

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**

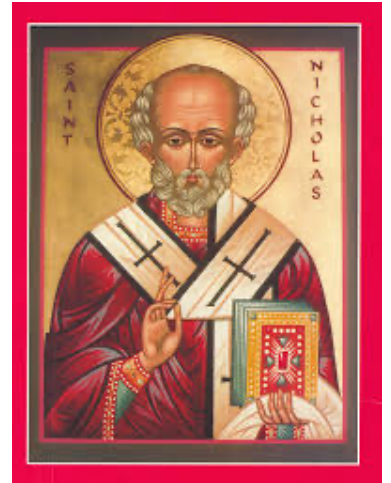
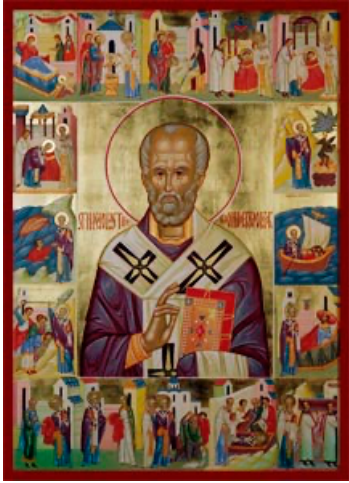
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Parish Council Chairman: **Salim Qaru**

Parish Council Vice Chairman: **Azar Azar**



Sunday, December 10, 2023

NATIVITY FAST: November 15th - December 24th

We would like to wish you a happy Advent season!



THE EPISTLE: Ephesians. (6:10-17)

Brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

الرسالة: أفسس.

يا إخوة، تقوّوا في الرَّبِّ وفي عِزَّةِ قُدْرَتِهِ. البسوا سلاح الله الكامل لِتَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ تَقْفُوا ضِدَّ مَكَايِدِ إبليس. فَإِنَّ مُصَارَعَتَنَا لَيْسَتْ ضِدَّ دَمٍ وَلَحْمٍ، بَلْ ضِدَّ الرِّئَاسَاتِ، ضِدَّ السَّلَاطِينِ، ضِدَّ وُلَاةِ الْعَالَمِ، عَالَمِ ظُلْمَةٍ هَذَا الدَّهْرِ، ضِدَّ أَجْنَادِ الشَّرِّ الرُّوحِيَّةِ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ. فَلِذَلِكَ أَحْمِلُوا سِلَاحَ اللَّهِ الْكَامِلِ لِتَسْتَطِيعُوا الْمَقَاوِمَةَ فِي الْيَوْمِ الشَّرِيرِ، حَتَّى إِذَا تَمَمَّمْتُمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ تَنْبُتُونَ. فَاتَّبِعُوا إِذَنْ مُنْطَقَيْنِ أَحْقَاءَكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ، وَلَا يَسِينِ دِرْعُ الْبِرِّ. وَأَنْعِلُوا أَقْدَامَكُمْ بِاسْتِعْدَادِ إِنْجِيلِ السَّلَامِ. وَاحْمِلُوا عِلَاوَةً عَلَى كُلِّ ذَلِكَ ثُرْسَ الْإِيمَانِ الَّذِي بِهِ تَقْدِرُونَ أَنْ تُطْفِئُوا جَمِيعَ سِهَامِ الشَّرِّيرِ الْمُتَلَهِّبَةِ. وَاتَّخِذُوا خُوْدَةَ الْخَلَاصِ وَسَيْفَ الرُّوحِ الَّذِي هُوَ الْكَلِمَةُ.

THE GOSPEL: Luke (13:10-17)

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed

from your infirmity.” And He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.” Then the Lord answered him, “You hypocrite! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?” As Jesus said this, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him.

