

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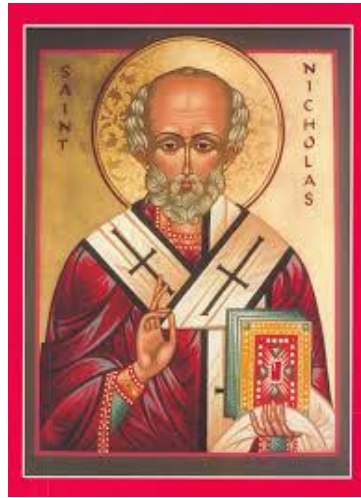
**Pastor, V. Rev. Fr. George Baalbaki**

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Pastor Emeritus, V. Rev. Fr. **Gregory Ofiesh**

Sub-Dn. **Michel Khoury**

Parish Council Chairman: **Suheil Azar**



**Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup> 2016 Venerable and God-bearing Father Anthony the Great**

القديس أنطونيوس الكبير

This Sunday (One- Year) Memorial Service for the Handmaiden of God

**Ellen Husary** offered by her family. May her memory be eternal!

Next Sunday January 24<sup>th</sup> (One- Year) memorial service for the servant of God

**Naim Turk** offered by his family. May his memory be eternal!



### House Blessing Starts on Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>

As the tradition of our Orthodox Church, V. Rev. Fr. George Baalbaki will start his visitation for house blessings on Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>. 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.

### THE EPISTLE: St. Paul to the Hebrews. (13:17-21)

Brethren, obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now may the God of peace Who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

### الرسالة: عبرانيين 13: 21-17

يا إخوة أطيعوا مدبريكم واخضعوا لهم فإنهم يسهرون على نفوسكم سهر من سيُعطي حسابًا حتى يفعلوا ذلك بسرور لا آتئين، لأن هذا غير نافع لكم. صلّوا من أجلنا فإننا نتق بسرور بأن لنا ضميرًا صالحًا فنرغب في أن نُحسن التصرف في كل شيء، وأطلب ذلك بأشدّ إلحاح حتى أردّ اليكم في أسرع وقت. وإله السلام، الذي أعاد من بين الأموات راعي الخراف العظيم بدم العهد الأبدي ربنا يسوع، يكملكم في كل عمل صالح حتى تعملوا بمشيئته عاملاً فيكم ما هو مرضي لديه بيسوع المسيح الذي له المجد إلى الأبد، آمين.

### THE GOSPEL: St. Luke. (17:12-19)

At that time, as Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When He saw them He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus said, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

## الإنجيل: لوقا 17: 12-19

في ذلك الزمان، فيما يسوع داخلٌ إلى قرية، استقبله عشرة رجال بُرص ووقفوا من بعيد ورفعوا أصواتهم قائلين: يا يسوع المعلم ارحمنا. فلما رآهم قال لهم: امضُوا وأروا الكهنة أنفسكم. وفيما هم منطلقون طَهُروا. وإنَّ واحدًا منهم، لما رأى أنه قد برئ، رجع يمجّد الله بصوت عظيم، وخرّ على وجهه عند قدميه شاكرًا له، وكان سامريًا. فأجاب يسوع وقال: أليس العشرة قد طَهُروا، فأين التسعة؟ ألم يوجد مَنْ يرجع ليمجّد الله إلا هذا الأجنبي؟ وقال له: قم وامض، إيمانك قد خلّصك.

### *Holy Bread of oblation offered by:*

- ❖ St. Nicholas Parish family for the good health of all who are named; Tony, Anthony ...etc on the occasion of their Names Day! Many years!
- ❖ St. Nicholas church for the good health of those who have celebrated their birthdays this week: Khouria Eman Baalbaki, Roula Bazouzi Palmer, Maher Aljada. Happy Birthdays. Many Years!

### *Alter Candle offered by:*

- ❖ Nadim, Janan, Jim, Ivette, Jennifer, Brandon, and Matthew Howell. Jane and Oscar Moran for the good health of **Basma Howell** on the occasion of her birthday January 18<sup>th</sup>. Happy birthday. Many years!
- ❖ St. Nicholas Parish family for the good health of **Rogette Bazouzi**. Many years!

## Announcements:

### Sunday Luncheon

This Sunday we will have Luncheon offered by St. Nicholas church for the benefit of the charity. We hope you all join and support.

➔ ***St. Nicholas General Assembly meeting and the installation of the Parish Council members*** will take place on ***Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>***. 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 2015.

