



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

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF
THE REDEEMER
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**V. REV. FR. SAMER YOUSSEF, D. MIN
REV. FR. THEODORE SAKELLAR, MTS**



NOVEMBER 2, 2025

**TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
& FIFTH SUNDAY OF LUKE**

**MARTYRS AKINDINOS, PEGASIOS, APHTHONIOS, ELPIDOPHOROS AND
ANEMPODISTOS OF PERSIA**

الاحد الواحد والعشرون بعد العنصرة والاحد الخامس من القديس لوقا الانجيلي

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE FOUR

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

أبوليتيكيون القيامة باللحن الرابع

إِنَّ تَلْمِذَاتِ الرَّبِّ تَعْلَمْنَ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ الْكَرَرُ بِالْقِيَامَةِ الْبَهْجِ، وَطَرَحْنَ الْقَضَاءَ الْجَدِّيَّ، وَخَاطَبْنَ الرَّسُلَ مُفْتَخِرَاتٍ وَقَائِلَاتٍ: سُبِّحِ الْمَوْتُ وَقَامَ الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُ، وَمُنَحَّ الْعَالَمَ الرَّحْمَةَ الْعُظْمَى.

APOLYTIKION OF THE PERSIAN MARTYRS IN TONE TWO

Blessed is the earth that drank your blood, O prizewinners of the Lord, and holy are the tabernacles that received your spirits; for in the stadium ye triumphed over the enemy, and ye proclaimed Christ with boldness. Beseech Him, we pray, since He is good, to save our souls.

أبوليتيكيون شهداء فارس باللحن الثاني

مَغْبُوطَةُ الْأَرْضِ الْمُخَصَّبَةِ بِدِمَائِكُمْ يَا مُجَاهِدِي الرَّبِّ، وَمَغْبُوطَةُ الْمَطَالِ الَّتِي اقْتَبَلَتْ أَرْوَاحَكُمْ. لِأَنَّكُمْ فِي الْمِيدَانِ قَهَرْتُمُ الْعَدُوَّ، وَكَرَزْتُمْ بِالْمَسِيحِ بِدَالَّةٍ. فَتَضَرَّعُ إِلَيْكُمْ أَنْ تَبْتَهِلُوا إِلَيْهِ، بِمَا أَنَّهُ صَالِحٌ، لِيُخَلِّصَ 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 باللحن السابع

لَمَّا تَجَلَّيْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُ فِي الْجَبَلِ، أَظْهَرْتَ مَجْدَكَ لِلتَّلَامِيذِ حَسَبَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا، فَأَشْرَقَ لَنَا نَحْنُ الْخَطَاةَ نَوْرَكَ الْأَزَلِّيَّ، بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ إِلَهُ، يَا مَانِحَ النُّورِ، الْمَجْدُ لَكَ.

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.

قنداق بالحن الثاني

يا شَفِيعَةَ الْمَسِيحِيِّينَ غَيْرِ الْخَازِيَةِ، الْوَسِيطَةَ لَدَى 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 الطَّلِبَةِ، يَا وَالِدَةَ الْإِلَهِ، الْمُتَشَقِّعَةَ دَائِمًا بِمُكْرَمِيكَ.

THE EPISTLE

O Lord, how magnified are Thy works.

In wisdom hast Thou made them all. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. (2:16-20)

Brethren, you know that a man is not justified by works of the Law but through faith in Jesus Christ. Even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the Law, because by works of the Law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the Law died to the Law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.

الرسالة

مَا أَعْظَمَ أَعْمَالَكَ يَا رَبِّ، كُلُّهَا بِحِكْمَةٍ صَنَعْتَ. بَارِكِي يَا نَفْسِي الرَّبَّ.
فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولُسِ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى أَهْلِ غَلَاطِيَةِ. (20-16:2)

يَا إِخْوَةُ، إِذْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَا يُبَرِّرُ بِأَعْمَالِ النَّامُوسِ، بَلْ إِنَّمَا بِالْإِيمَانِ بِيَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ، آمَنَّا نَحْنُ أَيْضًا بِيَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ لِكَيْ نُبَرَّرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ بِالْمَسِيحِ، لَا بِأَعْمَالِ النَّامُوسِ، إِذْ لَا يُبَرِّرُ بِأَعْمَالِ النَّامُوسِ

