

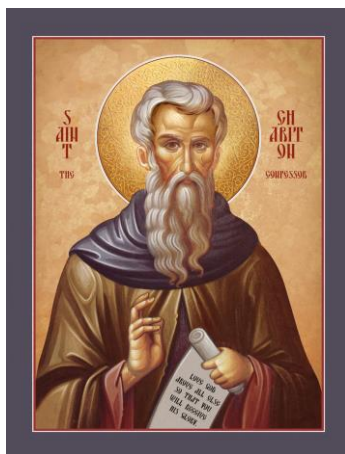


**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN
ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA
Diocese of Los Angeles and the West**

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF
THE REDEEMER
380 MAGDALENA AVE, LOS ALTOS HILLS, CA 94024
PHONE: (650) 941-1570**

www.orthodoxredeemer.org

**V. REV. FR. SAMER YOUSSEF, D. MIN
REV. FR. THEODORE SAKELLAR, MTS**



SEPTEMBER 28, 2025

**SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
& FIRST SUNDAY OF LUKE**

**VENERABLE CHARITON THE CONFESSOR AND ABBOT OF
PALESTINE**

PROPHET BARUCH; VENERABLE NEOPHYTOS AND AUXENTIOS OF CYPRUS

الاحد السادس عشر بعد العنصرة و الأحد الأول من القديس لوقا الأنجيلي
تذكّار القديس خاريطن المعترف

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SEVEN

Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world the Great Mercy.

أبوليتيكيون القيامة بالحن السابع

حَطَمْتَ بِصَلِيْبِكَ الْمَوْتَ، وَقَتَحْتَ لِلصِّ الْفِرْدَوْسَ، وَحَوَّلْتَ نَوَاحٍ حَامِلَاتِ الطَّيِّبِ، وَأَمَرْتَ رُسُلَكَ أَنْ يَكْرِزُوا، بِأَنَّكَ قَدْ قُمْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ، مَانِحاً الْعَالَمَ الرَّحْمَةَ الْعَظْمَى.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. CHARITON THE CONFESSOR IN TONE EIGHT

The barren wilderness thou didst make fertile with the streams of thy tears; and by thy deep sighing thou hast given fruit through thy struggles a hundred-fold. Accordingly, thou hast become a star for the universe, sparkling with miracles. Therefore, O righteous Father Chariton, intercede with Christ God to save our souls.

أبوليتيكيون للقديس خاريطن المعترف بالحن الثامن

لِلْبَرِّيَّةِ غَيْرِ الْمُثْمَرَةِ بِمَجَارِي دُمُوعِكَ أَمْرَعْتَ، وَبِالْتَّنَهَّدَاتِ الَّتِي مِنْ الْأَعْمَاقِ أَثْمَرْتَ بِأَتْعَابِكَ إِلَى مِثْنَةٍ ضِعْفٍ، فَصِرْتَ كَوْكَباً لِلْمَسْكُونَةِ مُتَلَأِلِئاً بِالْعَجَائِبِ، يَا أَبَانَا الْبَارَّ خَارِيْطُنْ، فَتَشَفَّعْ إِلَى الْمَسِيحِ الْإِلَهِ أَنْ يُخَلِّصَ نَفُوسَنَا.

APOLYTIKION OF THE TRANSFIGURATION IN TONE SEVEN

When, O Christ our God, Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, Thou didst reveal Thy glory to Thy Disciples in proportion as they could bear it. Let Thine everlasting light also enlighten us sinners, through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Thou Bestower of light, glory to Thee.

أبوليتيكيون تجلّي ربنا يسوع المسيح بالحن السابع

لَمَّا تَجَلَّيْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ فِي الْجَبَلِ، أَظْهَرْتَ مَجْدَكَ لِلتَّلَامِيذِ حَسَبَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا، فَأَشْرِقْ لَنَا نَحْنُ

الْخَطَاةَ نوركِ الأزلِّي، بِشَفَاعَاتِ والدَةِ الإلهِ، يا مانِحِ النُّورِ، المَجْدُ لك.

ORDINARY KONTAKION IN TONE TWO

O protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the Creator most constant, O despise not the suppliant voices of those who have sinned; but be thou quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession, and speed thou to make supplication, thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.