### Metropolitan Anthony Sourozh SERMON ON GRATITUDE

The Gospel - all the Gospel is a gift of God to us, and although we are not continuously reminded of the need to be grateful, how can we not respond with gratitude to what the Gospel brings to us? God has so loved the world that He has given His only begotten Son that the world may be saved; and the Son has given Himself freely, in the sovereign freedom of His Divinity to us; no-one has taken His life from Him - these are His own words; He gave His life willingly, freely, that we may live. And today we have in the Gospel a short example of the way in which we, most of the time, receive the gifts of God. Ten men came, covered with leprosy, condemned to a cruel death by illness, but also rejected ritually by their own people for the impurity of this infectious disease. They came to Him, stood at a distance, because they knew that according to the Jewish Law they had no right even to come near Him to touch Him. And they asked for mercy. And God send them to the priests to bring forth the sign of their gratitude for the healing which they had not received; and they believed, and they went, and they were healed before they reached their goal... We might have expected that they rushed back to fall to the feet of Christ, to touch Him in gratitude - no. Nine of them went their way; it was enough for them to have been healed: it's all they needed of God. One of them, however, turned round, and came to thank the Lord.

Isn't it an image of the way in which so often we also behave? We pray; we ask the Lord for something that matters to us: it may not be life and death, it may just be that we need so much one thing or another; or that we don't even need it so much, but that we long so much for it. And then it is given us; and we receive the gift, and we rush into life with this gift in our hearts, this gift in our hands, we rush to life because it is enough for us that our prayer was fulfilled. How seldom it is that we come back, leaving our gift to be used later, but first of all turning to God and saying: What wander! What is Your love! How great, how compassionate, how humble that You have responded to my prayer...

One out of ten came back to the Lord Jesus Christ: how many of us have ever come immediately, before they took advantage of the gift to turn to God with a smile, like a child turns and say 'Thank you!', even with a smile, without words before taking advantage of what is given. And we loose so much at not being grateful; because if we learned to be grateful for the obvious gifts of God, we would gradually discover that we can be grateful for a great deal more, for everything that Providence puts in our way: not only things we rejoice in, not only the wanders of life, but even the challenges of life, the things that claims from us courage, greatness, nobility, the things which we are afraid of. And how often we could overcome vanity by gratitude! Because vanity consists in looking at ourselves, and thinking how wonderful we are, forgetting that all that we are, all that we have is a gift of God. If we only, every time we have said the right thing, done the right thing, been worthy of our human quality, human greatness and nobility, and also of the name of the disciples of Christ - if every time we turned to God and said, 'Yes! How wonderful are the words I have spoken, how good is the action I have performed - and everything was of You: the occasion was given by You, o Lord! I was able to perceive the need because You whispered in my heart: Look! I could understand because I had my mind enlightened by the Gospel! My heart responded because You touched it, and from the heart of stone which I carry in my bosom most of the time it became a heart of flesh full of compassion and of understanding! And You gave me the means of meeting the need, and the joy of meeting this need!.. If we could respond to everything this way, we would discover that life is made into an act of worship and of gratitude.

Let us reflect on this because we are coming within a few weeks, a few days now to a day when our heart should be aflame with gratitude: God has loved us so much as to become one of us; while we were strangers, alien to Him, often inimical to Him, He came, and He gave His life for us that we may live!.. We must prepare for it: joy, gratitude, faith, openness to God does not happen of a sudden; we must prepare for it. Let us reflect on what is going to happen; the thing that happened nearly two thousand years ago we shall remember as an actual event now, in a few weeks; and be ready, with a heart tilled, deeply furrowed by faith, by reflection, having thought out all our life, ready to receive the Lord like a shepherd, in the simplicity and purity of our hearts, or like the Wise Men in the deep understanding of wisdom

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## أمثلة أنطونيوس

سأحاول أن أقتبس من أنطونيوس ما أستطيع من أجلنا نحن اليوم، وكلنا يعلم تقشّفه وضبطه لنفسه. وضع لنا القديس أنطونيوس قواعد هو ورهبانه ومن تبعهم في ما بعد. الرهبان، بالرغم من الظاهر، لم يهتموا لأنفسهم، بل أرادوا لنا أن نتبعهم ونحن في الدنيا، في عائلاتنا وفي أعمالنا. أي اننا إن لم نستطع أن نقبس من أنطونيوس شيئاً لحياتنا اليوم، يكون قديساً انصرف عنا ولا علاقة لنا معه.

