكَذا قَدْ كُتِبَ بالنَبِي: وأنتِ يا بَيْتَ لَحْمُ أَرْضَ يَهوذا، لَسْتِ بِصُغْرى في رؤَساءِ يَهوذا، لأَنَّهُ مِنْكِ يَخْرُجُ المُدَبِّرُ الذي يَرْعى شَعْبي إسْرائيل." حِينَئِذٍ دَعا هيرودُسُ المَجوسَ سِرًّا وتَحَقَّقَ مِنْهُمْ زمانَ النَّجْمِ الذي ظَهَرَ. ثُمَّ أَرْسَلَهُمْ إلى بَيْتَ لَحْمَ، قائِلًا: انْطَلِقوا وابْحَثوا عَنِ الصَّبِيِّ بِتَدْقيقٍ، ومَتَى وَجَدْتُموهُ، فَأَخْبِروني لِكَيْ آتِيَ أَنا أَيْضًا وأَسْجُدَ لَهُ. فَلَمّا سَمِعوا مِنَ المَلِكِ، ذَهَبوا، فَإذا النَّجْمُ الذي كانوا رَأَوهُ في المَشْرِقِ يَتَقَدَّمُهُمْ، حَتّى جاءَ وَوَقَفَ فَوْقَ المَوْضِعِ الذي كانَ فيهِ الصَّبِيُّ. فلَمّا رأَوا النَّجْمَ فَرِحوا فَرَحًا عَظيمًا جِدًّا، وأَتَوا إلى البَيْتِ، فَوَجَدوا الصَّبِيَّ مَعَ مَرْيَمَ أُمِّهِ، فَخَرّوا ساجِدينَ لَهُ، وفَتَحوا كُنوزَهُمْ وقَدَّموا لَهُ هَدايا مِنْ ذَهَبٍ ولُبانٍ ومُرٍّ. ثُمَّ أُوحِيَ إلَيْهِمْ في الحُلْمِ أَنْ لا يَرْجِعوا إلى هيرودُسَ، فَانْصَرَفوا في طَريقٍ أُخْرى إلى بِلادِهِم.

ALTAR CANDLES قناديل الهيكل

- Offered by **Khader and Lisa Atwan** in Loving memory of **Basima Jaghab Atwan, Christopher Issa Ghanem, Issam Jaghab, Basem Jaghab and Naimeh Jaghab.** *May their memories be eternal!*
- Offered by **Laila Louh** for the continued good health and well-being of **Laila Louh and her family**. *God bless and many years!*
- Offered by **Sylvia Cummingham** in Loving memory of **George Cunningham.** *May his memory be eternal!*

Holy Bread of Oblation is Offered by:

✞ **David Hanhan and his family,** in loving memory of his mother **Afdokia Hanhan** and his son **Joseph David Hanhan**.

May Their Memory Be Eternal!

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS:

- **SPECIAL ANTIOCHIAN ARCHDIOCESE CONVENTION: January 12th-13th, 2023.**
- **YOUNG ADULTS MINISTRY ANNUAL WINTER RETREAT AT BIG BEAR: January 13th-16th, 2023.** Join us for our annual winter retreat! Link to register is on @dlawyoungadults Instagram bio. Invite your family and friends, all young adults are welcome! For questions and information, please contact Esther Clemence or Shadi Azar.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

CHRISTMAS

In one of the texts of the Holy Scriptures we are told that the world had waxed old, had decayed in the course of centuries since man had lost touch with God, since communion between God and man had become dimmed. And Saint Paul says that the whole creation is waiting with longing for the revelation of the children of God, for the moment when man will have become Man again in the fullness, in all the beauty of the glory of his vocation.

And on the day when we remember the Nativity of Christ, the Incarnation of the Son of God, we can see that the beginning of a new time has come, that this world that had gone old because God was, as it were, far away from it - great, awe-inspiring but distant, had come to an end. GOD IS IN OUR MIDST: this is the meaning of the word 'Emmanuel'; God with us - and the world is no longer the same. We live in a world into which God has come, in which He is the living power, the inspiration, Life itself, Eternity itself already come. And this is why Saint John the Divine in the Book of the Revelation, speaking of Christ as the End, uses in Greek not the neuter which would be right, but the masculine: because 'The End' is not a moment in time, the End is not something that happens, but Someone that comes.

