

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 Emeritus, V. Rev. Fr. Gregory Ofiesh

Sub-Dn. Michel Khoury

Parish Council Chairman: Maher Shami



Sunday, January 15<sup>th</sup> 2017



This Sunday (40-Day) Memorial Service for the Servant of God

**Fayek Rantisi** offered by his family. May his memory be eternal!

### House Blessing Starts on Monday, January 9<sup>th</sup>

As the tradition of our Orthodox Church, V. Rev. Fr. George Baalbaki will start his visitation for house blessings on Monday, January 9<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 church office.

### 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 ٣ : ٤-١١

يا إخوة، متى ظهر المسيح الذي هو حياتنا فأنتم أيضا تظهرون 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 أنتم أيضًا سلكتُم حينًا إذ كنتم عائشين فيها. أما الآن فأنتم أيضًا اطرخوا الكل، الغضب والسخط والخُبث والتجديف والكلام القبيح من أفواهكم ولا يكذب بعضكم بعضًا، بل اخلعوا الإنسان العتيق مع أعماله وألبسوا الإنسان الجديد الذي يتجدد للمعرفة على صورة خالقه حيث ليس يوناني ولا يهودي ولا ختان ولا قلف ولا بربري ولا إسكيثي، لا عبد ولا حر، بل المسيح هو كل شيء وفي الجميع.

### 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 ١٧: ١٢-١٩

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: امضوا وأروا الكهنة أنفسكم. وفيما هم منطلقون طهروا. وإنَّ واحدًا منهم لما رأى انه قد برئ، رجع يمجّد الله بصوت عظيم، وخرّ على وجهه عند قدميه شاكرًا له، وكان سامريًا. فأجاب يسوع وقال: أليس العشرة قد طهروا فأين التسعة؟ ألم يوجد من يرجع ليُمجّد الله إلا هذا الأجنبيّ؟ وقال له: قمّ وامض، إيمانك قد خلّصك.

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

- ❖ Wahib Costandi Hanhan in loving memory of **Adel Saba** (Husband of Fernande Costandi Hanhan) who passed away in Maryland. May his memory be eternal!

***Upcoming event:***

- ❖ ***St. Nicholas Parish General Assembly meeting*** will take place on ***Sunday, January 22<sup>nd</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 2016.

**Save the Date:**

- ❖ ***Three Holy Youths Camp: June 19<sup>th</sup> – June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017***

Registration for camp begins...

January 15-February 15th Early Bird Registration \$250.00

February 16th- May 1st Registration \$300.00

A deposit must be made to your local parish registration officer of \$50.00 to hold your campers spots. Payments must be completed by May 1st 2017.

Physical Registration sheets will be at your local parish as well as online @ [norcaldeanerycamp.org](http://norcaldeanerycamp.org) > Registration> Media Consent Form.

Medical Forms must be completed at your parish in person.

For more info, please contact Ilyan Baalbaki : (586) 604-5331.

**Save the Date:**

***Valentine's Party:*** St. Nicholas Church Annual Valentine party will take place on February 11<sup>th</sup> 2017. More info to follow..

**Healing of the Ten Lepers**

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 wonder! 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 think: 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 2000 years ago that 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.

## نعمة الألم

حالتنا مع الرب أننا معذبون وان الرب دائما يشفي. ليس لنا أن نتساءل لماذا نحن في الآلام، لماذا وُجدنا في الآلام. الوحي الإلهي لا يجيب عن هذا السؤال، لا يقول لأي سبب نحن مطروحون في الأوجاع، في أوجاع الجسد، في أوجاع الروح، في أوجاع الضمير. يكتفي الكتاب الإلهي في أن يلاحظ ذلك، وينطلق منه ليكشف لنا كيف نستطيع أن نخرج من هذه الآلام أو كيف نقدر أن نحتملها ونحوّلها إلى طاقة إبداع وتقرب من الله فنجعلها سلماً نرتقي بها إلى السماء.

