

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 SABA, Archbishop
of New York and Metropolitan of all North America

Pastor, V. Rev. **Fr. George Baalbaki**

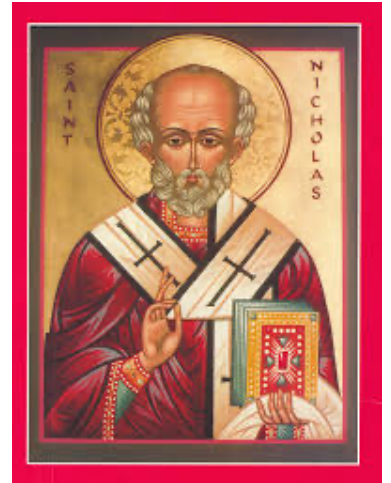
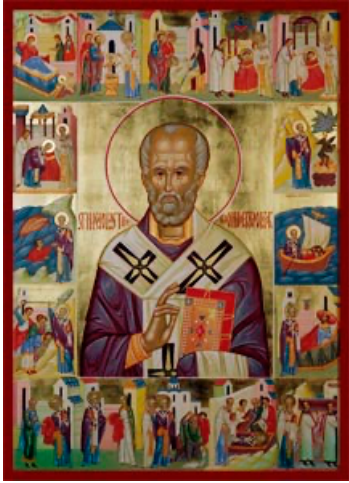
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Sub-Dn. **Ilyan Baalbaki**

Sub-Dn. **Tariq Rantisi**

Parish Council Chairman: **Salim Qaru**

Parish Council Vice Chairman: **Azar Azar**



Sunday, December 03, 2023

SYMPATHY AND CONDOLENCES:

We would like to offer our deepest sympathy and condolences to the **Entire Bouri families** for the passing of **+Khader Nakleh Bouri**.

May his Memory be Eternal!

NATIVITY FAST: November 15th - December 24th

We would like to wish you a happy Advent season!



THE EPISTLE: Ephesians. (5:8-19)

Brethren, walk as children of light—for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true—and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it is said, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.” Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

الرسالة: أفسس.

يا إخوة، أسلكوا كأولادٍ للنور (فإن ثمر الروح هو في كل صلاح وبرٍ وحقٍ) مُخْتَبِرِينَ مَا هُوَ مَرْضِيٌّ لَدَى الرَّبِّ. وَلَا تَشْتَرِكُوا فِي أَعْمَالِ الظُّلْمَةِ غَيْرِ الْمُثْمِرَةِ بَلْ بِالْأَحْرَى وَبَخُوا عَلَيْهَا. فَإِنَّ الْأَفْعَالَ الَّتِي يَفْعَلُونَهَا سِرًّا يَقْبُحُ ذِكْرُهَا أَيْضًا. لَكِنَّ كُلَّ مَا يُوَبَّخُ عَلَيْهِ يُعْلَنُ بِالنُّورِ. فَإِنَّ كُلَّ مَا يُعْلَنُ هُوَ نُورٌ. وَلِذَلِكَ يَقُولُ اسْتَبْقِظْ أَثْمَارَ النَّائِمِ وَقُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ فَيُضِيءَ لَكَ الْمَسِيحُ. فَانظُرُوا إِذَنْ أَنْ تَسْلُكُوا بِحَذَرٍ لَا كَجُهْلَاءَ بَلْ كَحُكَمَاءَ. مُفْتَدِينَ الْوَقْتَ فَإِنَّ الْأَيَّامَ شَرِيرَةٌ. فَلِذَلِكَ لَا تَكُونُوا أَغْبِيَاءَ بَلْ افْهَمُوا مَا مَشِيئَةُ الرَّبِّ. وَلَا تَسْكُرُوا

بالخمر التي فيها الدعارة بل امتلئوا بالروح. مكلِّمين بعضكم بعضاً بمزامير وتسابيح وأغاني روحية مرتلين ومرتلين في قلوبكم للرب.

THE GOSPEL: Luke. (18:35-43)

At that time, when Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging; and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, “Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.” And he cried, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to him; and when he came near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, let me receive my sight.” And Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.” And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

الإنجيل: لوقا

في ذلك الزمان، فيما يسوع بالقرب من أريحا، كان أعمى جالساً على الطريق يستعطي. فلما سمع الجمع مجتازاً سأل: «ما هذا؟» فأخبر بأن يسوع الناصري غابر. فصرخ قائلاً: «يا يسوع ابن داود، ارحمني!» فرجوه المتقدمون ليسكت، فازداد صرخاً: «يا ابن داود، ارحمني!» فوقف يسوع وأمر أن يقدم إليه. فلما قرب سألته: «ماذا تريد أن أصنع لك؟» فقال: «يا رب أن أبصر!» قال له يسوع: «أبصر. إيمانك قد خلصك». وفي الحال أبصر، وتبعه وهو يمجّد الله. وجميع الشعب إذ رأوا سبّحوا الله.

