

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

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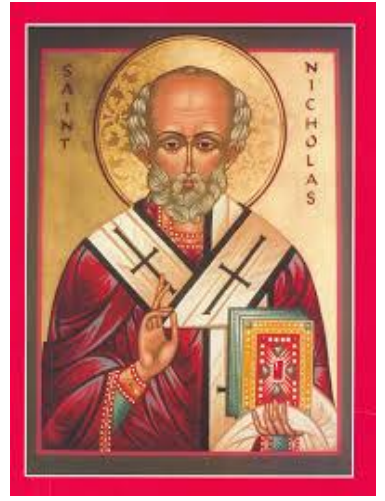
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Rev. Deacon Niphon Sweiss

Sub-Dn. Michel Khoury

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Sunday, March 22nd, 2015 ST. JOHN CLIMACUS, AUTHOR OF "THE LADDER"

الأحد الرابع من الصوم / أحد القديس يوحنا السلمى

This Sunday March 22nd, One- Year Memorial Service for

His Eminence Metropolitan Philip

Offered by St. Nicholas Church.

May his thrice memory be eternal!



THE EPISTLE The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (6:13-20)

Brethren, when God made a promise to Abraham, since He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by one greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, He interposed with an oath. So that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

الرسالة: عبرانيين يا إخوة، إن الله لمّا وعد إبراهيم، إذ لم يمكن أن يُقسم بما هو أعظم منه، أقسم بنفسه قائلاً: لأباركك بركة وأكثرتك تكثيراً. وذلك إذ تأتى نال الموعد. وإنما الناس يُقسمون بما هو أعظم منهم، وتتقضي كل مشاجرة بينهم بالقسم للتثبيت. فذلك لما شاء الله أن يزيد ورثة الموعد بياناً، لعدم تحوّل عزمه، توسط القسم، حتى نحصل بأمرين لا يتحوّلان ولا يمكن أن يُخلف الله فيهما، على تعزية قوية نحن الذين التجأنا إلى التمسك بالرجاء الموضوع أمامنا، الذي هو لنا كمرساة للنفس أمانة راسخة تدخل إلى داخل الحجاب حيث دخل يسوع كسابق لنا، وقد صار على رتبة ملكيصادق رئيس كهنه إلى الأبد.

THE GOSPEL The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (9:16-30)

At that time, a man came to Jesus, kneeling down and saying unto him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked Thy Disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And Jesus answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to Me." And they brought the boy to Him; and when the spirit saw Jesus, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if Thou canst do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running

together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when Jesus had entered the house, His Disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And Jesus said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And Jesus would not have anyone know it; for He was teaching His Disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and after He is killed, He will rise on the third day."

الإنجيل: مرقس 9: 17-31 في ذلك الزمان دنا إلى يسوع إنسان وسجد له قائلاً: يا معلّم، قد أتيتك بابني به روح أبكم، وحيثما أخذه يصرعه فيزبد ويصرف بأسنانه ويبيس. وقد سألت تلاميذك أن يخرجوه فلم يقدرُوا. فأجابه قائلاً: أيها الجيل غير المؤمن، إلى متى أكون عندكم؟ حتى متى أحتلمكم؟ هلّم به إليّ. فأتوه به. فلما رآه للوقت صرعه الروح فسقط على الأرض يتمرغ ويُزبد. فسأل أباه: منذ كم من الزمان أصابه هذا؟ فقال: منذ صباه، وكثيراً ما ألقاه في النار وفي المياه ليُهلكه. ولكن إن استطعت شيئاً فتحنن علينا وأغننا. فقال له يسوع: إن استطعت أن تؤمن فكل شيء مستطاع للمؤمن. فصاح أبو الصبيّ من ساعته بدموع وقال: إني أومن يا سيد، فأغث عدم إيماني. فلما رأى يسوع أن الجمع يتبادرون إليه، انتهر الروح النجس قائلاً له: أيها الروح الأبيكم الأصمّ أنا أمرك أن اخرج منه ولا تُعدّ تدخل فيه. فصرخ وخبطه كثيراً وخرج منه، فصار كالصبيّ حتى قال كثيرون انه قد مات. فأخذ يسوع بيده وأنهضه فقام. ولما دخل بيتاً سأله تلاميذه على انفراد: لماذا لم نستطع نحن أن نُخرجه؟ فقال لهم: إن هذا الجنس لا يمكن أن يخرج الا بالصلاة والصوم. ولما خرجوا من هناك اجتازوا في الجليل ولم يُردّ أن يدري أحد، فإنه كان يُعلّم تلاميذه ويقول لهم: إن ابن البشر يُسلم إلى أيدي الناس فيقتلونه، وبعد أن يُقتل يقوم في اليوم الثالث.

Alter Candle offered by:

- ❖ **Radi and Janet Baqleh** for the good health of children and grandchildren: Sophia, Gabrial, Gaven, Gibran, Jenine and Ava. Many years!
- ❖ Hayat Shiheiber in loving memory of **Emile, Georgette, Michael and Mais khoury**. May their memories be eternal!

