

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 Beatitude **Patriarch JOHN X**, Patriarch

of Antioch and All of East

Pastor, V. Rev. Fr. George Baalbaki

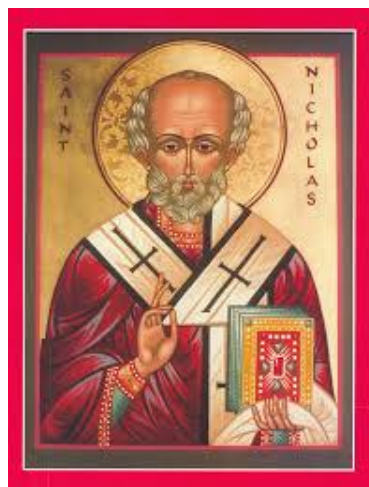
(586) 214-4428 revbaalbaki@yahoo.com

Sub-Dn. **Ilyan Baalbaki**

Sub-Dn. **Tariq Rantisi**

Parish Council Chairman: **Salim Qaru**

Parish Council Vice Chairman: **Azar Azar**



Sunday, January 29, 2023

House Blessings

As the tradition of our Orthodox Church, V. Rev. Fr. George Baalbaki started his visitation for house blessings. To schedule a visit, please call the church office or

Fr. George's cellphone: 586 214-4428

MEMORIAL SERVICES:

✠ Forty Days Memorial Service for the Servant of God, **Mansour Kawkab** will be this **Sunday, January 29th**, offered by his family. *May His Memory be Eternal!*

THE EPISTLE: 2 Corinthians (6:16-7:1)

Brethren, you are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from them, and be separate from them," says the Lord, "and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty. Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

الرسالة: 2 كورنثوس

يا إخوة، أنتم هيكل الله الحي، كما قال الله، "إني سأسكن فيهم، وأسير فيما بينهم، وأكون لهم إلهاً وهم يكونون لي شعباً فلذلك أخرجوا من بينهم واعتزلوا"، يقول الرب، "ولا تلمسوا نجساً، فأقبلكم، وأكون لكم أباً، وأنتم تكونون لي بنين وبنات"، يقول الرب القدير. وإذ لنا هذه المواعيد، أيها الأجباء، فلنطهر أنفسنا من كل أدناس الجسد والروح، ونكمل القداسة بمخافة الله.

THE GOSPEL: Matthew (15:21-28)

At that time, Jesus went to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But He did not answer her one word. And His disciples came and begged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before Him, saying, "Lord, help me." And He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

الإنجيل: متى

في ذلك الزمان، خرج يسوع إلى نواحي صور وصيدا. وإذا بامرأة كنعانية قد خرجت من تلك النخوم وصرخت إليه قائلة: "إرحمني يا رب! يا ابن داود، فإن ابنتي بها شيطان يُعذبها جداً." فلم يجبها بكلمة. فدنا تلاميذه وسألوه قائلين: "إصرّفها فإنها تصيح في إثرنا." فأجاب وقال لهم: "لم أرسل إلا إلى الخراف الضالة من بيت إسرائيل." فأتت وسجدت له قائلة: "أعطني يا رب." فأجاب قائلاً: "ليس حسناً أن يؤخذ خبز البنين ويلقى للكلاب." فقالت: "نعم يا رب، فإن الكلاب أيضاً تأكل من الفتات الذي يسقط من موائد أربابها." حينئذ أجاب يسوع وقال لها: "يا امرأة، عظيم إيمانك، فليكن لك كما أردت." فشفيت ابنتها من تلك الساعة.

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 Memories Be Eternal!

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS:

- **HOLY TRINITY SF 4TH WOMEN'S RETREAT:** January 28th, 2023 in the Kosturos Hall, located at 999 Brotherhood Way, SF. Breakfast: 9:30 AM | Event: 10AM-3PM | Lunch: 12PM-1PM. To register: <http://tinyurl.com/htretreat23>
- **ST. NICHOLAS ANNUAL VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY:** Saturday, February 11, 2023. Fancy Mazza, Dinner and Open Bar. Featuring famous singer: **Zuhair Francis** with **Maestro Radwan Shakshir + ensemble**. Doors open at 8 pm. Donation: \$125. To RSVP, please call Church office (415) 648-5200 | Salim Qaru (650) 642-0168 | Mourice Kari (650) 455-1600 | Elias Batshon (650) 580-7185 | Jeries Azar (415) 710-0456.
- **ST. NICHOLAS CRAB FEED:** Saturday February 25th, more info to follow.
- **CAMP THREE HOLY YOUTHS 2023:** June 19th – 22nd. Campthy.com
- **ANNUAL PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE 2022:** June 28th – July 2nd taking place in Garden Grove, Ca. at Irvine Marriott Hotel. For more information, please visit: <https://antiochianevents.com/la>

