

كنيسة مار نقولا الانطاكية الارثوذكسية

St. Nicholas Weekly Bulletin

Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church

Antiochian Archdiocese of North America

Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

5200 Diamond Hts. Boulevard, San Francisco, CA 94131

Tel: (415) 648-5200

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

Pastor, V. Rev. Fr. George Baalbaki

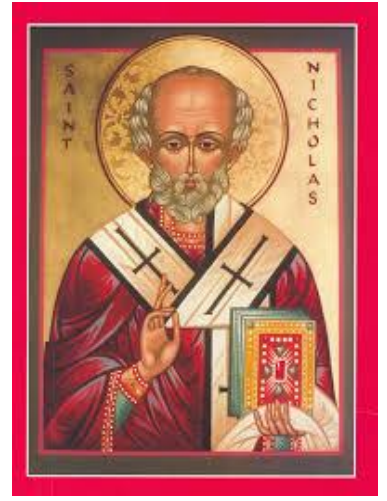
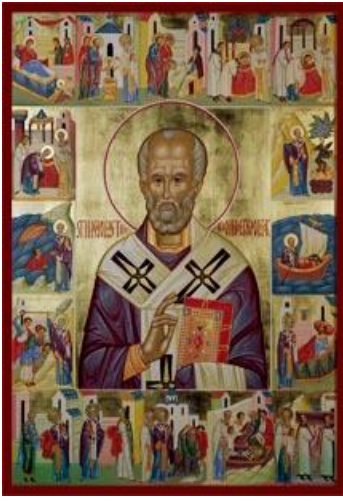
(586) 214-4428- revbaalbaki@yahoo.com

Pastor Emeritus, V. Rev. Fr. Gregory Ofiesh

Rev. Deacon Niphon Sweiss

Sub-Dn. Michel Khoury

Parish Council Chairman: Salim Qaru



Sunday, January 11th, 2015

House Blessing Starts on Wednesday, January 7th

As the tradition of our Orthodox Church, V. Rev. Fr. George Baalbaki started his visitation for house blessings on Wednesday, January 7th. You will receive a phone call from the Church Office for scheduling. If you would like to reschedule to another date, please call the office or Fr. George at (586) 214-4428.

THE EPISTLE St. Paul to the Hebrews. (13:7-16) Brethren, remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings; for it is well that the heart be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited their adherents. We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His own blood. Therefore, let us go forth to Him outside the camp and bear the abuse He endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city, which is to come. Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His Name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

الرسالة: عبرانيين ١٣: ٧-١٦ يا إخوة اذكروا مدبريكم الذين كلموكم بكلمة الله. تأملوا في عاقبة تصرفهم واقتدوا بايمانهم. إن يسوع المسيح هو هو أمس واليوم وإلى مدى الدهر. لا تتفادوا لتعاليم متنوعة غريبة. فإنه يحسن أن يُتَّبَعَ القلبُ بالنعمة لا بالأطعمة التي لم ينتفع الذين تعاطوها. إن لنا مذبحاً لا سلطان للذين يخدمون المسكن أن يأكلوا منه، لأن الحيوانات التي يُدخَلُ بدمها عن الخطيئة إلى الأقداس بيد رئيس الكهنة تُحرق أجسامها خارج المحلة. فذلك يسوع أيضاً تألم خارج الباب ليقّس الشعب بدم نفسه. فلنخرج إذن إليه إلى خارج المحلة حاملين عاره لأنه ليس لنا ههنا مدينة باقية بل نطلب الآتية. فلنقرب به إذن ذبيحة التسبيح كل حين وهي ثمر شفاه معترفة لاسمه. لا تنسوا الإحسان والمؤاسة فإن الله يرتضي مثل هذه الذبائح.

THE GOSPEL St. Matthew. (4:12-17) At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

الإنجيل: متى في ذلك الزمان لما سمع يسوع أن يوحنا قد أُسْلِمَ، انصرف إلى الجليل وترك الناصرة وجاء فسكن في كفرناحوم التي على شاطئ البحر في تخوم زبولون ونفتاليم ليتم ما قيل بإشعيا النبي القائل: أرض زبولون وأرض نفتاليم، طريق البحر، عبر الأردن، جليل الأمم. الشعب الجالس في الظلمة أبصر نورا عظيما والجالسون في بقعة الموت وظلاله أشرق عليهم نور. ومنئذ ابتدأ يسوع يكرز ويقول: توبوا فقد اقترب ملكوت السماوات.

Holy Bread of oblation offered by:

- ❖ Lamis Malouf Bachir and Wafa Vassilakis and family in loving memory of mother **Souraya Baker** and brother **Josef Milano Malouf**. May their memory be eternal!
- ❖ Afaf, Lana, and Peter Dudum, Joyce Imprescia, June Strickland and family in loving memory of **Thomas Dudum** on the occasion of his birthday. May his memory be eternal!

Coffee Hour offered by:

- ❖ John and Trix Salih and family in loving memory of sister Souraya Baker and nephew Josef Milano Malouf. May their memory be eternal!