Coffee hour offered by:

- ❖ Julia Nasser in loving memory of **Wajdy Nasser**. May his memory be eternal!

Sponsors for Sunday's are needed. Please make checks payable St. Nicholas Church in the amount of \$25.00 or more.

Announcements:

MARCH IS LADIES' MONTH

In keeping with the tradition in our Archdiocese, ladies will show their involvement in the life of the church in the most visible way during the month of March.

They will usher, collect trays, read the Epistle and deliver sermonette...

Our ladies Auxiliary usually prepare a Lenten Luncheon on Sundays. This year they are asking of your help by Donating or preparing food for that purpose.

For more information see Suheila Sweis...

Sunday, March 22nd : Sermonette: *Hanady Batshon*

Epistle Readers: *Fadwa Azar (English), Rozana Maayeh (Arabic).*

GREAT LENT SCHEDULE 2015:

Every Monday and Wednesday is the Great Compline /pre-Sanctified Service at 7:00 pm. (صلاة يارب القوات)

Every Friday is the Akathist Service at 7:00 pm starting February 27th.

(صلاة المدائح) **followed by Pot Luck dinner.**

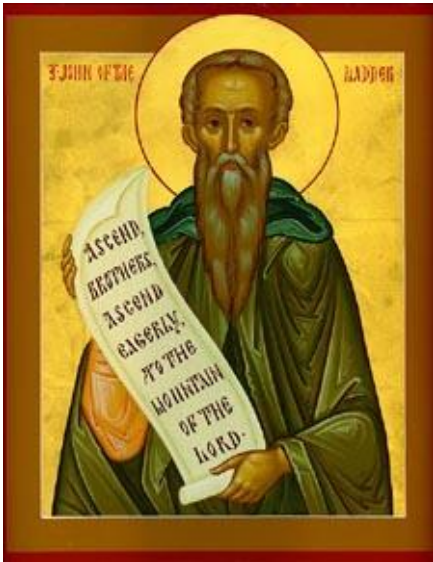
Palm Sunday, April 5th (أحد الشعانين)

Pascha, April 12th. (عيد الفصح)

PASCHA (EASTER) BREAKFAST ITEMS NEEDED

As our custom, the Family of St. Nicholas Parish enjoys breaking the Fast together on the dawn of the Resurrection day. All the parishioners of St. Nicholas will have their breakfast together in celebration of the feast of the Resurrection of our Lord. Call church office if you would like to donate these items or money toward purchasing these items:

Feta Cheese	Cheese	Labneh	Olives	Ham
Orange Juice	Turkey	Pickles	Fruits	Napkins
Pita Bread	Tahini	Milk	Foam Cups	Olive Oil
Eggs	Sausage	Bacon	Potato	Coffee
Pancakes	Knives	Forks		



Saint John Climacus

The symbolic ascent to heaven is customarily portrayed by the flight skyward with angelic wings; one of our saints, however, depicts the ascension by the more practical use of a ladder. This symbolic ladder is to be scaled in a series of spiritual rungs where increasingly more exertion is required in order to see the Kingdom of God. The author of this approach was St. John of the Ladder who was one of the greatest writers in Christianity. "The Ladder of Perfection" is a treatise on spiritual exercises and actions, which present in a brilliant and scholarly fashion and approach to the throne of Heaven. Born in the sixth century, John spent the first sixteen years of his life in Palestine, the ancient Holy Land of his birth whose traditions he respected and whose Christian heritage is cherished. His early ambitions were realized when

he went to the monastery of St. Catherine at Mt. Sinai, the oldest Christian monastery in the world. There he became one of the most scholarly monks in Christendom. The site of St. Catherine's was conducive to prayer and meditation, for there the scene of the burning bush took place and there Moses received the word of God himself. Moreover, to this place the grieving St. Helen, mother of St. Constantine the Great, came on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land some three hundred years before. John is remembered not only as the author of the masterful "Ladder of Perfection," but also as the originator of hesychasm, the divine quietness that leads one to God through constant prayer, the prayer which has come to be known as the pure or intellectual "Jesus Prayer." Regarding this John wrote: "Let the remembrance of Jesus be present with each breath, and then you will know the value of hesychia." He continued to champion this doctrine which found eager support among Christian thinkers, chief among them was St. Gregory Palamas, whose sponsorship brought about official Church recognition of hesychasm in the fourteenth century.

For more than seventy years, John of the Ladder practiced what he preached in the confines of his desert monastery. He achieved such a reputation for piety and wisdom that men from all walks of life were drawn to his side and came from all over the east to make a pilgrimage to his retreat. From John's strong faith and fervent prayer came the power of healing through the divine intervention of the Jesus. If nothing else, St. John's visitors would leave him with a serenity which they had never before experience and with a sense of fulfillment that would last a lifetime.

One of the Christendom's finest figures, he died on March 30 at the age of eighty-six. His feast day is celebrated on the fourth Sunday of Lent.