قنْدَاقُ بِالْحَنِّ الثَّانِي

يا شَفِيعَةَ الْمَسِيحِيِّينَ غَيْرِ الْخَازِيَةِ، الْوَسِيطَةَ أَدَى الْخَالِقِ غَيْرِ الْمَرْذُودَةِ، لَا تُعْرِضِي عَنْ أَصْوَاتِ طَلِبَاتِنَا نَحْنُ الْخَطَاةَ، بَلْ تَدَارِكِينَا بِالْمَعُونَةِ بِمَا أَنَّكَ صَالِحَةٌ، نَحْنُ الصَّارِخِينَ إِلَيْكَ بِإِيمَانٍ: بَادِرِي إِلَى الشَّفَاعَةِ وَأُسْرِعِي فِي الطَّلْبَةِ، يَا والدَةَ الإلهِ، الْمُتَشَفِّعَةَ دَائِمًا بِمُكْرَمِيكَ.

THE EPISTLE

The Lord will give strength to His people.

Bring unto the Lord, ye sons of God, bring unto the Lord glory and honor.

The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (6:1-10)

Brethren, since we are fellow workers, we entreat you also not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says, “At an acceptable season I hearkened unto thee, and in a day of salvation I helped thee”; behold, now is “the acceptable season”; behold, now is “the day of salvation”; giving no occasion of stumbling in anything, that the ministry is not blamed, but in everything commending ourselves, as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in vigils, in fasts, in purity, in knowledge, in longsuffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

الرسالة

الرَّبُّ يُعْطِي قُوَّةً لِّشَعْبِهِ.

قَدِّمُوا لِلرَّبِّ يَا أُنْبَاءَ اللَّهِ، قَدِّمُوا لِلرَّبِّ مَجْدًا وَكَرَامَةً.

فَصَلُّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ بُولُسِ الرَّسُولِ الثَّانِيَةِ إِلَى أَهْلِ كورنثوس. (10-6:1)

يا إِخْوَةُ، بِمَا أَنَّا مُعَاوِنُونَ، نَطْلُبُ إِلَيْكُمْ أَنْ لَا تَقْبَلُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ فِي الْبَاطِلِ. لِأَنَّهُ يَقُولُ "إِنِّي فِي وَقْتٍ مَقْبُولٍ اسْتَجَبْتُ لَكَ، وَفِي يَوْمِ خَلَاصٍ أَعْنُتُكَ." فَهُذَا الْآنَ وَقْتُ مَقْبُولٍ. هُوَذَا الْآنَ يَوْمُ خَلَاصٍ. وَلَسْنَا نَأْتِي بِمَعْتَرَةٍ فِي شَيْءٍ لِنَلَّا يَلْحَقَ الْخِدْمَةُ عَيْنٌ بَلْ نُظْهِرُ، فِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ، أَنْفُسَنَا كَحُدَامِ اللَّهِ، فِي صَبْرٍ كَثِيرٍ، فِي شِدَائِدٍ، فِي ضَرُورَاتٍ، فِي ضِيقَاتٍ، فِي جَلَدَاتٍ، فِي سُجُونٍ، فِي اضْطِرَابَاتٍ، فِي أَتْعَابٍ، فِي أَشْهَارٍ، فِي أَصْوَامٍ، فِي طَهَارَةٍ، فِي مَعْرِفَةٍ، فِي طَوْلِ أَنَاةٍ، فِي رَفَقٍ، فِي الرُّوحِ الْقُدُسِ، فِي مَحَبَّةٍ بِلا رِيَاءٍ، فِي كَلِمَةِ الْحَقِّ، فِي قُوَّةِ اللَّهِ، بِأَسْلِحَةِ الْبِرِّ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الْيَسَارِ، بِمَجْدٍ وَهَوَانٍ، بِسَوْءٍ صَبِيحٍ وَحُسْنِهِ. كَأَنَّا مُضِلُّونَ وَنَحْنُ صَادِقُونَ، كَأَنَّا مَجْهُولُونَ وَنَحْنُ مَعْرُوفُونَ، كَأَنَّا مَايَثُونَ وَهَذَا نَحْنُ أَحْيَاءُ، كَأَنَّا مُؤَدَّبُونَ وَلَا نُقْتَلُ، كَأَنَّا حَزَانَى وَنَحْنُ دَائِمًا فَرِحُونَ، كَأَنَّا فَقَرَاءُ وَنَحْنُ نُغْنِي كَثِيرِينَ، كَأَنَّا لَا شَيْءَ لَنَا وَنَحْنُ نَمْلِكُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (5:1-11)

At that time, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And He saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, Jesus asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when Jesus had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at Thy word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish, which

they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

الإنجيل

فصلٌ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ لَوْقَا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتَّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ.

