

كنيسة مار نقولا الأنطاكية الأرثوذكسية

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

Antiochian Archdiocese of North America

Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

5200 Diamond Heights Blvd., San Francisco, CA 94131

Tel: (415) 648-5200

Email: info@stnicholas-sf.com--website: stnicholas-sf.com

His Beatitude **Patriarch JOHN X**, Patriarch
of Antioch and All of East

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

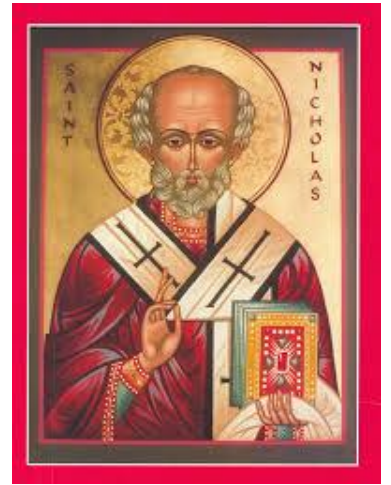
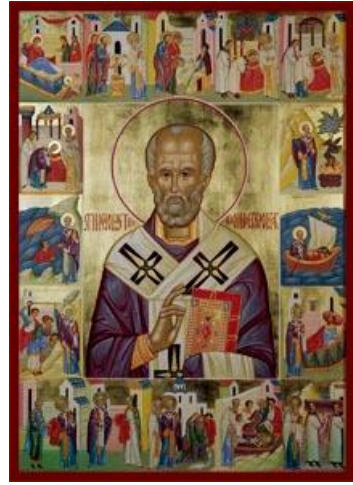
(586) 214-4428 revbaalbaki@yahoo.com

Sub-Dn. **Ilyan Baalbaki**

Sub-Dn. **Tariq Rantisi**

Parish Council Chairman: **Salim Qaru**

Parish Council Vice Chairman: **Azar Azar**



Sunday, September 24, 2023

Proto-martyr Thekla, equal-to-the-Apostles



MEMORIAL SERVICES



6 Month Memorial service for the servant of God, **+Shady Isa Martha** will be held this Sunday,
offered by the his family.

May His Memory be Eternal!

THE EPISTLE: 2 Timothy. (3:10-15)

Timothy, my son, you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra. What persecutions I endured! Yet from them all, the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all, who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

الرسالة: 2 تيموثاوس

يا ولدي تيموثاوس إِنَّكَ قَدْ اسْتَقْرَيْتَ تَعْلِيمِي وَسِيرَتِي وَقَصْدِي وَإِيمَانِي وَأَنَايَ وَمَحَبَّتِي وَصَبْرِي. واضطهاداتي وألامي وما أصابني في إنطاكية وأيقونية ولسترة. وأية اضطهاداتٍ احْتَمَلْتُ وقد أَنْقَذَنِي الرَّبُّ مِنْ جَمِيعِهَا. وَجَمِيعُ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَعِيشُوا بِالتَّقْوَى فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ يُضْطَهَدُونَ. أما الأشرارُ والمُعْوُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَيَزْدَادُونَ شَرًّا مُضِلِّينَ وَمُضَلَّلِينَ. فَاسْتَمِرَّ أَنْتَ عَلَى مَا تَعَلَّمْتَهُ وَأَيَّنْتَ بِهِ عَالَمًا مِمَّنْ تَعَلَّمْتَ. وَأَنْتَ مُنْذُ الطُّفُولِيَّةِ تَعْرِفُ الْكُتُبَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الْقَادِرَةَ أَنْ تُصَيِّرَكَ حَكِيمًا لِلْخَلَاصِ بِالْإِيمَانِ بِالْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ.