Announcements:



➔ This Sunday January 11th we will be having Awamat (Zalabieh زلابية) offered by St. Nicholas Church. كل عام وأنتم بخير

➔ Youth meeting will be held on **Monday January 12th** at 7:00 pm. At Natalie Hanhan's House. Address: 111 Estate Dr. San Bruno.

➔ Ladies Auxiliary meeting will take place on **January 14th at 6:30 pm** in the church hall.

➔ **Young Adult Winter Retreat**. The Fellowship of St. John the Divine will be hosting their second annual Young Adult Winter Retreat in Big Bear, CA from January 16-18, 2015. The retreat is very inexpensive so that young adults from all over the diocese can attend. Join young adults from across the diocese for a weekend of prayer, fellowship, and fun! The speakers will be Mother Victoria from St. Barbara Monastery & Fr. David Sommer. \$50/\$75 w/ Lift Ticket. More information and registration can be found on the website www.dlawyoungadults.com. Or contact **Tariq Rantisi : (650) 290-3492**.

➔ ***St. Nicholas Parish General Assembly meeting*** will take place on **Sunday, January 25th**. In order to have the right for voting, you have to be spiritually qualified, also a member in good standing and paid your dues for 2014.

➔ Men's Fellowship meeting will take place on **Tuesday 27th** @ 7:30 pm.

➔ ***SAVE THE DATE! SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 2015.*** By the grace of God, we invite you to prayerfully participate in the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West Enthronement Gala Celebration of

HIS EMINENCE, METROPOLITAN JOSEPH
ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK AND
METROPOLITAN OF ALL NORTH AMERICA
Saturday, January 31, 2015
Sheraton Universal Hotel – Universal City, California
Benefitting St. Nicholas Camp and Youth Education Programs
3:30 PM Clergy and Clergy Wives Reception
5:00 PM Great Vespers Service
6:00 PM Cocktail Reception
7:30 PM Dinner and Program

Please note there will be a Youth and Young Adult Brunch with Metropolitan JOSEPH on Saturday 11:00 AM and Hierarchical Divine Liturgy beginning with Orthros on Sunday 9:15 AM Both of these events will take place at St. Nicholas Cathedral : 2300 West 3rd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90057

Adult Tickets are \$185.00 per person, Young Adult Ticket 18-30: \$100 (includes the Youth and Young Adult Brunch Saturday Morning), Child's Ticket (up to 17 years): \$75 (includes the Youth and Young Adult Brunch Saturday Morning) To order tickets online or place an ad in the program book visit: <http://antiochianladiocese.org/enthronementgala.html>. To purchase by check, kindly remit check or money order payable to St. Nicholas Cathedral to: Anna Nasser | St. Luke Orthodox Church | 13261 Dunklee Avenue | Garden Grove, CA 92840. Phone: [714-971-2244](tel:714-971-2244) Deadline for Reservations is January 15, 2015

Note: Anyone who is interested to go to LA, please contact the church office at (415)648-5200 by January 14th



Valentine Party: We will have a party on Saturday February 14th. More info to follow...

“The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light”



The Gospel reading on the Sunday after the Theophany is that proclaimed by St. Matthew (4:12-17). In it he quotes the prophesy of Isaiah (9:2): “The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light”. Thus he shows that the ministry of Jesus, who has been baptized by St. John, who was imprisoned by Herod shortly after that event, was a fulfilment of prophesy. God was bringing the long-awaited salvation to the people of Israel and to the world. Thus, the Feast of Theophany is also called the Feast of Illumination, and at one time it was traditional to baptize catechumens, those preparing to enter the Church, on the eve of this festival. At one time the Feast of the Lord's Nativity was celebrated together with this marvellous Feast – as the Oriental Orthodox do to this day. For the Eastern Orthodox the main event of the feast is the blessing of water – in the Temple and also outside beside a body of water. The significance of this is that our Lord, Who is God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity eternally begotten of the Father, has come to us as a true Human Being, to end our alienation from God and from His Paradise which was made for us. He is not only born as a perfect Human but also identifies with us. He does so by being baptized in the Jordan by John, just as though He had need of purification. He had no such need, as John recognized when he protested: “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”. Jesus' answer that John should do it “for thus it is fitting to fulfill all righteousness”, shows that He was doing this for us rather than Himself. He was identifying with sinful humanity because He had come to take all of the human condition upon Himself in order to bring it to the Father so that it could be transformed into perfect humanity. When Jesus descends into the waters He brings with Him you and I. It is not He Who is purified thereby – it is you and I. The water we bless is the water of our purification. It is also the beginning of the full restoration of creation to what it was made by God to be – His Kingdom on earth as it is in Heaven.