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ، فِيمَا يَسُوعُ وَقَفَ عِنْدَ بُحَيْرَةِ جَنَيْسَارَتِ، رَأَى سَفِينَتَيْنِ وَقَفَتَيْنِ عِنْدَ شَاطِئِ الْبُحَيْرَةِ، وَقَدْ انْحَدَرَ مِنْهُمَا الصِّيَادُونَ يَغْسِلُونَ الشَّبَاكَ. فَدَخَلَ إِحْدَى السَّفِينَتَيْنِ، وَكَانَتْ لِسِمْعَانَ، وَسَأَلَهُ أَنْ يَتَّبَاعَهُ قَلِيلًا عَنِ الْبَرِّ، وَجَلَسَ يُعَلِّمُ الْجُمُوعَ مِنَ السَّفِينَةِ. وَلَمَّا فَرَّغَ مِنَ الْكَلَامِ، قَالَ لِسِمْعَانَ: "تَقَدَّمْ إِلَى الْعُمُقِ وَأَلْقُوا شَبَاكَكُمْ لِلصَّيْدِ." فَأَجَابَ سِمْعَانُ وَقَالَ لَهُ: "يَا مُعَلِّمُ، إِنَّا قَدْ تَعَبْنَا اللَّيْلَ كُلَّهُ وَلَمْ نُصِبْ شَيْئًا، وَلَكِنْ بِكَلِمَتِكَ أَلْقِي الشَّبَاكَ." فَلَمَّا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ، اخْتَارُوا مِنَ السَّمَكِ شَيْئًا كَثِيرًا حَتَّى تَحَرَّقَتْ شَبَكَتُهُمْ. فَأَشَارُوا إِلَى شُرَكَائِهِمْ فِي السَّفِينَةِ الْأُخْرَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا وَيُعَاوَنُوهُمْ. فَأَتُوا وَمَلَأُوا السَّفِينَتَيْنِ حَتَّى كَادَتَا تَغْرَقَانِ. فَلَمَّا رَأَى ذَلِكَ سِمْعَانُ بَطْرُسُ، خَرَّ عِنْدَ رُكْبَتَيْ يَسُوعَ قَائِلًا: "أَخْرِجْ عَنِي يَا رَبُّ، فَإِنِّي رَجُلٌ خَاطِئٌ." لِأَنَّ الْإِنْذِهَالَ اعْتَرَاهُ هُوَ وَكُلُّ مَنْ مَعَهُ لِصَيْدِ السَّمَكِ الَّذِي أَصَابُوهُ. وَكَذَلِكَ يَعْقُوبُ وَيُوحَنَّا ابْنَا زَبْدَى اللَّذَانِ كَانَا رَفِيقَيْنِ لِسِمْعَانَ. فَقَالَ يَسُوعُ لِسِمْعَانَ: "لَا تَخَفْ، فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْآنَ تَكُونُ صَيَادًا لِلنَّاسِ." فَلَمَّا بَلَّغُوا بِالسَّفِينَتَيْنِ إِلَى الْبَرِّ، تَرَكَوا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَتَبِعُوهُ.