الإنجيل: لوقا

في ذلك الزمان، كان يسوع يعلم في أحد المجامع يوم السبت. وإذا بامرأة بها روح مريض منذ ثماني عشرة سنة، وكانت منحنية لا تستطيع أن تنصب البتة. فلما رآها يسوع، دعاها وقال لها: إنك مُطلقة من مرضك. ووضع يديه عليها، وفي الحال استقامت، ومجدت الله. فأجاب رئيس المجمع، وهو مُعْتَظٌ لإبراء يسوع في السبت، وقال للمجمع: هي سنة أيام ينبغي العمل فيها. ففيها تأتون وتشتفون، لا في يوم السبت. فأجاب الرب وقال: يا مرأي! أليس كل واحد منكم يحل ثوره أو جماره في السبت من المذود ويطلق به فيسقيه؟ وهذه، وهي ابنة إبراهيم التي ربطها الشيطان منذ ثماني عشرة سنة، أما كان ينبغي أن تطلق من هذا الرباط يوم السبت؟ ولما قال هذا، خزي كل من كان يقاومه، وفرح المجمع بجميع الأمور المجيدة التي كانت تصدر منه.

ALTAR CANDLES قناديل الهيكل



Offered by **Mike Tannous, Hani Tannous, Gihan Cosentino, Christine Jekelian and their families** in Loving memory of their mother +**Almaz Tannous**.

Also in loving memory of +**Khalil Charles and +Asal Tannous, +Josef and +Margarit Hanhan. May Their Memory Be Eternal!**

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!**

CONGRATULATIONS:

Congratulations and Best wishes to **Ghazi, Rachal, Laila and Zaina Shami** for churaching of **Fuad Ghazi Shami** this past Sunday. *God Bless and Many Years!*

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS:

BYZANTINE NATIVITY CAROL: TONIGHT, December 8th at 6PM. Come 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!

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!

SPECIAL CANDLE LIGHT VIGIL AND PRAYER: Thursday, December 21st at 6PM.

Come join the St. Nicholas Young Adults for a special candle light service in solidarity with the martyrs of Gaza. All are welcome. Food will be available after in our hall.

ST. NICHOLAS CHRISTMAS FAMILY NIGHT: Saturday, December 23rd. More info to come.

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

MIRACLES OF CHRIST ON THE SABBATH DAY

Time and again we read in the Gospel of the anger which the Lord Jesus Christ provoked by performing an act of mercy, a miracle of healing on a Sabbath day. And we cannot help asking ourselves a question: Why did He do it so constantly, so persistently, with such insistence? Could it be to challenge those who surrounded Him? Could it be to provoke them? Could it be simply a pedagogical action? I believe that there is a great deal more in His action. The Lord created the world in six days; on the seventh day He rested of His toils and labours. But what happened to the world then? The seventh day was the day when the world came into the hands of man to be brought to its fulfilment and to its completeness; the seventh day, the Sabbath of the Lord is the day of man. The whole of human history falls in that day. But God did not leave man to work alone as the Lord Jesus Christ says in the Gospel, as reported by Saint John, My Father still works, He shows His work to His Son for Him to fulfil them. And in another passage He teaches us, He tells us that His judgment is true because it is not His judgment; He hears the words of the Father and that is the judgment He pronounces.

And so, history is the day of man, but man is called to be guided by the wisdom, by the love of God. It is because we are so often seeking for our own ways, it is because we do not ask ourselves what is God's way in one situation or the other that the world has become so ugly, and so frightening, and so tragic. There is a Hebrew poem that describes the misery of this world into which man does not bring the love of God; it says, Man has ceased to believe in God and love has departed this world. Men have hanged themselves in forests, have drowned themselves in lakes, in rivers. Heaven is no longer mirrored in the lakes, in the woods; the bird does no longer sing songs of paradise, and the Prophet himself on his pedestal has become a mere statue. Is this not what we have become? Not statues but so much alike the wife of Lot who turned back and who became a statue of salt. We have remained salt and yet we are petrified, immobile, we do not fulfil on earth this function of ours. And Christ shows us, by working His miracles, His acts of love and of compassion on Sabbath day, time and again, He Who is the only true man, the only man who is in total, ultimate oneness with God, what our part should be: take on the history of mankind, take every situation in which we or others find themselves, and carry them on our shoulders in an act of mercy and of love. A Western writer has said that a Christian is the one to whom God has committed the care of His world and of other people. Are we discharging this basic central commission of ours, do we care? We may care with tenderness, we may care sternly, but we must care.

