

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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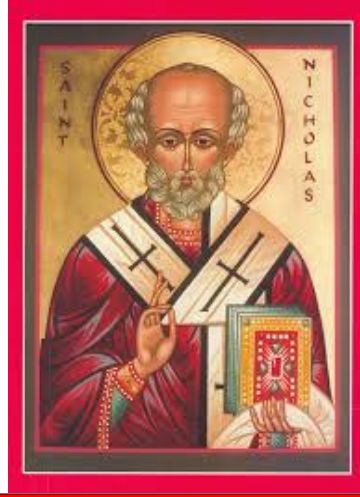
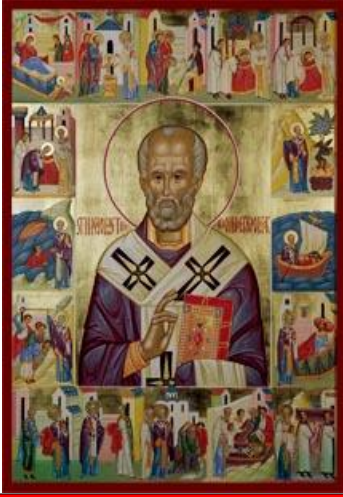
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Pastor Emeritus, V. Rev. Fr. Gregory Ofiesh

Sub-Dn. Michel Khoury

Parish Council Chairman: Suheil Azar



Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Sunday of Forefathers (Ancestors) of Christ

**NATIVITY FAST: November 15<sup>th</sup> - December 25<sup>th</sup>**

Nativity Fast (Advent) is the period proceeding the Christmas season in which we abstain from meat and dairy products. Eating fish is allowed except Wednesdays and Fridays, and we can eat all the regular meals like breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. The purpose of this fast is seeking the spirituality and the preparation for the feast of the advent of our Lord on December 25<sup>th</sup>.



صوم الميلاد: يبدأ صوم الميلاد 11/15 وهو صوم يسمح فيه أكل السمك (عدا الأربعاء والجمع) لغاية نهار 12/20. هذا الصوم تهيئة للاحتفال بعيد ميلاد ربنا يسوع المسيح. نتمنى للجميع صوماً مباركاً وكل عام وأنتم بخير.

**Christmas Service: Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup> Matins 5:00 pm Divine Liturgy 5:30 pm.**

**THE EPISTLE: St. Paul to the Colossians. (3:4-11)** Brethren, when Christ, Who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

الرسالة: كولوسي 3:4-11 يا إخوة، متى ظهر المسيح الذي هو حياتنا فأنتم ايضا تُظهرون حينئذ معه في المجد. فأميتوا أعضاءكم التي على الأرض: الزنى والنجاسة والهوى والشهوة الرديئة والطمع الذي هو عبادة وثن، لأنه لأجل هذه يأتي غضبُ الله على أبناء العصيان، وفي هذه انتم ايضا سلكتم حيناً إذ كنتم عاتشين فيها. اما الآن فأنتم ايضا اطرحوا الكل: الغضب والسخط والخبث والتجديف والكلام القبيح من أفواهكم. ولا يكذب بعضكم بعضاً بل اخلعوا الإنسان العتيق مع أعماله والبسوا الإنسان الجديد الذي يتجدد للمعرفة على صورة خالقه حيث ليس يوناني ولا يهودي، لا ختان ولا قلف، لا بربري ولا اسكيثي، لا عبد ولا حر، بل المسيح هو كل شيء وفي الجميع.

الإنجيل: لوقا 14:16-24 قال الرب هذا المثل: انسان صنع عشاء عظيماً ودعا كثيرين فأرسل عبده في ساعة العشاء يقول للمدعوين: تعالوا فإن كل شيء قد أُعدّ. فطفق كلهم، واحد فواحد، يستعفون. فقال له الأول: قد اشتريت حقلاً ولا بد لي ان أخرج وأنظره، فأسألك ان تعفيني. وقال الآخر: قد اشتريت خمسة فدادين بقر وانا ماض لأجرّبها، فأسألك ان تعفيني. وقال الآخر: قد تزوجت امرأة فلذلك لا أستطيع ان أجيء. فأتى العبد وأخبر سيده بذلك. فحينئذ غضب رب البيت وقال لعبده: اخرج سريعاً الى شوارع المدينة وأزقتها، وأدخل المساكين والجدع والعميان والعرج الى هنا. فقال العبد: يا سيد قد قُضي ما أمرت به، ويبقى ايضا محلّ. فقال السيد للعبد: اخرج الى الطرق والأسيجة واضطررهم الى الدخول حتى يمتلئ بيتي. فإني اقول لكم انه لا يذوق عشائي احد من اولئك الرجال المدعوين، لأن المدعوين كثيرين والمختارين قليلين.