HOLY BREAD OF OBLATION

OFFERED BY: Fr. Samer, the Clergy and the parishioners for the good of the parish council members, the building committee and the Ladies Auxiliary and their families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Fr. Samer, the Clergy and the parishioners for the good health of all the families in Gaza, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Ukraine and all the countries has the unrest in the world. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Richard Godfrey for the good health of his wife Nancy and her sister Norma on the occasion of their birthday (Sep 26) and the good health of their children and the Godfrey, Sharkery and Bitar families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Nickitas Panayoto for the good health of his wife Narimane on the occasion of her birthday (Sep 26) and the good health of their children Troy, Nino and the Panayoto family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Tatiana and Eli Hanani for the good health of their parents Maher and Randa on the occasion of their wedding anniversary (Sept 24). Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Najwa Saah on the occasion of her birthday (Sept 27) and the good health of the Saah family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Edmon Aboujudom, David, Randa, Rajaie, Majdi, Samer and their families in memory of beloved daughter and sister, Rima Aboujudom Batshon and in memory of beloved wife and mother, Margaret Aboujudom (19 Years Memorial). Memory Eternal!

OFFERED BY: Najwa Saah in memory of her beloved husband Samaan Saah. Memory Eternal!



COFFEE HOUR AND LUNCHEON

Offered By: The Parish Community
All proceeds go to support the **Building Fund**.
Thank you for your support!

(To host the Coffee Hour, please contact Wardeh Asfour @408-718-3339)
office@orthodoxredeemer.org

Online Link: <https://holytransfiguration.breezechms.com/form/26c422>

Services Schedule Every Week

Matins @ 9:00 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

Vespers: Every Saturday @ 5:00 PM

(Please check your email in case of any cancellations for Vespers)

*Fr. Theodor will be out of town.
Thank you to Dn. John Dibs for helping. Samer Youssef
at the service this Sunday*

PARISH COUNCIL 2025

The Parish Council members' of 2025. Chair President; Bassam Khoury, Vice-Chair; Linda Salah, Treasurer; Dania Amireh Baker, Secretary; Maria Segal, Jad Bateh, Sana Eideh, Johnny Khamis, Didi Kreitem, Maher Fasheh and Rowida Barghouth. Sheila Veizades will represent the Antiochian Women Committee and Salem Aweiss will represent the Men Fellowship Committee.

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN 2025

The Antiochian Women Committee Leaders of 2025. Wardeh Asfour, Rowida Barghouth, Rima Gannage, Diana Khoury, Sheila Veizades and Hala Aboujudom (Sunshine).

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER YOUNG ADULTS

Young adults (college age and up to 39-1/2) meet on the first Sunday of the month and organize social, educational, and volunteer activities. For more information, please contact Fr. Theodor Sakellar @ 408-455-8145

SOYO (YOUTH GROUP 12-18 YEARS)

Our SOYO (Youth Group) is active through the leadership of the Advisors: Dominic Youssef and Caesar Haddad. The officers are: President; Isabella Zarzar, Vice-President; Riad Akery, Secretary; Adriana Ajlouni, Treasurer; Breanna Zarzar, Social Media Coordinator; Eliana Halteh.



SUNDAY SCHOOL CORNER

Sunday School Registration is now open. Please register your children ASAP. Registration forms are available at the church hall or on church Website: <http://www.orthodoxredeemer.org/schoolregistration>

School Schedule:

Sunday school starts 9/14/25 and ends 5/17/26. Sunday school graduation Ceremony will be on 5/17/26. Sunday school classes begin after communion and ends at 12:30pm.

Teachers: Samuel Hage, Hussam Ibrahim, Dimitry Youssef, Heather Simonovich, Randa Hanani and Jocelyn Mikhael. Caitlin Timothy and Alia Nystrom as back-up/support.

Speak the Truth with Love

By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

Much is said these days about “truth.” All people cling to their own truth, seeing it from their own perspective, whether for personal benefit or the interests of their group. Yet the Absolute Truth, God Himself, is often the most forgotten. Strangely, people still appeal to Him to justify their cause, and to strengthen their battle to obtain what they call their rights.

But in our faith, truth is not simply a law or custom—it is God Himself. The Lord said in the Holy Gospel: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). He is both the Truth and the Way to the Truth. To follow Him, to walk according to His commandments, to love Him and to humble ourselves before Him – these allow His presence to fill us, protecting us and those around us from error and falsehood.

The Lord also says: “If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

If you are a follower of Christ, you belong fully to the Truth – not partially, but wholly. The presence of Christ within you purifies you from every stain and falsehood. You cannot belong to Him and to someone else at the same time. Either you open yourself entirely to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17 and 15:26), or you remain divided and unstable.