And then, this seventh day when God in His mercy and love has committed this world to our care, still can become the day of the Lord. And the City of man which is been built without God, which so often is like the Tower of Babel, may still unfold and attain the greatness and the holiness of the City of God in which the Lord Jesus Christ, true God but also true Man, is called to be a citizen, the heart of it, but also one of us. Is not this call great enough?

Is not God's faith in us sufficiently inspiring? Are we going to defeat His hope, to reject His love for ourselves or for others? Or are we going to learn from the ways in which Christ fulfils His human vocation in the day of the Lord, shall we not learn from Him and together with Him build the world which God has dreamed, has willed and is still loving in his distress and so often in our betrayal of Him!

Let us learn to love one another actively, bear one another's burdens, listen to the Living God when He speaks, listen with all our energy, look into His ways and be those who fulfil His will and bring the world to the perfect beauty He has willed for it!

قصد الله والبشارة

بين تحريف وأصالة

لم يحلّ سلام الله على الخليفة، بعد أن أبرزها إلى الوجود، كما حلّ في يوم ذلك السبت الأوّل حينما استراح من كلّ أعماله متوجّاً إيّاهما بخلق الإنسان على صورته ومثاله. وسلام الله هذا يعني أنّ قصده من كلّ شيء قد تحقّق في كلّ ما صنع، ولم يبقَ سوى أن تقيم كلّ خلّاقه في هذا القصد، لا سيّما ملكها، الإنسان.

إقامة الإنسان في قصد الله هو معنى وصيّة الاستراحة يوم السبت في العهد القديم. من حمل قصد الله هذا حمل أيضاً السلام الذي يكمل تحقيق قصده الأخير منه، ألا وهو الشركة مع الله. وهذا السلام ينبثق في العقل والقلب، ولكن أيضاً في علاقة الإنسان مع الله ومع قريبه. والإقامة في سلام الله تحمل في طيّاتها محبة الله وصلاحه مسكوبين في قلب من يؤمن به، قلب يرنو إلى أن يعرفهما أيضاً أترابه، سواء عبر خدمته إيّاهم أو الصلاة من أجلهم. فإن كان القصد أنّ الله «يريد أن جميع الناس يخلصون، وإلى معرفة الحق يُقبلون» (١ تيموثاوس ٢: ٤)، وقد عبّر عنه يسوع باسم أبيه وجسده بيننا، ودعا تلاميذه عبر العصور إلى أن يحملوا هذا القصد بشري إلى كلّ المسكونة.

انطلاقاً من هذا القصد، يستوقفنا في إنجيل شفاء «امرأة بها روح ضعف اثنني عشرة سنة وكانت منحنية ولم تقدر أن تنتصب البتّة» (لوقا ١٣: ١١) المواجهة التي افتعلها رئيس المجمع على خلفيّة دفاعه عن قضيّة حفظ يوم السبت: «هي سنّة أيّام ينبغي فيها العمل ففي هذه ائتوا واستشفوا وليس في يوم السبت» (لوقا ١٣: ١٤)، والتي انبرى يسوع يعرض، في جوابه، لقضيّة الله والإنسان والقصد الخلاصي من عمله وإبرائه لهذه المرأة. هذا حصل على أكثر من صعيد:

أولاً، على صعيد فحص السلوك اليوميّ لليهود، حيث استشهد يسوع بسقايتهم للبهائم يوم السبت. وتاليًا، فإنّ ما قام به يسوع، بالمقارنة مع سلوكهم، لا يرقى إلى اعتباره مخالفة للشريعة بشأن السبت، لا منه ولا من المرأة التي أتت إلى المجمع لتستمع إلى كلمة الله، بل هو من صميم وصيّة حفظ السبت.

ثانيًا، على صعيد عيش الإيمان في شخص رئيس المجمع، حيث واجهه يسوع بريائه. فقد استخدم منصبه كرئيس للمجمع لفرض نفسه على أترابه، وسلطانه في تفسير مبتور لكلمة الله، وسلطته في تعليمه الشعب بخلاف القصد الإلهي منها، وموقعه لإدانة ما قام به يسوع على مرأى من الجميع. وضع يسوع إصبعه على الداء وصوّب البوصلة نحو الحقّ الكامن في الوصيّة، حقّ الله من الإنسان، أي خلاصه والشركة معه، وحقّ الإنسان من الله بأن يعرف كلمته من دون تحريف أو تشويه.