THE GOSPEL: Luke. (5:1-11)

At that time, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And He saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, Jesus asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when Jesus had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night

and took nothing! But at Thy word I will let down the nets.” And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish, which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men.” And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

الإنجيل: لوقا

في ذلك الزمان، فيما يسوع واقف عند بحيرة جنيسارت، رأى سفينتين واقفتين عند شاطئ البحيرة، وقد انحدر منهما الصيادون يغسلون الشباك. فدخل إحدى السفينتين، وكانت لسمعان، وسأله أن يتباعه قليلاً عن البر، وجلس يعلم الجموع من السفينة. ولمّا فرغ من الكلام، قال لسمعان: "تقدّم إلى العمق وألقوا شباككم للصيد." فأجاب سمعان وقال له: "يا معلّم، إنّنا قد تعبنا الليل كله ولم نصيد شيئاً، ولكن بكلمتك ألقى الشبكة." فلمّا فعلوا ذلك، احتازوا من السمك شيئاً كثيراً حتى تحرقت شبكتهم. فأشاروا إلى شركائهم في السفينة الأخرى أن يأتوا ويعاونوهم. فأتوا وملأوا السفينتين حتى كادتتا تغرقان. فلمّا رأى ذلك سمعان بطرس، خرّ عند ركبتي يسوع قائلاً: "أخرج عني يا رب، فإنّي رجل خاطئ." لأنّ الإنذال اعتراه هو وكلّ من معه لصيد السمك الذي أصابوه. وكذلك يعقوب ويوحنا ابنا زبدي اللذان كانا رفيقين لسمعان. فقال يسوع لسمعان: "لا تخف، فإنّك من الآن تكون صياداً للناس." فلمّا بلغوا بالسفينتين إلى البر، تركوا كلّ شيء وتبعوه.

ALTAR CANDLE OFFERING:

✠ Offered by **St. Nicholas Church** for the good health and well-being of **Yousef Jerious Tannous & Family, Abboud & Darlene Jadelrab and Nadim & Basma Howell.**

God Bless and Many Years!

✠ Offered by **Yousef, Tariq & Marya, and Rami Rantisi** for the good health of their parents **Michael & Nadia Rantisi** on the occasion of their Wedding Anniversary.

God Bless and Many Years!

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 Memory Be Eternal!

CHURCH ANNUAL FESTIVALS:

➤ St. John the Evangelist (Orinda, Fr. Nicholas Borzghol): **September 23-24th**

➤ **St. Nicholas Church (San Francisco, Fr. George Baalbaki): October 7th-8th**

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS:

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH CHOIR: We are looking for men and women who would be interested in singing with the choir on Sundays. If interested, please contact Fr. George or Theresa Cardinale, the choir director at theresacardinale@hotmail.com

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH ANNUAL FESTIVAL CAR RAFFLE TICKETS: Our annual car raffle tickets with a grand prize of a brand new Tesla is back! \$50 Per ticket. Please contact Elias Batshon (650) 580-7185 to purchase.

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 (415) 648-5200.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

On being true to oneself

Time and again I am asked by people on a concrete occasion 'What is the Will of God for me now, in the nearest future?' And I always refuse to speak in God's own Name, because I believe that all I, or any priest, can do is to stand before God in awe, and say, 'Lord, Thou art the Truth, Thou art Life, Thou art also the Way — teach this person; be to this person the Way, enlighten this person with the truth, and bring him to such plenitude of life as no one can either convey or give'.

And yet there are things which can be done. Each of us is a freeman of God, as St. Paul said clearly, He says there was a time when we all were slaves of Satan, slaves of our passions, of our fears, slaves of all the things that press on all sides and do not allow us to be true people. In Christ freedom is granted; not licence, but the freedom to be ourselves, the freedom to grow into the fullness of the stature which God has dreamt for us, to grow into fullness that will make us truly living members of the Body of Christ, partakers of the Divine Nature.