صام القديس أنطونيوس. وما نستطيع ان نتّخذة لنا قاعدة في فترة الصوم هو ان الإنسان المسيحي لا يستطيع ان يعيش في تبذير ولا في ترف. هذه أول قاعدة نتّخذها من قديسنا الا وهي ضرورة مراقبة النفس.

هناك أيضاً ما جاء في الموعظة على السهل: «طوباكم أيها الباكون الآن لأنكم ستضحكون» (لوقا ٦: ٢١). ستضحكون أي انكم ستبتهجون في الملكوت إذا كنتم باكين الآن. معنى هذا أنه علينا أن نستقبل كل الحوادث التي تطرأ علينا في العائلة وفي الوطن على أنها حوادث مُنجية. الإنسان المؤمن يعرف ان يقرأ من الحادثة ما يحولُه لخلاص نفسه: مرضاً أو موتاً حلّ في البيت، هذا صليب نحمله ونمشي به حتى القيامة. المطلوب القيامة من بين الأموات، الخلاص من الخطيئة.

ليس المطلوب الخلاص من سرطان أو من موت. هذه أشياء لا بد لها من ان تحدث، وعلينا ان نتقبّلها على انها طريق النور وطريق الحياة الأبدية. ما علّمه أنطونيوس ورهبانه هو اننا متألّمون ولكننا لا نزعج أنفسنا في الآلام. في الكنيسة الأرثوذكسية مفهوم «الإماتة» مفهوم خارج عن قاعدة الإيمان. الصوم ليس «إماتة» بتجريح أو قصاص للنفس، انه فعلٌ إيجابي، ارتفاع عن الشهوات لنسير في طريق النور. وأما الآلام فهي موجودة ونحن نخرج منها بنعمة الإيمان، أي نخرج منها بالارتفاع فوقها.

أهم ألم يحدث في الإنسان هو الخطيئة، والإنسان يستطيع ان يخرج من الخطايا، وقد وضع لنا أنطونيوس قواعد لمراقبة النفس حتى لا تأتي الخطيئة اليها، وإذا جاءت فهناك قواعد وضعها أيضاً لنخرج منها. عندنا مبدأ أساسي في المسيحية هو أننا نخرج من الطبيعة إلى النعمة. عبارة تستدعي اهتمامنا: «نطلع» أو «نخرج» من الطبيعة إلى النعمة. كان مع الطبيعة، مع المادة، مع اللحم والدم. فيلّقى الروح القدس في ماء المعمودية فينتقل إليه.

يبقى أن جسدنا تراب، الطبيعة القديمة التي كانت فينا، التي ورثناها من أهلنا ومن البيئة ومن المجتمع. لكن المسيح فينا يدخل في صراع مع ترابيّتنا، أي انه يعمل داخل النفس وهي ممزّقة بين كيانه القديم وبين كيان النعمة الذي اكتسبته فيحولها إلى نفس انسكبت عليها النعمة، أي ان المسيح يأخذها إليه، يرفعها إليه. لا يغتصبها اغتصاباً بل يحولها إليه إن هي أرادت هذا التحوّل في توبة حق.

ما قاله لنا أنطونيوس هو ان المسيح يستطيع أن يرفعنا إليه عن طريقين لا ثالث لهما: الطريق الأول مراقبة النفس وقد دعاها إلى التقشّف أو الجهاد الروحي. والطريق الثانية هي النعمة التي تأتي إلينا بالمعمودية وبالمناولة وبالإنجيل وبالصلاة وبالتوبة. علينا أن نتقبّلها، ان نجاهد نحوها فيلتقي جهدنا مع نعمة الرب فنصبح مخلصين.

ذاك هو كل التعليم الذي جاء به القديس أنطونيوس. انه يدعونا إلى ان نرتفع بالتقشّف، بعدم البذخ، بعدم الترف، بالسلام الروحي، بالغفران لكل الناس.

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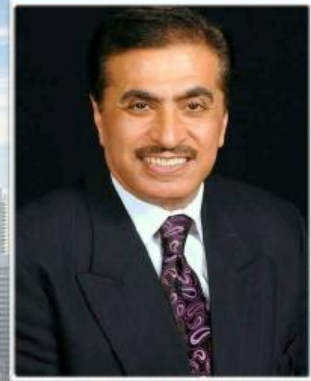
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