2023 GREAT LENT		
Day	Date	Celebration
Monday	February 27	First Day of Great Lent
Sunday	March 5	Sunday of Orthodoxy
Sunday	March 19	Sunday of the Holy Cross
Sunday	April 9	Western Easter / Orthodox Palm Sunday
Sunday	April 16	GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA

2023 ST NICHOLAS CHURCH EVENTS	
July 23 rd	St. Nicholas Annual Day Picnic
October 7 th – 8 th	St. Nicholas Annual Festival
November 18 th	St. Nicholas Annual Thanksgiving Family Night
December 10 th	Parish Council Elections
December 23 rd	St. Nicholas Christmas Party

Archdiocese Receiving Applications for Prospective Antiochian Seminarians

A Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree from an Orthodox Theological School is the required educational qualification for ordination to the holy priesthood in our archdiocese. Now that the Antiochian House of Studies (AHOS) offers an accredited MDiv, we have received several questions about how this new degree program fits into our archdiocesan educational program. Therefore, we are providing the following guidance.

As has been the longstanding policy of our archdiocese, all men who wish to study for an MDiv in preparation for ordination to the holy priesthood must apply for the blessing of the Metropolitan before applying to a theological school. If they are approved, the Metropolitan will bless them to apply to a school of his choice. Candidates do not normally indicate a preference of which school they wish to attend; rather, they obediently attend the program chosen by the Metropolitan.

However, the distinctive features of the AHOS MDiv program argue for a slight modification of this procedure. The program utilizes a hybrid-learning model, which is different from traditional, on-campus seminary; these two different models each have different advantages and benefits and thus may be suited to students in different life situations or with different future goals. Therefore, when applying to the Metropolitan for a blessing to begin MDiv studies, applicants may include a statement explaining why studying through AHOS might make more sense in their particular case (no such statement is necessary if they are willing and able to attend a traditional, on-campus seminary). Of course, providing such an explanatory statement must be done with the understanding that the Metropolitan will have the ultimate decision.

All men who wish to study in preparation for priestly ministry should begin by discussing this vocation with their pastor. The pastor may then request an application packet from the archdiocese and pass it on to the applicant. The application deadline each year is January 31, in advance of a fall commencement of studies.

Time for House Blessings

Theophany has passed for those of us following the new calendar. The waters have been blessed. Our souls have been cleansed and refreshed by the drinking/sprinkling thereof. And now it's time! Time to clean our house. Literally.

Why should we clean our home at this time of year? We want to prepare for the special event that will happen soon within our walls: our house blessing! The traditional "after Theophany" visit from the parish priest to bless each home with holy water has been part of Orthodox Christian practice for centuries. We work to prepare our homes for this blessing, just as we work to prepare our hearts for other blessings (like communion) that we receive from God. While the house blessing is not a sacrament, it is an important part of helping us to live the Faith at home, and so we need to take time to prepare accordingly!

Zaccheus welcomed Christ into his home with generosity. "Do they (your children) see you welcoming Christ into your home by giving what you can to those who need it?... Is it clear to everyone who lives there and visits there that your house is a house of prayer?" Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick challenges his listeners to welcome Christ as Zaccheus did, not just for the house blessing, but all year around in [this homily from January 2017](#).

The house blessing is a special time for each family. It is unique because of the prayers requesting God's sanctification of our home, and also because of the personal time that it offers with our parish priest. Every member of the family can participate (and even help!) with the house blessing, and each person will benefit from it. You may wish to print this [prayer from the early church](#), and allow your child(ren) to decorate it as you talk about your upcoming house blessing. Talk together about all of the things we are asking God to do when we pray this prayer and when we have our house blessed. Perhaps your family will find it helpful to incorporate this prayer for the blessing of your house into your prayers more regularly than once a year!

[Author Jane G. Meyer wrote a beautiful, child-centered piece about house blessings.](#) "There may be a few rituals in the Orthodox Church that we struggle to explain to a young child, but the house blessing is not one of them. Many of the elements that accompany this tradition are appealing to a little one. Here are a few things we've discovered over the years that make this tradition especially meaningful..." You can read the ways that she incorporates children into the house blessing in her article posted on [pemptousia.com](#)

Families with young children may find this [information and lesson about Holy Theophany](#) (which talks a bit about house blessings) helpful to use to teach the children about this wonderful event. Here is a [useful printable](#) that can help us teach our children about Theophany and house blessings. It also provides a checklist that we can go over together to be sure that we have everything ready!