How, then, can you remain faithful to Him while sin still finds a place in you? Faithfulness lies in your sincere striving toward Him, in following His footsteps wherever they lead, and in remaining conscious always to live in loyalty to Him. Yes, you will face obstacles and temptations either from within yourself or from the

outside. Do not be afraid, although the devil never sleeps. “Like a roaring lion, he prowls around looking for someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Do not despair if you fall once or many times. What matters most is that you rise quickly after each fall. Faithfulness to the Lord does not mean you will never sin. Rather, it means that when you do sin, you are ready to repent, to be corrected, and to continue walking toward Him in truth.

The Lord has not left you alone in this struggle. He promised: “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter to be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:16–17). To stray from the truth, then, is to turn away from the Spirit of God dwelling within you.

People may disagree endlessly about what they call “truth.” But too often they forget that truth cannot be separated from love. If in your pursuit of truth you lose love, you are no longer on the right path. At such moments, you must pause, examine yourself carefully in the light of the Gospel, and repent.

In your search for truth, you may sometimes confuse what is actually the truth with what only appears to be so. Your passions and lack of purity — whether as an individual, a group, a worldly institution, or even a church in this fallen world — play large roles in clouding your vision. Imagine, for example, the magnitude of the deception when you are under pressure from your friends or those around you! Reflect also on how dangerous it becomes when the truth to which you cling and defend is shaped by competing interests, politics, and the struggles for influence and power that dominate this world. To remain faithful, you must be willing to die to yourself in order to live in truth, integrity, and loyalty to God.

Your spiritual confusion will provide you with many justifications, sometimes disguised as logic, self-interest, craftiness, or wisdom. All of this pushes you to walk by the standards of this world, protecting yourself and your reputation, and supporting them with the spirit of the world — a spirit that is not yours if you are a disciple of Christ. For the world does not place its priority on bearing witness to the truth, but rather on cunning and compromise, which stand against the Gospel. The lure of power and influence, and the love of possession can lead you to build a

seemingly logical structure for your ambitions, filling it with noble goals that justify your actions — while in reality you are only covering up the evil within and the harm of your behavior.

Do not forget the Gospel's warning about wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15). You could be that wolf when you let evil lead you to seek your own desires disguised as virtue, or poison in honey. Be watchful, lest you become a tool of the evil one even while believing you are resisting him. Your distortion of truth is most painful when you direct it against those closest to you. Remember what Christ said: "Because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me" (John 8:45).

The Lord said: "A man's enemies will be those of his own household" (Matthew 10:36). And the Arab poet reminds us: "The injustice of kin is the hardest to bear." Your suffering is also made heavier when people label you as belonging to one camp or another, simply because the truth you spoke happened to align with their position. This, too, is part of your cross, if you remain faithful to the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. Expect your reward from the Lord alone. Many before you stood against the entire world and paid a heavy price, yet it was the truth they proclaimed that triumphed in the end.

What grieves the Lord is that some entrusted with His Church busy themselves with things He never asked for, while His children hunger for the word of life and thirst for the living water that could relieve their suffering. While God's creation longs for salvation, attention is instead directed to pursuits that have nothing to do with salvation, and efforts are poured into superficial concerns that feed and heal no one. Even more painful is that those who clearly understand their evangelical mission and pastoral responsibility are forced to spend their energy correcting distortions, rather than dedicating themselves fully to nurturing true righteousness in the hearts of Christ's beloved.

And so, you are called to remain steadfast in both truth and love. Speak the truth as you see it, but always with love (Eph. 4:15). The moment you sense within yourself the presence of anger, pride, or malice, remain silent and turn to the Lord in humble prayer. Ask Him to place His word on your lips, so that you may become a real witness to the Truth. As for false witnesses, leave them to the Lord and to the judgment of history.

قل الحق بمحبة المتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

يكثّر الكلام عن الحق في هذه الأيام. فكلّ يتمسك بحقّه، ويراه من وجهة نظره. يرى إليه في منفعته الشخصية، أو مصلحة جماعته. أمّا الحقّ المطلق، أعني الله، فهو المَنسي الأكبر، في الوقت الذي يستند فيه الجميع إليه، في تزكية حقّهم، وفي معركة الحصول عليه.