The Orthodox view salvation as the growth into this perfection, the transformation of darkness into light, the transformation of sinful humans into the children of God. St. Athanasius proclaimed in the 4th century: "God became man so that man could become godlike" (that is, by God's grace what God is in His nature). Thus, there is no end to the joy, the love, the light, the fellowship that is to come about between God and all His creation. We are saved not only from our sins, our humiliation, our weakness, our ignorance, our despair. We are saved for life in the Kingdom. Thus, in the same Gospel we read on the Sunday after the Theophany, we hear Jesus say: "Repent" – that is turn away from darkness towards God's marvellous light – "for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" – it is here and now, ready to be grasped, ready to be received with joy and love so that we may embody it in the world today.

تأمل في الظهور الإلهي

في البدء كان روح الله يرفرف على وجه المياه، وانتظم الروح على المياه بكلمة الله وكانت الخليقة (تكوين الإصحاح الأول). كانت هذه الخليقة الأولى كما أرادها الله عذراء عفيفة بلا عيب. ثم كان السقوط وطُرد الإنسان من الجنة، ومعه أصبحت الأرض تُثبِت شوكا وحسكا (تكوين ٣: ١٨). ومن بعد السقوط أصبحت الخليقة بحاجة إلى تجديد، فجاء الأب ثانياً بكلمته الخلاقة ليقول: "هذا هو ابني الحبيب". في البدء قال الله: "ليكن نور فكان نور" (تكوين ١: ٣). وفي المسيح يسوع كلمة الله المتجسد، كانت الحياة من جديد مع الله في فردوس مستعاد. كان النور الحقيقي الذي ينير كل إنسان والذي به أُعطي الإنسان ثانياً سلطاناً أن يصير ابناً للعلي (يوحنا ١: ١٨-١). في المعمودية يسوع جاء الروح القدس يرفرف من جديد على وجه مياه الأردن ليصنع الكون الجديد بالمعمودية وبالإيمان بالإنجيل، وكان مظهر الله الحق في هذا الحبيب الذي تجسّد.

في الظهور يتجلّى لنا الله أباً وابناً وروحاً قدساً بعد أن ظهر طفلاً في بيت لحم. وكما رتلنا في صلاة السحر للعيد: "انه هو الذي أفاضه الله من البطن"، أي ان الذي أفاضه الأب من البطن الإلهي الأزلي وأطلقه إلى أحشاء البتول وبها ظهر لنا مخلصاً، ظهر لنا محوراً للكون بل كان الكون فيه خليفة جديدة، مسكن الله مع الناس.

في الظهور الإلهي نحن نقول شيئاً أساسياً وهو أن الله ظهر في الجسد وأن الأجساد التي تقف في الكنيسة لتقيم القداس الإلهي ليست ككل الأجساد. الجسد المعمّد ليس ككل الأجساد لأن الله قائم به. الإنسان المسيحيّ واع بأن معاً أنه من تراب وأنه من ضياء، وأن التراب فيه يتحوّل إلى ضياء. نحن لا نتغنّى بالله، نحن إلهنا قائم فينا، في عيوننا، في لحومنا، في عظامنا. نحن نأكل الله أكلاً ونشرب دمه شرباً. المعمودية التي لنا بالروح القدس تجعلنا نقيم جسراً بين كل شيء والمسيح. كل شيء جميل في هذا العالم، كل شيء طاهر وجليل، كل حقيقة في الدنيا، كل خلجة حلوة في قلوب الناس، كل ومضة فرح في عيونهم، كل هذا مصدره المسيح يسوع. إن أحببنا كل حقيقة في الكون وكل بهاء فيه، فنحن بذلك نحيا في المسيح يسوع لأننا نُقرّ أنها منه تجيء، وأنها منه تتخذ معناها. المسيحيون موحّدون لأنهم يربطون كل شيء بالإله الواحد الظاهر في الابن. كيف يمكن هذا؟ هذا ممكن إذا عُدنا إلى شهادة يوحنا. شهادته كانت أنّ "هذا هو حَمَلُ الله الرافع خطايا العالم". هذا ما سمعناه في بدء التلاوة الإنجيلية للعيد.

ماذا يعني هذا الكلام لنا اليوم؟ انه يعني اننا نؤمن أن الله ليس بذلك البطاش المستأثر بالسماء والأرض، ليس ذلك الذي يسود ليستعبد الناس. انه تنازل حتى الناس، حتى الموت، موت الصليب. في الصليب والقبر والقيامة انسكب روح الله على الخليقة من جديد ينبوعاً متدفقاً يغمر العالم. أي عندما سكن الله في الناس وانسكبت حياته من أجلهم على الصليب، تدفّق روحُ الله من جديد على المسكونة.

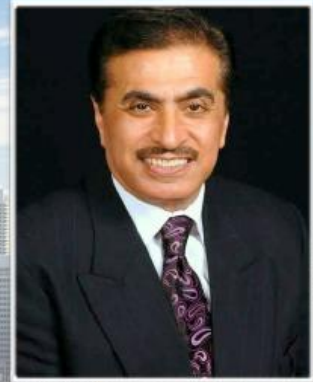
جاور جيوس مطران جبيل والبترون وما يليهما (جبيل لبنان)

Note: Year 2015 pledge offering envelopes are available! Please pick up your assigned envelopes from the vestibule (back) back of the church.

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