"St. John gives me strength in the times that I appear weak (because I always am). He reminds me why I am here on Earth and what my purpose is and keeps me on track so that I do not get too caught up school or any one thing. He inspired people just by his actions, not by words, and that to me says a lot and is powerful."

Back copy from Orthodox Saints written by George Poulos, published by Holy Cross Orthodox Press.

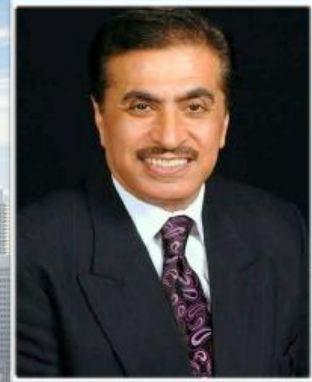
أغثني في عدم إيماني

في الأحد الرابع من الصوم تقيم الكنيسة المقدسة ذكرى ناسك عظيم كان رئيسا لدير طور سيناء وألف كتابا ذاع صيته في المسيحية الا وهو كتاب "سُلم الفضائل"، يصور فيه حياة الراهب أصلا وحياة المؤمن بصورة عامة. في الكتاب يتسلق المؤمن سُلمًا، ودرجات السُلم هي الفضائل يسمو بها من درجة إلى درجة إلى قمة السُلم، وهذا بعد صراع مرير. وفيما نحن مدركون آخر الصيام أرادت الكنيسة أن تضع أمامنا هذه السُلم لكي نصعد عليها ونحن ننظر إلى قمة الحياة التي جاءتنا بالفداء، إذ ان إنجيل اليوم ينتهي بإعلان السيد لتلاميذه أنه صاعد إلى أورشليم. طبعاً الرب قد وصل إلى نهاية السُلم ولم يسقط، والسُلم كانت بالنسبة له الصليب الذي ارتفع منه إلى أعلى السموات. على هذا الدرب تريدنا الكنيسة أن نسلك، ولذا أخذت من الإنجيل حادثة الشاب المصاب بداء الصرع وكان يسقط ويزبد ويقع في نوبات مرض الفترة تلو الفترة. ونرى السيد يُمسك بيده ويُنهضه، وكأنه بذلك يجعله معه على الصليب وفي القيامة لِمَا طلب والد الشاب من يسوع أن يشفى ابنه قال له يسوع: "إن استطعت أن تؤمن فكل شيء مستطاع للمؤمن". عند ذلك يعترف الوالد بأنه ضعيف الإيمان ويترجى أن يزيد السيد ثقته به: "إني أومن يا رب فأعِن قلة إيماني". ماذا يعني هذا لنا اليوم؟ الإيمان مُعرض للضعف لأن الانسان تتجاذبه أهواء الدنيا المعشّشة فيه كما كان الشيطان مستقراً في جسد الولد المصروع. لذلك ينبغي أن يظهر الانسان كي يبقى على الإيمان. قضية الإيمان ليست قضية تصديق عقلي. ليست أن نسلم بأن الله موجود وأنه مصدر الكائنات. الشياطين كلها تُسلم بوجود الله ولكنها تُحاربه بأن. كيف نتحوّل من أناس يُصدّقون بوجود الله إلى أناس إلهيين يكونون قيثارات للروح، هياكل متحركة، سماء للآخرين؟ يتم هذا اذا تسلّقنا السُلم التي تحدت عنها يوحنا رئيس دير طور سيناء. كيف نتسلق السُلم لنصل إلى فوق؟ كيف نتحوّل من أناس بُكم إلى بشر فُحاء بشهادتهم الحية؟ الجواب ايضا في هذا الفصل الإنجيلي: "هذا الشيطان لا يخرج الا بالصلاة والصوم". هذان هما الركبان اللذان نعتمدتهما في الحياة المسيحية لكي نصل إلى الكمال. الصلاة والصوم بمعناهما العميق هما افتقار إلى الله. المُصلي هو إنسان جثا أمام ربه ليقول انه لا شيء وأنه بحاجة إلى كل شيء من الله لكي يوجد. الإنسان لا يوجد دون صلاة. والصوم في معانيه البليغة يعني أننا ننتظر من الله كل شيء، كل عطاء، كل نعمة، كل فضل. الصلاة والصوم يعنيان في آخر المطاف أننا سلطنا في تواضع أمام الله، لذلك فإنهما يحفظان الإيمان. ولذلك إن اعتبرنا أننا ذوو وجود وجاه وعظمة فليس لله مكانة في النفس. ولكن إن أحسنا عميقاً، وكل منا في غرفته، بأننا بالكلية لا شيء، دودة الأرض وتراب ورماد، إن صدّقنا بأننا كالهباء الذي تُذريه الريح، إن قادتنا رياضات الصلاة إلى هذا الشعور، فعند ذلك يأتي الله إلى فراغنا ويملاه بنعمة من عنده ويعطينا كل وجود. وعند ذلك إذا تكلمنا، فلسنا نحن المتكلمين ولكن روح أبينا هو الذي يتكلم فينا. عند ذلك نرتفع إلى ذروة السُلم ونرفع معنا العالم إلى الملكوت الباقي.

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