ALTAR CANDLES قناديل الهيكل



Offered by **St. Nicholas Church** for the good health and well-being of **Manuel Hanhan. God Bless and Many Years!**



Offered by **Sana Jarjura and family** in loving memory of parents + **George and Najla Jarjura. Memory Eternal!**



Offered by **St. Nicholas Church** for the good health of all who are named *Barbara* after the **Feast of Saint Barbara** on the occasion of their Names Day! **Barbara Karleen. God Bless!**



Offered by **St. Nicholas Church** for the good health of all who are named *Nick, Nicholas, Nicole, Nicola* after the **Feast of Saint Nicholas on December 6th** on the occasion of their Names' Day, especially: **Fr. Nicholas Borzghol, Dn. Nicholas Adranly, Nicholas Baalbaki, Nicholas Habeeb, Nicholas Ofiesh, Nichole Ofiesh, Nicholas Haddad, Nicholas Katout, Nicholas Houli, Nicholas Nabil Hanhan, Nicholas Tannous, Nicholas Qaqish, Nicola Mogannam, Nicole Aho, Nicole Hanhan, Nicole Jadelrab, Nicole Wahab, Nicole Bekhit, Nick Nichola, Nicola Akik, Nick John Saba, Nicholas Maalouf, Nick Baba, Nicholas Shaheen, Nicholas Shatara, Nicholas Azar** and in Loving Memory of **Fr. Nicholas Habib. God Bless!**



Offered by **St. Nicholas Church** for the good health of all who are named *Andrew, Andrew, Andrawes* after the **Feast of Saint Andrew** on the occasion of their Names Day! **Andrew Yaser, Andre Hawit, Andrew Khoury, Andrawes Husary, Andy Azar and Andrew Azar. God Bless!**



Offered by **St. Nicholas Church** for the good health of all who are named *Saba* after the **Feast of Saint Saba** on the occasion of their Names Day! **The Saba family, Saba Shatara, Saba Sahouria** and in loving memory of **Nicholas Saba and George Nichola Saba. God Bless!**

Holy Bread of Oblation

✠ 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!

The Feast of the Patron Saint of our Church: Saint Nicholas - Wednesday, December 6th.

Celebrating the Great Feast of St. Nicholas the Patron Saint of our Church.

Diving Liturgy at 11:00 AM *followed by a luncheon.*



BURBARA: This Sunday, **December 3rd**, delicious Burbara Pudding will be served after Divine Liturgy. Donated by **Diana Batshon** in loving memory of her husband +**Michel Batshon**.

Donated by **Janet Baqleh** for the good health of her family.

Donated by **Salwa Schnoudi** for the good health and well-being of her son **Naim Schnoudi**, on the occasion of his birthday.

May God bless you all and your families.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS:

THE FEAST OF SAINT NICHOLAS: **Wednesday, December 6th.** Join us as we celebrate the Great Feast of St. Nicholas, the Patron Saint of our Church. Divine Liturgy will be held at 11:00 AM followed by a luncheon.

BYZANTINE NATIVITY CAROL: **December 8th at 6PM.** Please join us as we host the Sons of Antioch Byzantine Choir for their “The Word Made Flesh” series. Invite your family and friends, this will be a beautiful concert for everyone to enjoy. Hope to see you all there!

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION: **December 11th.** There will be a parish council election meeting for the sole purpose of electing some members of the Parish Council for the upcoming term. Anyone interested in serving or nominating someone to serve on the Parish Council must be fully pledged and spiritually qualified. Please submit your candidate’s name to Fr. George and/or Salim Qaru as soon as possible. In order to vote in the elections, members must be spiritually and financially in good standing with the church.

LADIES CHRISTMAS GATHERING FOR CHARITY: **Saturday, December 16th at 3pm- St. Nicholas Church Hall.** Ladies, please join us with your family and friends for our Christmas gathering this year, for charity. Donation is \$30, all proceeds will be going to charities. Show your solidarity and come dressed in your traditional Palestinian clothing. Main dish will be provided, please bring salad, sweets or fruits to share. To RSVP, please contact Randa Shatara at (415) 871-1043 or the Church office at (415) 648-5200. We hope to see all of our ladies!

ST. NICHOLAS CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISING EVENT: **Saturday, December 23rd.** More info. to follow.

TREE OF LIFE: If you would like to purchase a Leaf with your name or a loved one’s name engraved to hang on the Tree, please contact the Church office at (415) 648-5200.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh
EUCCHARIST

Every time we approach the holy chalice to receive Communion to the Body and Blood of Christ we say a prayer that contains words that must become true on our lips, otherwise they are a lie before God. We say to God that we are the worst sinner, we are the chief sinner that there is.