Draw Near Designs offered a [simple guide to prepare for your house blessing](#), complete with a "map" of where on your prayer table to place each item needed for the blessing. They have also included ways to incorporate children in the preparation for the blessing, for example: "Have your kids pretend to be the priest and walk around the house blessing or censuring it. Have them remove any toys that are in their way and in turn would be in the priest's way as he walks through the house."

Print your own copies of the [house blessing service in its entirety](#) to follow along during the priest's visit.

Following the house blessing, consider showing [this video of an Indonesian house blessing](#) to your children and talking about how our brothers and sisters around the world worship as we do. Look and listen for things that are the same from your house blessing! "...By sanctifying our home, we extend the grace of God to the neighbors."

So, let us do all that we can to prepare our home, our family, and our hearts for our house blessing! And then, let us participate with joy. We will be the better for it.

From the Antiochian Orthodox Department of Christian Education

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh The Prayers of the Liturgy

What awesome words do we hear both in the Gospel and in the prayers of the Church. And what dread a responsibility do we take when we hear them, approve of them, accept them, and yet, do not live up to them.

If you listen to the Holy Liturgy, the beginning is easy for us to carry. It speaks to us of our need and of God's response; it is the cry of the earth Godwards. But a moment comes when we stand before God as the Church of God; and the Church of God is, in the words of one of our orthodox theologians, the Church of God is the continued incarnate presence of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth, His presence unto the salvation of the world. The first moment which strikes me as being so frightening and so glorious, is the moment when, in one of the early litanies we ask the Lord to

bless those Gifts which we have brought to Him, and to bless us also. Because at that moment begins a double consecration; we return to God what is His: the bread, the wine - they are no longer prisoners of a fallen word, they are given back to Him, liberated, freed, pure in themselves, and capable of receiving the fullness of the Divine presence within themselves.

But at the same time we pray for us to be consecrated to God. Re-consecrated indeed, because in the baptism, in the first act of faith we have declared that we offer ourselves to God, soul and body, to become His, but through sin we fall away, we give the lie to our promise. And here again we say, Renew in us our consecrated status!"

And a moment later a proclamation is made, a warning: 'The doors! The doors! Its a moment when in the Ancient Church only those who were allowed to receive communion could stay in the church, all those who could pronounce the Creed, say the Lord's Prayer, and receive the Body and Blood of Christ, could stay. We now all stay; but these doors - are they only the doors of a temple? Are they not the doors of a heart, the doors of a life, of a mind, of our will, of our determination? It's a warning: open these doors, which you can open to God, and only then can you enter into the sacred realm of the Liturgy as members of the Church, not as outsiders.

And after that, again, another cry: Let us love one another so that with one mind we may acknowledge the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit! We cannot pronounce the Creed outside of a relationship, of mutual love. The Creed speaks to us only of a God of love, a God Who has loved us and the whole creation into existence, a God Who has given His life to redeem it, a God, the Spirit Who comes upon us in our frailty, in our weakness, in our impurity to burn evil, and to make us into the Burning Bush.

And then, can we say these words, speak of the God of love if we have no love for one another? Saint John, in one of his Epistles says: if we say that we love God and don't love our neighbour we are liars, there is no truth in us. We must reflect on that, because we are not proclaiming a theological statement, we are not speaking of general truth, of a world-outlook, but we are speaking of a God Who says to us, 'I have given you an example for you to follow.

But can we summon love within our hearts, when they are cold, when they are dead, when they are full of trouble? No, we cannot summon love as a feeling, as a glorious joy that embraces all creation and everyone of our neighbours. But love does not begin as a feeling, love begins as an act. 'Those who love Me, says the Lord, will fulfill My commandments.

And the commandments - we have heard today in the words of Saint Paul, in addition to all that the Gospel proclaims to us: Love your enemies, pray for them, bless them, do not curse anyone! Christ, at the moment of the Crucifixion said, Father, forgive them, they don't know what they are doing! If we are in the Liturgy as the Body of Christ, it is on these terms that we are there. And how frightening it is to say in the Lord prayer, Forgive as I forgive, because it does imply, If I do not forgive, I stand un-forgiven. By whatever measure you measure it will be measured to you, says the Lord in the Gospel.