### THE GOSPEL: St. Luke. (14:16-24)

The Lord spoke this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But, one by one, they all began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.' For many are called, but few are chosen

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

- ❖ Maha Dabit and family in loving memory of **Rimon Dabit, Nakleh and Ellen Aho**. May their memory be eternal!

### *Upcoming Events:*

#### ❖ *Parish Council Election December 11<sup>th</sup> after the Divine Liturgy*


This Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, there will be a parish council election meeting for the sole purpose of electing some members of the Parish Council for the coming term. Three are to be elected and one to be appointed by the Pastor.

In order to vote in the elections, members must be spiritually qualified and in a good standing with the church.

**Children Christmas Program:** will take place on Sunday Dec 18<sup>th</sup> after Divine Liturgy. Followed by SANTA CLAUSE coming to town to give out Christmas Presents, with the Bubble lady show entertainment. Please bring your kids and your camera to take a picture with Santa!



#### ❖ *Christmas Party:* St. Nicholas Church Christmas Party will be held on Saturday December 17<sup>th</sup>,



## St. Nicholas Orthodox Church


Christmas Party  
Saturday December 17, 2016 @7:30pm

Famous singers from Palestine: Bishara Sakhamini  
And from Jordan: Fouad Rakan  
& Maestro Radwan Shakhshir & Band

Donation \$85 per person  
(Includes open top shelf bar, Meza and dinner)

FOR RESERVATIONS CALL:

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Salim Qaru: (650) 642 - 0168	Sana Jada: (650) 255 - 1380
Maurice Kari: (650) 455 - 1600	Elias Batshon: (650) 580 - 7185



## *Pledge Commitments & Archdiocese Fees*

*Friendly reminder:*

*Before the end of this year, we would like you to honor your pledge commitments and archdiocese fees. God bless you!*

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### **Bridal Feast**

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

How often have we heard today's a parable about those people who were called to the Bridal Feast of the King, and who refused to come. The one who had acquired a plot of land; he thought he was in possession of it; in reality, he was so attached to it that he could not detach himself from it: he was a prisoner of what he thought he possessed. And so it is with whatever we imagine we possess; it is enough for us to have the smallest thing in our hand — and this hand is alienated to us; we cannot use it anymore, we cannot use our arm, our whole body is conditioned by what we possess, or imagine we possess: we are held a prisoner by it.

Others refused to come because they had bought five pairs of oxen: they had to try them, they had a task to fulfil, they had work to do, they had perhaps what they believed to be a mission in life, and therefore they had no time for anything except that that was their personal concern.

And the last refused to come because his heart was full of his own joy; having married, how could he be concerned with anyone else's marriage? He was full of his own joy — how could he participate in anyone else's joy?

And so, they all turned away from the call.

Doesn't it apply very directly to us? Each of us possesses something that he deems so important that he is prepared to turn away from God — yes, from God: there is no time for prayer, there is no time for worship. At the same time we turn away from other people who need us because we are busy with our own business?

And how often happens that we are full of joy or of sorrow — but they are our own, we hug them to our heart, we have no time for anyone else's sorrow or anyone else's joy.

But then, what should we do? You hear every Sunday in the Liturgy words that say, 'Let us lay aside all the cares of this life'; does it mean that we must turn away from the earth on which we live, from the tasks which are ours, from the joys and true sorrows that come our way? No!

But there is an answer to it perhaps in the lines that precede the reading from the Epistle which we heard today, where we are told: Are you risen with Christ? Are you where He is? Is your life hid in God with Christ? What does it really mean to us? It means that if we are dead with the death of Christ to everything which is destructive of love, destructive of compassion, which is self-centredness, which is self-love, which leaves no space for anyone but ourselves — if we are dead to all this, and if we have accepted life on Christ's terms, ready to live for others, live for God, live for the joy and life of those who surround us — then we are risen with Christ, and our life is indeed hid with Christ in God, it is at the very depth of God, at the very depth of divine love! And then we can turn to the earth; then, instead of possessing we can serve, instead of overpowering we can try to bring this earth of ours, in an act of love, in an act of reverence to be free, to be God's earth, to be able to bring fruit, not as it does being raped, being violently possessed by us, but giving us its fruit in an act of responsive love. And the same applies to our tasks; we are called to serve, we are called to make of all our life an act of concern, of love, of service — then, all that we do becomes an act of God, then it becomes meaningful and it does not separate us from God.