And isn't it natural that so often we say these words thinking, 'This was true of the saints, who could feel that way, but I can't feel that I am the worst of sinners'. When we look around, when we look at the state of the world in which we live, we can see a number of people who in our eyes are worse than we are. And regarding this I would like to remind you of a passage in the diary of Saint John of Kronstadt, who also asked himself the same question, and in the end answered it in the affirmative: 'Yes, I am the worst of all the sinners I know'.

And the reason he gave for this judgement of his was that he was aware of how much God had given him, and how little he had given to God in response.

I think we must all of us begin in this frame of mind, ask ourselves: What are the gifts which God has bestowed upon us? What is it that makes us so happy in ourselves, or makes others so happy in us, rightly or wrongly? And when we have come to understand how much we have received, then we can ask ourselves: what are the fruits which we have borne of these gifts?

And we will see that, according to the first Beatitude, there is nothing in us, in our life, which is our own, of our own making. God gave us life. He gave us a body, a soul, a mind. He gave us all that fills our lives with richness. All that we are and all that we possess are gifts of his. Do we give Him gratitude for it, or do we appropriate these gifts, thinking no, they are our own really? And even when we are aware of the fact that they are not of our making, that it is God who has given us all that we are and all that we have, do we know how to be grateful and also to ask ourselves the question which I have already mentioned: what have I done with all the gifts of God? And if we go ever more deeply within ourselves and in our lives, can we begin to be able to say: yes, I really am the worst of all the sinners around me because I am so richly endowed by God and look how little, how very little, I have brought to God and to my neighbour as a result of it?

Let us all reflect on this. And when we come next time to Communion and we think or say these words, let us say them with at least a beginning of understanding that yes, it is true, and I know why. But come with an incipient understanding, because it takes a very long time for us to see how richly God has endowed us and how poorly we have responded to Him. But gradually, step by step, these words will become true and we will receive Communion with a new depth of broken-heartedness and with gratitude.

لدافع إلى الانطلاق من جديد

أن تنطلق من جديد هو حدث يوميّ يحتاج منك إلى قوّة الالتزام والمثابرة من دون فقدان الرجاء. فما هو الدافع الذي يساعدك كلّ يوم لتقدّم هذا الجهد برّاء وبساطة؟ شهادة أعمى أريحا تعطيك الجواب. بالفعل، كان هذا الأعمى محتاجاً إلى الاستعطاء ليقى نفسه العوز، محتاجاً إلى النور لكي يرى، إلى مَنْ يرأف به لأنّه متروك لمصيره، إلى المعنى لكي يستمرّ. هذا، وإن بدت حاله مزرية إلى هذا الحدّ، لم يترك نفسه يوماً تغرق في اليأس. خبرة أمثاله تعلّمنا كيف ينهضون من جديد كلّ يوم ويجدون في أنفسهم القوّة والدافع الكافيين ليتعهّدوا بهما أنفسهم، فلا يستسلمون، بل يشعّون لمن حولهم بشهادة مميزة. أخذ أعمى أريحا موقعه «جالساً على الطريق يستعطي» (لوقا ١٨ : ٣٥)، وظهر شديد الحساسية لما يجري حوله، على عكس المحيطين به. فلمّا سمع جلبة، استفسر «ما عسى أن يكون هذا؟»، فاستوقفه مرور يسوع من هناك، لذا عمد إلى أن يستوقفه بدوره صارخاً: «يا يسوع ابن داود ارحمني» (لوقا ١٨ : ٣٦ و ٣٨). لم يصرخ لأنّ المسيح لا يأبه له، بل ليتغلّب على محيطه غير المبالي به والمتضجّر منه والعميم الشفقة، إذ «انتهره المتقدّمون ليسكت!» (لوقا ١٨ : ٣٩). ثابر حتّى أفلح في تغيير مسار حياته وموقف المحيطين به!

أن تجاهر بالمسيح وبحاجتك إليه هو لا غيره، أمر مفروغ منه عندما تتأمّل في الأحداث بعد إسدال الستارة عليها، لكنّ الأمر ليس كذلك قبل ذلك. ففي خضمّ المخاض، أنت تشعر أحياناً أنّك تجاهد على غير هوى، فلا ترى بازغة نور، ويخبو رجاؤك برويته يوماً. فهل تصغي إلى الذين يرون الواقع بتذمّر وشكوى وسوداوية، وليس عندهم رجاء؟ أتخالفهم وتختلف معهم، أم تماشيهم وتتموضع على غرارهم؟ بالفعل، أن تعرف ما تريد، وأن تريده من كلّ قلبك، يبدو بسيطاً في بدء الأمر؛ ولكن أن تثابر عليه فلا تضيع الهدف ولا تتوانى في الوصول إليه، فهذا، لعمرى، أمر ليس متوافراً لدى كثيرين اليوم. أعمى أريحا مثال يُحتذى.