Yes, we are waiting for the day when God will come in glory, when all history will be up, when all things will be summed up, when God shall be all in all; but already now God is in our midst; already now we have a vision of what man is by vocation and can be by participation. But this is an offer; God gives His love, God gives Himself - not only in the Holy Gifts of Communion, but in all possible ways He is ready to enter into our lives, to fill our hearts, to be enthroned in our minds, to be the will of our will, but to do that, to allow Him to do that we must give ourselves to Him, we must respond to love by love, to faith - the faith which God has in us - by faith that is trust and faithfulness to Him. And then - then, we, each of us singly and all of us in our togetherness, will become God's Kingdom come with power, the beginning of the fullness of time, the beginning of the glorious victory!

Isn't that something which is worth struggling for? Isn't it worth turning away from everything that separates us from our own integrity, from one another, from God, and allow ourselves to become new creatures?

Let us now, now that the beginning has come, and in a way the end is already in our midst, let us do it: overcome all that is unworthy of ourselves and allow God victoriously to transfigure our lives! Glory be to God for His love! Glory be to God for the faith He has in us, and for the hope He has put into us!

تبنّانا الله بالمسيح

"لمّا حان ملءُ الزمان". هذه المقولة نفهمها بما قبلها وهو حديث عن الوارث الذي هو تحت أوصياء ووُكلاء. ولكن عند بلوغه الرشد ينتهي حُكم الأوصياء. ولكن بعد انتهاء زمن الوصاية جاء ملء الزمان. إذ ذاك أَرسَلَ اللهُ ابنه مولودًا من امرأةٍ، وبتنا مباشرة تحت أمر هذا الابن او تحت حُكمه، وبطلَ إذ ذاك حُكم الناموس الموسويّ وفرائضه.

أكّد بولس أننا صرنا أبناء. لذلك "أَرسل اللهُ روحَ ابنه الى قلوبكم صارخًا أَبّ Avva." هنا بولس كتب بالحرف اليوناني العبارة الآرامية ثم فسّرها بكلمة الآب. "فلستَ بعدُ عبدًا بل أنت ابنٌ" بمعنى أن نظام الوصاية قد زال وصرتَ مثل الابن الوحيد حبيب الآب ولك المحبة التي للابن من الآب وهذا ما يفسّر أنك مُتَبَنّى.

"فأنتَ وارثٌ لله" الذي لم يعُد يُعاملك كواحد من العهد القديم موضوع تحت وصاية. علاقتك مباشرة مع الله "بيسوع المسيح". بنوّة هذا الأخير للآب جعلتك ابنًا. هذا الفصل من الرسالة الى أهل غلاطية اتخذناه لنفهم معنى الميلاد. في الكنيسة الأُولى كان هذا اليوم يُعَيَّد مع الظهور الإلهي (الغطاس)، ومعنى التذكارين ظهور الله بطريقة الميلاد وطريقة العماد.

ثم فصَلْنا التذكارين وأَبقينا ذكرى معمودية السيّد للسادس من كانون الثاني. لكن عندما نقرأ هذا المقطع من الرسالة الى أهل غلاطية، أخذنا نفهم ما لم يكن واضحًا في العيد المُشتَرك أي أننا صرنا أبناء ببنوّة يسوع المسيح.

وبُنوّتنا لله صارت تحمل معنى الدالّة للأولاد على أبيهم. يخاطب الطفل أباه وأمه بروح القُربى.

صحيح أن هذا العيد سمّاه آباؤنا "العيد الصغير"، وسمّوا الفصح "العيد الكبير" لكونه عيد الخلاص. ولكن التجسد الإلهي يُدشّن الخلاص. كذلك يظهر الخلاص في كل الأعياد السيدية والعجائب كما تعاليم يسوع تُظهر سرّ الخلاص.

المؤسف أن الميلاد التبس بعادات وثنية مِن أَكْل وشُرب قبل القداس او عشية القداس، ويكاد يتحوّل الى موسم دنيويّ، وآن الأوان لنعيشه كموسم كنسيّ مليء بالمعاني الإلهية نتجدّد فيه كل سنة.