ثالثًا، على صعيد انتماء الجماعة إلى الإيمان الذي تحلّى به إبراهيم، إيمان حدا بهذه المرأة أن تكون يوم السبت في المجمع. في إشارته إلى إبراهيم، يعود يسوع إلى واقع ما قبل العمل بوصيّة حفظ السبت، ألا هو الإيمان غير المشروط بالله والذي هو في أساس حفظ الوصايا كلّها ومن العمل بها. القصد من الوصيّة هو حفظ الإنسان في رباط الإيمان الحيّ بالله.

رابعًا، على صعيد عمل الله الخلاصي مع الإنسان ومن أجله. فما أصاب هذه المرأة إنّما هو نتيجة لعمل الشيطان، الذي هو مخالف لقصد الله من الإنسان ومن الاستراحة يوم السبت. وبنتيجة شفائها، استطاعت هذه المرأة أن تعيش وصيّة السبت في عمقها بأن مجدّت الله على صنائعه ومجّده معها الشهود على هذه الحادثة.

بهذه العناصر الأربعة، أقامنا يسوع في قصد الله لجهة خلاصنا، وبالأخصّ لجهة تبنيّنا لهذا القصد تجاه أترابنا. نعم، لم يفقه رئيس المجمع قصد الله ولا أقام في سلامه ولا أصاب في رسالته. عجزه هذا استحال بالنسبة إلينا نبراسًا حتّى لا نسقط معه في الحفرة ذاتها، أي البعد عن الله. هلّا انتبهنا إذاً إلى حالنا، فلا نقيم في هذا البعد والذي نترجمه بفقدان القدرة على الصلاة من أجل خلاص العالم، وبإهمالنا تبنيّ قضيّة الله من أجل خلاص الكل؟ هلّا تركنا الوهم الذي نحتمي به من تديّن سطحيّ أو مذهبيّ، من كلّ حفظ صوريّ لتقاليد أو وصايا، لا يكثرث سوى بصورة واهية عن الإيمان نمجّد بها أنفسنا ولكن يبقينا خارج حقيقة إيماننا وما يحمله من حياة ونور وقوّة؟ هلّا شكرنا من صار تلميذًا أميّنًا لبشرى الكلمة وكشف لنا قصد الله منّا؟ ألا بارك يا ربّ كل من يعيننا، منذ حدثتنا وحتّى المشيب، على أن ننزع عنّا هذا الوهم، المحفوف بالرياء والفراغ، فتظهر صورتك فينا على حقيقتها، ببهائها، فتمجّدك على كلّ الأعمال المجيدة الكائنة منك، وتتمجّد بأن نحافظ على شركائك أصيلة في شهادتنا وخدمتنا.

+ سلوان متروبوليت جبيل والبترون وما يليهما (جبيل لبنان)



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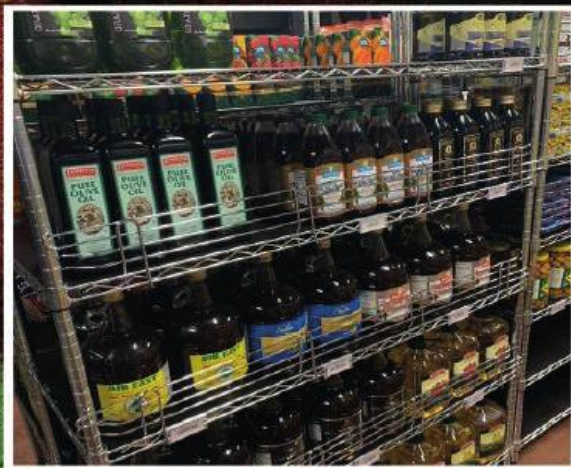


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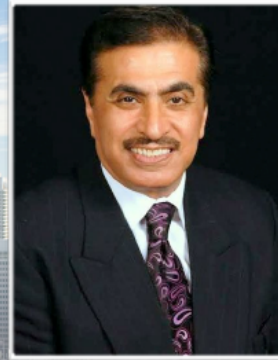


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