فلننقل إلى المقلب الثاني من الواقعة، حيث يبرز حوار من نوع آخر، جديد وبسيط بالكليّة، حوار جمع الأعمى ويسوع. به يداوي المسيح الجمع المتدافع حوله والمعميّ عن رؤية الأشياء والأحداث والأشخاص على حقيقتها، أي بنور المسيح، ويكافئ مثابرة الأعمى المتروك لمصيره. «فوقف (يسوع) وأمر بأن يقمّ إليه» (لوقا ١٨ : ٤٠). هكذا يستوقف يسوع هذا الجمع ويدفعه، من حيث لا يدري، إلى تحسّس واقع الأعمى والمشاركة في مجرى الأحداث اللاحقة، ولو أنّ، عملياً، كان الأعمى يحتاج إلى مَنْ يقوده بيده حتّى المسيح. سياق الأحداث أظهر أنّه هو من قاد الآخرين إلى المسيح، وعلمهم كيف يدنون من هذا الأخير وكيف يتعلّمون أن يروا بمنظاره! كان الحوار مقتضباً: «ماذا تريد أن أفعل بك؟... أن أبصر... أبصر، إيمانك قد شفاك» (لوقا ١٨ : ٤١-٤٢). على ضوء هذه الاستعدادات والشكيمة، لقاء المؤمن بالمسيح انفتحت معه أبواب النعمة فعينا الأعمى، ولربّما أبواب الخلاص لمن أراد من المحيطين به حينها، ومثلاً نحن اليوم! أعلّ الضوضاء حولنا تفعل فعلها فينا اليوم كما كانت الجموع المحيطة بالأعمى حينها، فتمنعنا من طلب المسيح بالحاح؟ أم التصاقنا بيسوع صوريّ وسطحيّ بحيث لا نستوقفه البتّة ليرانا ويحاورنا ويشفيانا؟ أم فقداننا المثابرة وغياب اليقين بالمخلص حجباً عنّا أنّنا عميان عن إدراك حقيقة الأشياء، فنندافع على غير هدى في أوقات نحن بأمسّ الحاجة فيها إلى أقصى درجات الرؤية والتمييز والإدراك؟

انتهت القصة بشفاء الأعمى وتمجيده الله وتسبيح الجمع أيضاً. فهل أسدلت بذلك الستارة حقّاً؟ يبدو لنا أنّ ثغرة بقيت مفتوحة لنطلّ عبرها على فعل صغير سيكون له مفعول كبير: «أبصر وتبعه» (لوقا ١٨ : ٤٣). تلازم هذين الفعلين يضعنا على محكّ أن نرى ما رآه هذا الأعمى، وأن نلتزم بما قام به، فننطلق مثله وليس على منوال الجمع المرافق للمسيح! أليست في هذا تكمن كلّ قصّة النهوض من جديد؟ أليس هذا هو سرّ الدافع الذي نودّ لو يحركنا، وبه، وبفضل ثباتنا ومثابرتنا، نعين أترابنا في محنتهم حتّى يروا هذا الدافع فيهم فيقوموا من العمى الذي يأسر قراءتهم للواقع، أيّاً كان هذا الواقع معقّداً، وينطلقوا بدورهم، فتكرّر السبحة، وهكذا دواليك، حتّى لا يبقى أحد خارجاً من رؤية خدر المسيح؟ سلوان متروبوليت جبل لبنان



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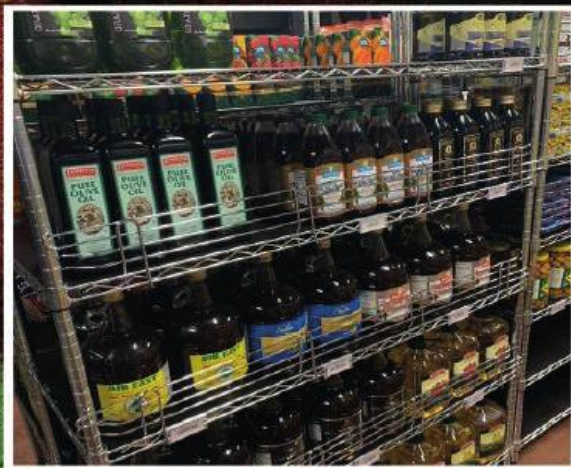


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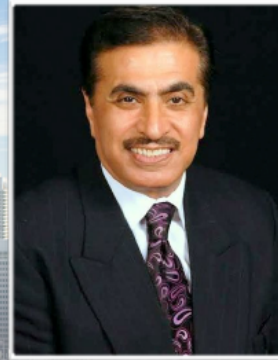


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