هل نستقبل المسيحَ كما استقبلَتْه مريم والمذود والمغارة؟ هل تنفتح له القلوبُ الفقيرة اليه ونتلمّس دفء محبته؟ هل نقيم العيد في كنائسنا وليس فقط في بيوتنا؟

العيد ليس الزينة. انه مشاركة الفقراء حتى يعرفوا أن الله يحبّهم بواسطة إخوتهم الأكثر يُسرًا. المسيح كان فقيرًا يوم ولادته وبقي فقيرًا. إكرامًا له ومحبة سوف نفتقد المحتاجين لكي نسترضيه ونقترب من قلبه.

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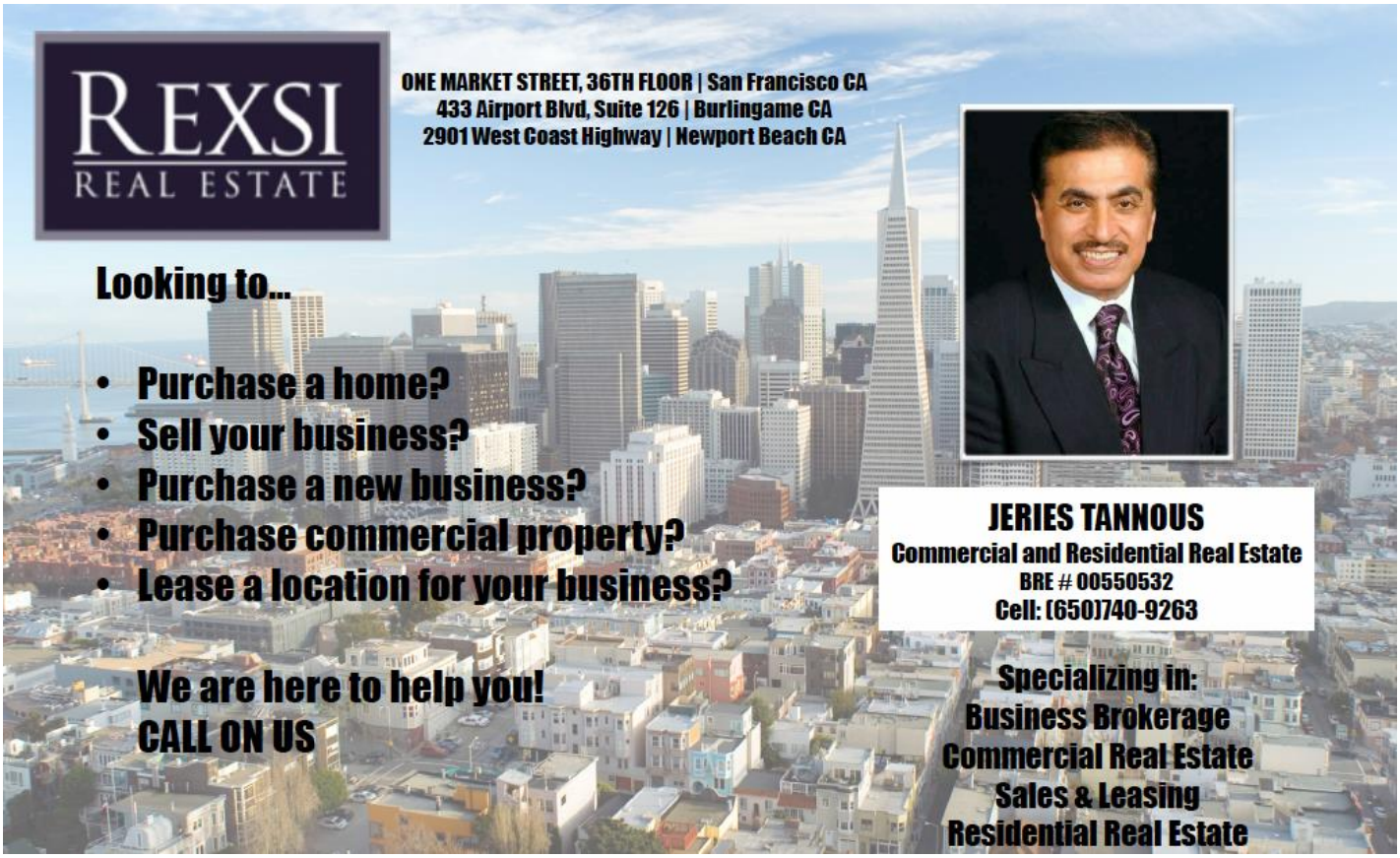
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