ليس الحقّ، في إيماننا، قانوناً أو عُرفاً ما، بل الله نفسه. وفي هذا قال الربّ في إنجيله المقدّس: "أنا الطريق والحقّ والحياة" (يو ١٤: ٦). هذا معناه أنّه هو الحقّ والطريق إلى الحقّ في الوقت ذاته. أنت تتبعه، وتسير على هدي وصاياه، وتحبّه، وتتواضع، فيملؤك من حضوره، الذي يقيك والذين حولك، من خطر الضلال، والسقوط في الباطل.

"إذا ثبتتم في كلامي، صرتم في الحقيقة تلاميذي: تعرفون الحقّ والحقّ يحزركم" (يوحنا ٨: ٣٢).

فإن كنت من أتباع المسيح فأنت للحقّ، لا جزئياً وإنّما بالكلية. حضور المسيح فيك ينفي، منك، كلّ زغل وشائبة. لا يمكنك أن تكون له ولغيره، في الوقت ذاته. آنذاك أنت لغيره، وتوهّم أنّك له. إمّا أن تفتح ذاتك بكلّيتها للروح القدس، روح الحقّ (يوحنا ١٤: ١٧، ١٥: ٢٦)، أو أن تبقى تعرج على الجنبين.

كيف تكون أميناً له حتى المنتهى، والخطيئة ما تزال تجد لها موضعاً، أو أكثر، فيك؟ تكمن الأمانة في مسعاك المخلص إليه، وفي تقبّي آثاره أينما وُجدت، وفي وعيك لأنّ تسلك، على الدوام، في الأمانة له. ستواجهك العقبات والعوائق المختلفة، هذه تأتي منك ومن غيرك. لا تخف فإبليس لا ينام. إنّهُ "كأسد زائر، يجول ملتمساً من يبتلعه" (١بط ٥: ٨). لا همّ إن سقطت مرّة أو أكثر، الأهمّ أن تقوم، فوراً، بعد سقطتك. أن تكون أميناً للسيد، لا يعني أنّك لن تخطئ أبداً. بل على العكس من ذلك، قد تخطئ، وتضلّ الطريق، وتظن أنّ الصحيح هنا، فتكتشف، في ما بعد، أنّه في مكان آخر. إن كانت ذاتك منفتحة على فعل روح الله، فلن تخشى تصحيح خطئك، وتقويمه.

كيف تخرج عن الحقّ، وربّك أرسل لك روحه. "وسأطلب من الآب أن يعطيكم معزّيّاً آخر يبقى معكم إلى الأبد. هو روح الحقّ الذي لا يقدر العالم أن يقبله، لأنّه لا يراه ولا يعرفه. أمّا أنتم فتعرفونه، لأنّه يقيم معكم، ويكون فيكم" (يوحنا ١٤: ١٦-١٧). ألا يعني هذا الكلام الإلهي، بوضوح تامّ، أنّ خروجك عن الحقّ يعني أنّ روح الله ليس فيك؟

يختلف البشر على ما يسمّونه "الحقّ"، لكنّهم غالباً ما يتناسون أنّ الحقّ لا ينفصل عن المحبّة. إن كسر سعيك، إلى الحقّ، المحبّة فيك، فأنت لست في الطريق القويم، ولست على الحقّ. انتبه، آنذاك عليك أن تراجع ذاتك، وتفحصها، بدقّة، على ضوء إنجيل الربّ وتعليمه.

في طلبك للحقّ قد تختلط الأمور عليك بين ما هو حقّ حقّاً، وبين ما يزين لك أنّه كذلك. أهواؤك، وعدم نقاوتك، أكنت شخصاً أو جماعة، مؤسسة دنيويّة أو كنيسة في هذا العالم الساقط، سوف تلعب دوراً رئيساً في ضبابيّة الرؤية لديك. تخيل، على سبيل المثال لا الحصر، كم سيكون الضلال عظيماً حين تكون عرضة للتأثير والضغط من أصحابك أو من الذين هم حولك!! ولك أن تتأمّل مدى الخطر على الحقّ، الذي تتمسّك به وتدافع عنه، عندما يكون الأمر خاضعاً لتجاذبات المصالح وسياساتها، التي تفرضها صراعات النفوذ والقوى، التي تسود هذا العالم. أنت تذوب لكي تبقى، فيه، على الحقّ والأمانة والاستقامة.