So, you see, what awesome words we accept, and we proclaim, and we make ours so lightly! And what responsibility to proclaim them, to accept them, even to hear them. But then, we can ask the same question which Peter asked from the Lord: But who then can be saved? There is hope; there is hope because we are sustained by the grace of the Lord, because the power of God deploys itself in weakness, because all things are possible in Him, but only on one condition: that we earnestly accept Him, that earnestly we struggle, and try to live what we proclaim, to be Christ within, perhaps, our limitations, but with all our will, all our mind, all the little strength we have, all the faith we have!

Let us therefore re-read, time and again, the Liturgy, the prayers which we use, and ask ourselves: is it only words for me? Do I only agree with these words in my mind? Do I only applaud these words and leave them untouched?

Let us reflect on this; but let us also reflect on this with hope because we know that in our frailty we are sustained by God. If only there is good will, if only we want good, if only we struggle for it - the power of God will manifest in us and we will outgrow our deadness, our narrowness, our timidity, our cowardice, our inability to be Christ's own people.

دليل مرافعة المبتهلين إلى الله

حينما صرّح داود النبيّ في مزاميره: «لا تدخل في المحاكمة مع عبدك، فإنّه لن يتبرّر قدامك أيّ حيّ» (مزمو ١٤٢: ٢)، كان محقّاً للغاية. فأيّ مخلوق بإمكانه أن يتبرّر أمام الله؟ حادثة شفاء ابنة المرأة الكنعانيّة كشفت لنا طريقاً يمكن أن يسلكه المغاوير في الإيمان، أي ذوو الشكّية والنباهة الروحيّة، فيدنيهم تواضعهم من الله من دون أن يكتنوا بقضائهم العادل بل يلتهبون بمحبّته. استخدمت الكنيسة هذا المزمور ووضعت في مطلع صلاة الابتهاال إلى السيّد العذراء والقديسين ليكون لنا سبيلاً يضيء به واقعنا وصلاتنا على السواء.

تواجهت المرأة الكنعانيّة مع يسوع من أجل ابنتها المريضة. تسلّح يسوع بالصمت، فأعرض ظاهريّاً عن طلب الاسترحام الذي قدّمته. اتّخذ معاونوه، أي تلاميذه، مكاناً لهم في القضية فطلبوا إليه أن يصرفها. ساعتها أعلن يسوع عن فقدانه الاختصاص والصلاحية للنظر في القضية لكونه راعياً تكمن مسؤوليته في أن يبحث عن الخراف الضالّة من بيت إسرائيل حصراً. بدلت هذه الأمّ طريقها من صيغة استرحام إلى طلب معونة وغوث ليس إلّا، من دون أن تناقشه في مسألة أهليّته للنظر في قضيتها. حينئذٍ، دخلت المواجهة حلقة جديدة، أصعب وأدهى، تلك التي تمسّ كرامة الإنسان أمام الله، وأعظمها هي علاقة البنوّة. هنا، استخدم يسوع صورة الطعام الذي يُعطى للبنين وليس للكلاب، في صورة معبّرة عن واقع نجاسة الوثنيين في علاقتهم مع الإله الحقيقيّ، واستحالة خلط الأمور على هذا الصعيد. فتبنّت المرأة الكنعانيّة هذه الصورة ووظفتها في التعبير عن إيمانها بشأن التخلّي عن هذه النجاسة، وهذا هو ما أفضت به في إشارتها إلى أنّ الكلاب تأكل الفتات الذي يتساقط عن موائد أسيادها. إنّها طريقة أقرّت من خلالها بواقع حالها الروحيّ والتمست عبره التعبير عن رغبتها في التخلّي عن واقع الحال هذا.

في التماس الشفاء لابنتها، واجهت هذه المرأة عقبات ثلاث في رفع قضيتها إلى يسوع. أوّلاً، هل لديها الحقّ في تقديم الطلب؟ هذا واجهه يسوع بالصمت. ثانيّاً، هل تستحقّ أن تتمّ تلبية طلبها؟ هذا تتخّى عنه يسوع بداعي فقدان الصلاحية. ثالثاً، هل تتمنّع بالأهلية لكي ترفع عن قضيتها أمامه؟ هذا اتّخذ منه يسوع موقفاً روحياً صارماً أغلق به أمامها كلّ محاولة منها للدفع بقضيتها إلى الأمام.