And if joy has come into our heart, it is a gift of God; if sorrow has come into our heart, we can carry it to God, for it to be integrated in the mystery of salvation!

Let us reflect on this! Let us truly lay aside all the cares of this life in the sense that let us not be prisoners, but free: Christ has come to set us free. And then the earth, and our labour, and our joys, and our sorrows and everyone on earth will become part of the Kingdom of God. Then indeed, our life will be hid with Christ in God, but a God Who have chosen so to love the world as to be incarnate, to become man among men, to take upon Himself all the human destiny, createdness, life in a fallen world, the consequences of human sin, and even the loss of God which is what kills. And, having accepted it all in an act of saving and redeeming love, He has risen, and anyone can enter into eternal life, the life of the resurrection by uniting himself or herself to Christ. Amen.

### تعالوا فإن كل شيء قد أُعِدَّ

استعداداً للميلاد المبارك، نُقيم اليوم ذكرى الأجداد الذين سبقوا السيد من آدم إلى مريم، وفي الأحد القادم سنقيم ذكرى الذين سبقوه من العبرانيين أي ابتداء من إبراهيم. السيد متصل بكل الجنس البشري، وبنوع خاص بالأبرار الذين هيأوا مجيئه. يتحدث إنجيل اليوم عن وليمة أُعدها إنسان فأخذ يُرسل يطلب المدعوين، ولكنهم اعتذروا الواحد تلو الآخر: هذا له حفل اشتراه، وذاك له فدادين أراد أن يفلح بها، فاستعفيا، والثالث تزوج امرأة فقال: لا أقدر أن أجيء. غير أن صاحب الدعوة لم يقبل من أحد عذراً لأن الوليمة الإلهية خير من كل شيء آخر.

كما أن الأبرار في العهد القديم كانوا ناظرين إلى مجيء المخلص، هكذا نحن ننظر إلى هذه الوليمة الخلاصية التي تنتظرنا والتي أُعدها لنا يسوع بتجسده. ولهذا أخذ صاحب الوليمة يجمع المساكين والعُميان والعُرج من الطريق ويدخل إلى ملكوته مَنْ لم يكن مُعداً لهم.

وهذا تحذير لنا لأننا نحن، بعد أن هيأنا الإنجيل لاقبالت الخلاص، نستعفي بسبب أغراض هذا العالم وبسبب حاجات حقيقية أو مصطنعة. اختلقنا الأعداء التي نُحوّلنا عن رؤية يسوع وعن الانضمام إليه في التوبة والامتنال وتهيؤ النفس. ولذلك يُحذّرنا السيد بقوله أن المدعوين كثيرون والمختارين قليلون، وقد نكون نحن من الذين نُقصى عن وجهه ونُرمى في الظلمة البرّانية. غير أن يسوع أت لننظر إليه ويكون هو نعيمنا ومائدتنا ووليمتنا وغذاءنا الدائم. فيسوع يغذيّننا إن نحن التفتنا إليه كما التفت إليه إبراهيم والأبرار الذين انحدروا من إبراهيم وكانوا لا يعيشون الا لمجيء المخلص.

مَنْ مَنّا يحيا لمجيء المخلص إلى قلبه بعد أن جاء إلى العالم؟ مَنْ طهر قلبه ليصير مذوداً للرب يرحّب بنعمته؟ إن كُنّا مرتدّين عن المسيح مُبتعدين عنه بعبادات سيئة نُكررها وبخطايا نستطيعها، إن كُنّا نافرين من المسيح، أو كان نافرّاً مَنّا بسبب خطايانا، فهوذا اليوم يوم مقبول، انه يوم خلاص نتهياً فيه لكي يبنّثق مَنّا المسيح كما انبنّثق بالجسد من أمّه. كلّ مَنّا يستطيع أن يكون مريم العذراء، أي أن يُجسّد المسيح في بيته، بين أصدقائه، في قريته، في العالم. العالم يشّتاقي إلى مَنْ يُنقّذه من ويلات، من سقوطه، من اهترائه. العالم يتمخّض. متى يأتي النور؟ النور هو نحن الذين عُمدنا وليس لنا الا أن نُشعّ اذا استطعنا أن نعود إلى السيّد. سوف يأتينا طفلاً لكي نعود، لكي نبقي، لكي نلازمه في فقره وفي تعبته وفي آلامه، لكي نلازمه بالحب الذي أعطانا. وهكذا إذا ذاق الناس المحبة التي نعطيها نحن، يستطيعون أن يعودوا وأن يكون عُمرهم كلّهُ عياداً.

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