سيقدم لك عكرك الروحيّ كمّاً كبير التّنوع من التبريرات، التي تلبس ثوب المنطق حيناً، والمصالح أو الذكاء أو الفطنة في التصرف حيناً آخر. هذا كلّه لكي يجعلك تسلك في شطارة هذا العالم، فتحفظ نفسك ومكانتك، وتدعمهما بروح العالم، الذي أنت لست منه إن كنت من تلاميذ المسيح. لا تكمن الأوليّة، في منطق هذا العالم، في الشهادة للحقّ، بقدر ما هي في الشطارة القائمة على المفاهيم المضادّة للإنجيل. إغراء السلطة والنفوذ وحبّ التملّك يجعلك تبني عمارة منطقيّة لطموحك، توجد فيها أهدافاً وغايات صالحة، تبرّر ما أنت فاعل، فيما الحقيقة قائمة في أنّك تغطي، بهذه "الخيرات"، الشرّ الذي في داخلك، والأذى الذي يسبّبه سلوكك.

لا تنسَ كلام الإنجيل عن الذئاب الخاطفة التي تأتي بثياب الحملان (متى ٧: ١٥). هذا يصحّ عليك قبل غيرك. فقد يقودك الشرّ إلى طلب شهواتك مغلفة بالفضيلة. وراثنا الشعبي يعرف مقولة "السّم في العسل". انتبه لئلا تكون، آنذاك، مطيّة للشرّير، فيما اعتقادك أنّك تحاربه. اعوجاجك هذا يكون أشدّ مضايضة عندما توجّهه ضدّ القريب. ضع في ذهنك أنّ مسيحك قال: "أما أنا فلأني أقول الحقّ لستم تؤمنون بي" (يو ٨: ٤٥).

وقد قال السيّد في إنجيله: "أعداء الإنسان أهل بيته" (متى ١٠: ٣٦). فيما قالت الشاعرة العربي "وظلم ذوي القربى أشدّ مضايضة". كذلك يزيد في وجعك أن تُصنّف في جعبة هذا وذاك، لمجرّد أنّ الحقّ الذي قلت به قد توافق مع هذه الجهة أو تلك. هذا جزء من صليبك، إن ثبتّ على التمسك بثوابت الإنجيل وتعليم كنيستك. لا تنتظر الجزاء إلا من ربّك. كثيرون، من قبلك، وقفوا في وجه العالم كلّهُ، ودفعوا ثمناً غالياً، لكن الحقيقة، التي نادوا بها، هي التي انتصرت أخيراً.

يؤلم الربّ أن بعضاً من القيّمين على كنيسته أناس مهتمّون بما لم يطلبه قطّ، فيما أبناؤه جياح إلى كلمة حياة، وعطاش إلى ماء يروي ظمأ شقائهم ومعاناتهم. في الوقت الذي تطلب خلائق الله الخلاص، تتوجّه الاهتمامات إلى تحقيق مآرب لا تمتّ إلى هذا الخلاص بصلة، وتركز الجهود على صور شكلية، لا تغني فقيراً ولا تُشبع جائعاً. والأكثر إيلاماً، أنّ من يعي رسالته الإنجيليّة ومسؤوليته الرعوية بدقّة ورهافة، يُضطرّ إلى أن يصرف وقته في التصدّي للاعوجاج، بدلاً من الانصراف الكامل إلى بناء الاستقامة الحقّة، في نفوس أحبة المسيح. يبقى لك أن تثبت على الحقّ والمحبة. قل ما تعتقده حقّاً لكن بمحبة (أفسس ٤: ١٥). واصمت حالما تشعر بأثر شرّير في داخلك، وتوجّه إلى ربّك، في مناجاة متواضعة، لعلّه يسكب كلمته على فمك، فتكون من الشاهدين للحقّ. أمّا شهود الزور فاتركهم لربّك، وحكم التاريخ.

ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

LUNCHEON FUNDRAISER

SHAWARMA PLATE

With Hummus & Salad

Sunday, September 28
after the Divine Liturgy

\$10 Donation