عندنا في الكتاب وعود بالشفاء وبالخلاص من الخطيئة. وعندنا وعد بالفرح وكشف للحياة الأبدية التي تأتي عندما نقبل سر الله ونطيعه في كل ما ندوقه من مصائب الدنيا، في الروح كان أم في الجسد. عندما نكون في حال من هذه الأحوال، في عذاب كهذا الذي وقع فيه الرجال العشرة البرص الذين يذكّرهم لنا إنجيل اليوم، لسان حالنا مع السيد ان نقول: "يا رب ارحمني". نلاحظ هنا ان الرجال استرحموا يسوع، وهذا أشمل من قضية الشفاء. عندما نطلب الشفاء، أكثرنا يطلب شفاء الجسد، وهذا صالح. الألم الجسدي يُلقينا في ما هو مبهم، وكأننا تجاهه في خلوة قمة عالية حيث صفاء الهواء يجعل التنفس صعباً ومضنياً. في الضعف الجسدي العضلي تسقط كل تساؤلاتنا. كل ما ادّخرناه من معرفة وفهم يزول ويفنى، يصبح لا شيء. نعلق هكذا في فراغ وعجز وفقر. نداهم فجأة بتفاهة كل ما نتعرقل به من سعي ومأرب. السقم والمرض يحوان كل ما هو سطحيّ فينا. تُنقى داخلياً اذ نُعمد بدموع الألم. والسيد دائماً يفتقدنا هناك فيما تجفّ أحشائنا في داخلنا فنعطش حقاً إلى ماء حيّ ونلتمسه في ما نعرف من عمق وجدية.

يأتي السيد ويُلازمنا في وحدتنا. يقف من بعيد. يمرّ بنا كما يذكر لنا النص الإنجيلي. لا يفرض نفسه بل ينتظرنا. يخاطبنا بلغتنا نحن. فإن قبلنا الحوار، إن تعلّمنا كيف ننتفض ونقول: "ارحمني"، حتى ولو بدا لنا غريباً، حتى إن لم نكن نعرف اسمه، يدخل هو في حوار معنا ويزيل بحضرتة حشجة أهوائنا، يطفئ لهيب سهامها ويحوّل ضجيج أفكارنا إلى ينبوع يفيض فينا فننتعش، يرفع عنا كل ضيق ونبقى للمسيح.

ما هو موقفنا في المصاب بعد أن نقع في الشر، بعد أن تجتاح الظلمات نفوسنا؟ أية صلاة نصلي؟ هل نحن واثقون بأن الله نفسه ينحدر إلينا اذا صلينا؟ هل نعرف أن الله يريد أن نخدمه، ان ندخل معه في حوار؟

الله قادر بالطبع أن يستجيب في كل حين، وهو مُستجيب بالفعل اذا سألنا واذا لم نسأل لأنه يعلم حاجتنا. ومع ذلك فالرب يفضل ان نُكلمه لكي نتدرب على صداقته. انه يطلب منا هذه الدالة، دالة البنين على أبيهم. وهذا ما نطلبه في القداس الإلهي قبل أن نتلو الصلاة الربّية اذ نقول: "وأهلنا ايها السيد أن نجسر بدالة لندعوك أبا".

الله يريد ان يختلط بنا، ان يعاشرنا لكي نعرف أننا ارتفعنا إلى مصف الألوهة ولكي ندرك أن الله تنازل إلى مصاف البشر. واذا جاء الله إلى نفوسنا كما هي، كما نعهدها، في ضعفها، في هوانها، في قذارتها، اذا جاء الله إلى هذه النفوس فهو شافيها.

تجربة الألم القصوى هي أن نتعلق بالمناء، ان نُعلق النوافذ بالكليّة على أنفسنا فنختنق داخلياً. قلوبنا تدبل، عقولنا تسكت، ضمائرنا تتسكّع فنموت روحياً. الانسان لا يختنق فقط من رثيته، يختنق إن رفض ان يفتح النوافذ متى أحسّ بالاختناق، لأنه إن فتح نوافذ القلب إلى السماء فالرب يأتي اليه ويحاوره والحوار تنفّس وانتعاش.

الصلاة تنفّس. اذا ما كنا متأكدين من هذا الأمر، نستطيع ان نتغلب على جميع تجارب الدنيا لأن ارواحنا تكون مليئة من النعمة.

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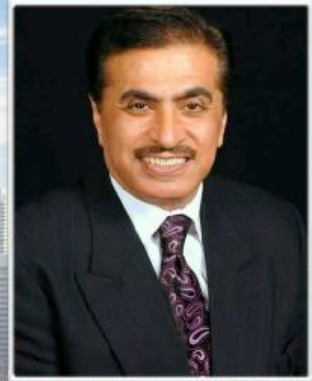


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