أمام هذه العقبات الثلاث، تجلّت هذه المرأة بفضائل ثلاث ميّزتها إلى الأبد. أوّلاً، إيمانها بقضيتها وبمن تتقاضى أمامه. ثانيّاً، نباهتها وواقعيتها بشأن التدبير الذي يتمّه يسوع بين بني جنسه، أي الشعب العبرانيّ، والأولوية والأسبقية التي يتمنّع بها، ولكنّها كانت أيضاً حسّاسة إلى الواقع الروحيّ العامّ لسواهم، فوجدت لها كوّة تنفذ منها إلى هذا التدبير. ثالثاً، اتّضاعها حتّى النهاية من جهة واقعها الروحيّ، ومن جهة عدم استحقاقها لأية نعمة، ولكن من دون أن تفقد رجاءها على الإطلاق بمن هي ماثلة أمامه. شكّلت هذه العناصر الثلاثة سنداً في الدفع بقضيتها، وبقضيتنا أيضاً، إلى برّ الأمان أمام من بقدرته أن يحقّ الحقّ الذي من الله لطالبه.

هذه المرافعة جديرة بالاهتمام، ففيها قدّمت هذه المرأة حجّتها بشأن توسيع دائرة التدبير الإلهيّ ليشمل خلاص الأمم. بالطبع، لم يكن يسوع يحتاج إلى مثل هذه المرافعة، فهو مخلص الإنسان إلى أيّ جنس انتمى، أو في أية خطيئة وقع. ولكن لا يسعنا سوى أن نبدي إعجابنا وتقديرنا لهذه المرأة الذي بقي اسمها مجهولاً، فقد افتدت بمرافعتها عن واقعها الخاصّ واقع أترابها أيضاً، من حيث لا تدري، وتركت لنا أمثلة في طريقة رفع قضيتنا أمام الله في التضرّع والابتهاال من أجلنا ومن أجل سوانا.

انحدرت هذه المرأة إلى أسفل دركات الوجود أمام الله. لم تتحطّم نفسها في هذا المشوار فهي تدرك مسؤوليتها في ما آلت إليه حالها. لكنّ هذا الإدراك ما كان بشيء أمام إدراكها الأكبر، فهي مدركة بمن تؤمن وبمن وضعت عليه رجاءها. هنا نتفاجأ بقرار من رافعت أمامه: «يا امرأة، عظيم إيمانك! ليكنّ لك كما تريد» (متّى ١٥: ٢٨). لكننا ندرك سريعاً أنّ موقفه هذا إنّما يعكس قاعدة روحية رسمها لأمثالها في خاتمة مثل الفرّيسيّ والعشّار: «إنّ هذا (أي العشّار) نزل إلى بيته مبرّراً دون ذاك (أي الفرّيسيّ)، لأنّ كلّ من يرفع نفسه يتّضع ومن يضع نفسه يرتفع» (لوقا ١٨: ١٤). هكذا التقت إرادة هذه المرأة بإرادة الله! هلاً كان طريقها نصيبنا أيضاً، وثمارها غذاءنا؟

+ سلوان متروبوليت جبيل والبترون وما يليهما

Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church

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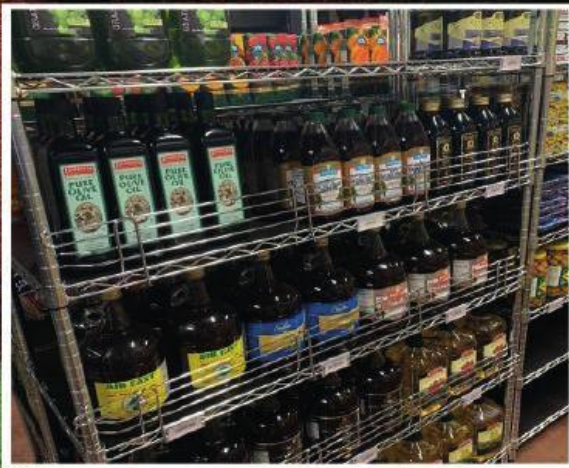
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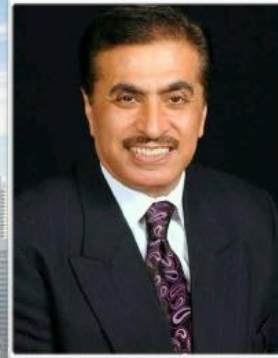


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OF SERIOUS PERSONAL INJURY
& WRONGFUL DEATH

If you or someone you know has
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loved one due to someone else's
negligence...

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