On whatever step of our spiritual development we are, the first thing which is required of us is that we should be true to ourselves: not to try to be anyone except the person we are; not to try to ape any behaviour, to force ourselves into any mould in heart, in mind, in will which could be a lie before God, to lie to ourselves, a deception for others. The first rule is to be true to ourselves; and to be true with all the integrity, all the passion, all the joy of which we are capable. And what does this mean? Apart from what I said a moment ago, it means that we must find who we are not only socially, but at another level. And to do this, we can read the Gospel which is an image of what a true human being is; not a book of commandments, of orders, as it were, given by God, 'Do this, and you will be right in My sight' — no: it is a picture of what a real human being thinks, feels, does and is. Let us look into the Gospel as one looks into a mirror, and we will discover that in so many ways we are a distorted image but that in a few ways perhaps, we are a true human being already, at least potentially. Let us mark those passages of which we can say, like Luke and Cleophas on the way to Emmaeus: Does not my heart burn within me when I hear, when I read these words? How beautiful they are! How true! That is life!.. And if you find one passage or another to which you respond this way, rejoice; because at that point God has reached you at the deepest level of your being, revealed to you who you truly are; but at the same time revealed to you Who He truly is, shown you that you and He are in harmony; that if you only become what you already, potentially, truly are, you will become His like, the like of God; a true undistorted image — at least in one or two things.

Then there is another move; if we want to be truly ourselves, we must remember that God does not expect us to be what we are not, but what we are. And that we can stand before God, and say to Him, 'Lord! I have read this and that in the Gospel; I understand it with my mind; I believe in my heart that it must be true; but it does not set my mind aglow, my heart on fire; it does not stir my will, it does not transform me yet. Accept me as I am! I will change — but for the moment I cannot respond to such a commandment, to such an example. There is a passage so beautiful, to me, in the writings of St. Mark the Ascetic in which he says, 'If God stood before you, and said, Do this, and do that — and your heart could not answer 'Amen' — don't do it; because God does not need your action: He needs your consent, and harmony between Him and you'.

Let us therefore try when we ask ourselves in an attempt to find out what the Will of God is for us, not in the absolute, but now: where do I already stand? What can I already now be and do, and do it wholeheartedly with God? — because in the end, the aim of our spiritual life, of our life and our faith in Christ does not consist in being drilled into doing one thing rather than the other; it is to

establish between God and us a relationship of true friendship, of a joy of mutual freedom, and within this freedom, within this friendship, in response to God's love, to God's respect for us, to the faith He has in us, to the hope He has vested in us, and say 'This person has understood that he is not a slave, that he is My friend — and He is our friend. What a joy! And it is a gift of God, which we can give Him as we received it from Him!

حلفات نموّ صياد البشر وكمالهِ
يصطاد يسوعُ بشباك الكلمة والنعمة الإنسانَ إلى معرفة الله والسجود له وخدمته. وهو أيضًا يصطاد معاونين له للقيام بهذه المهمة، يدرّبهم عليها بمثاله الخاصّ، ويلقّنهم روحها بحيث ينمون في عمليّة الاصطياد حتّى يبلغوا كمالها.
فلننّلعلم من بطرس الرسول كيف هو، في حادثة الصيد العجيب، انطلق إلى أبعد من ذاته وواقعه، من إمكانيّاته ومحدوديّته، من خيبته وتعبه، إلى الرحاب التي يكشف له يسوعُ النقاب عنها. فالإبحار إلى العمق أتى على صعيدين في سياق الحادثة. فمن جهة، هناك الغوص في معرفة الذات على ضوء نور المسيح، فانكشفت لبطرس نفسه، فاعترف: «أخرج من سفينتي يا ربّ لأتّي رجل خاطئ» (لوقا ٥: ٨)؛ ومن جهة أخرى، هناك الغوص في سرّ التدبير الإلهيّ على ضوء ممارسة يسوع حرفة صيد البشر التي انكشفت لنا عبر كرازته العلنيّة، ودعا إليها تلاميذه تباعًا كقوله لبطرس: «من الآن تكون صيادًا للناس» (لوقا ٥: ١٠).
ما أحلى أن يعرف المرء نفسه على ضوء لقائه بيسوع، فتصير خبرة معرفة الذات مبنية على حقيقة كونه مخلوقًا على صورة الله، فيعمل على أن تكون حياته مبنية على الصخرة، التي هي المسيح وكلمته وتحقيق مشيئته، وليس على الرمال فيكون تحقيق الذات ساعتها بمعزل عن الإيمان به.

ما أحلى أن ينهض المرء من هذه المعرفة إلى الإيمان بيسوع، فيتكوّن فيه الإنسان الجديد الذي يغلب في ذاته جذور الخوف والأنانيّة، ويتحلّى بالشجاعة التي يسكبها فيه الإيمان به، فينطلق في رحاب عيشه كأنه في مرعى خصيب.
ما أحلى أن ينطلق المرء من هذا الإيمان إلى خدمة يسوع، فيقدّم المرء حياته قربانًا طاهرًا، وتصير وزناته فرصة لربح عيم في تجارة بذل الذات على مذبح الخدمة، يبيع فيها نفسه ليشترى بها اللؤلؤة الغالية الثمن، والتي هي يسوع ووجهه في القريب.
ما أحلى أن يتعلّم المرء من هذه الخدمة اتّباع يسوع، فيصير يسوع بالنسبة إليه مبدأ حياته وألفها ويأها، فيسلك في الاتّضاع الذي يؤهّله ليحمل مع يسوع، الحامل خطيئة هذا العالم، أثقال أترابه من دون تذرّ أو نفور أو ترفع، بل بصبر وبذل ورجاء.
ما أحلى أن يتكوّن المرء في اتّباعه يسوع رسولًا مرسلاً على مثاله، فلا يخور في طريق الخدمة، بل يستند إلى الذي أرسله، رغم كلّ الصعاب والضيقات والمعوقات، تاركًا لواضع الجهاد أن يحدّد الأوقات والأزمنة والحلول التي تصلح له ولخدمته ولمن يقوم بخدمتهم.

ما أحلى أن يتجلّى الرسول آخر الكلّ، فقيرًا لكنّه يغني كثيرين، بحيث يعتاد أن يقيم في الخدر الذي يقيم فيه يسوع، أي الجلجلة، فيأخذ من المصلوب عنا نورًا لتحقيق مشيئته في كلّ شيء، في طاعة له لا زغل فيها ولا عودة عنها.
ما أحلى أن يصير هذا التلميذ منارة يضيء لجميع أهل البيت بنور من أناره، فيترك نفسه أن تصير وقودًا يحترق رويدًا رويدًا، إلى أن توافيه المنية، بحيث تكون شهادته على هذا المنوال نورًا يخترق ظلمة العقول وتحجّر القلوب وضعف الإرادة لدى أترابه، فيستحثّهم على التوبة، أي على الإقبال مثله إلى يسوع فينطلق في الحلفات السابقة التي ارتسم طريقها أمانًا، عساه يصير بدوره تلميذًا ليسوع وصيادًا للبشر.

ألعلنا لم نصب بعد شيئًا ثمينًا في هذه الحياة، على غرار التلاميذ الذين تعبوا الليل كلّهُ؟ هوذا حادثة الصيد العجيب تنتشل كلّ متعب ومحبط عساه يعطي نفسه للمسيح ليقودها إلى تحقيق الصيد الوفير، فيجذب بدوره إخوته إلى مساعدته على جذب الشباك، حتّى يتعرّفوا إلى يسوع وتصير أسماؤهم مكتوبة في سفر الحياة. سامحنا يا ربّ إن تأخرنا في أن نخرّ على ركبنا أمامك، ولم نع حقيقة أننا خطاء، ولم نعطك ذواتنا لتصير شباكا تصيد بها سوانا إلى معرفتك وخدمتك. بارك يا ربّ صيدك الوفير، الحاضر والآتي، مع صياديك الذين أتوا بنا إليك.

+ سلوان متروبوليت جبيل والبترون وما يليهما (جبل لبنان)



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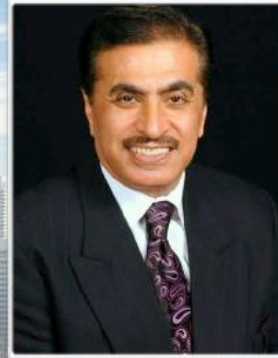


P: (650) 918-7465
Saadehlawfirm.com
john@saadehlawfirm.com

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