أَحَدٌ مِنْ ذَوِي الْجَسَدِ. فَإِنْ كُنَّا وَنَحْنُ طَالِبُونَ التَّبَرُّيرَ بِالْمَسِيحِ، وَجِدْنَا نَحْنُ أَيْضاً خُطَاةً، أَفَيَكُونُ الْمَسِيحُ إِذَنْ خَادِماً لِلْخَطِيئَةِ؟ حَاشَى فَإِنِّي إِنْ عُدْتُ أَبْنِي مَا قَدْ هَدَمْتُ، أَجْعَلُ نَفْسِي مُنْعَدِّياً. لِأَنِّي بِالنَّامُوسِ مُتُّ لِلنَّامُوسِ لِكَيْ أَحْيَا لِلَّهِ. مَعَ الْمَسِيحِ صُلِبْتُ فَأَحْيَا، لَا أَنَا، بَلِ الْمَسِيحُ يَحْيَا فِيَّ. وَمَا لِي مِنَ الْحَيَاةِ فِي الْجَسَدِ أَنَا أَحْيَا فِي إِيْمَانِ ابْنِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي أَحَبَّنِي، وَبَذَلَ نَفْسَهُ عَنِّي.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (16:19-31)

The Lord said, "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'

الإنجيل

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ لَوْقَا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ. (16:19-31)

قَالَ الرَّبُّ: كَانَ إِنْسَانٌ غَنِيٌّ يَلْبَسُ الْأَرْجَوَانَ وَالْبَزَّ، وَيَتَنَعَّمُ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ تَتَعَمَّ فَاخِرًا. وَكَانَ مِسْكِينٌ اسْمُهُ لَعَازَرُ مَطْرُوحًا عِنْدَ بَابِهِ مُصَابًا بِالْقُرُوحِ. وَكَانَ يَشْتَهِي أَنْ يَشَبَعَ مِنَ الْقُتَاتِ الَّذِي يَسْقُطُ مِنْ مَائِدَةِ الْغَنِيِّ. بَلْ كَانَتْ الْكِلَابُ تَأْتِي وَتَلْحَسُ قُرُوحَهُ. ثُمَّ مَاتَ الْمِسْكِينُ، فَنَقَلَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِلَى حِضْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ. وَمَاتَ الْغَنِيُّ أَيْضًا، فَذُفِنَ فَرَفَعَ عَيْنَيْهِ فِي الْجَحِيمِ وَهُوَ فِي الْعَذَابِ، فَرَأَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ مِنْ بَعِيدٍ وَلَعَازَرُ فِي حِضْنِهِ. فَنَادَى قَائِلًا: "يَا أَبَتُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ ارْحَمْنِي وَأَرْسِلْ لَعَازَرَ لِيُغَمِّسَ طَرْفَ إصْبَعِهِ فِي الْمَاءِ وَيُبْرِدَ لِسَانِي، لِأَتِي مُعَذَّبٌ فِي هَذَا اللَّهيبِ." فَقَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ: "تَذَكَّرْ يَا ابْنِي أَنَّكَ نِلْتَ خَيْرَاتِكَ فِي حَيَاتِكَ، وَلَعَازَرُ كَذَلِكَ بَلَايَاهُ. وَالآنَ فَهُوَ يَتَعَزَّى وَأَنْتَ تَتَعَذَّبُ. وَعَلَاوَةً عَلَى هَذَا كُلِّهِ، فَبَيْنَمَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ هُوَّةٌ عَظِيمَةٌ قَدْ أُثْبِتَتْ، حَتَّى إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَجْتَازُوا مِنْ هُنَا إِلَيْكُمْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ، وَلَا الَّذِينَ هُنَاكَ أَنْ يَعْبُرُوا إِلَيْنَا." فَقَالَ: "أَسْأَلُكَ إِذَنْ يَا أَبَتُ أَنْ تُرْسِلَهُ إِلَيَّ بِنَيْتِ أَبِي. فَإِنَّ لِي خَمْسَةَ إِخْوَةٍ، حَتَّى يَشْهَدَ لَهُمْ لِكِي لَا يَأْتُوا هُمْ أَيْضًا إِلَى مَوْضِعِ الْعَذَابِ هَذَا." فَقَالَ لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ: "إِنَّ عِنْدَهُمْ مُوسَى وَالْأَنْبِيَاءَ، فَلْيَسْمَعُوا مِنْهُمْ." قَالَ: "لَا يَا أَبَتُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ، بَلْ إِذَا مَضَى إِلَيْهِمْ وَاحِدٌ مِنَ الْأَمْوَاتِ يَتَوَبُّونَ." فَقَالَ لَهُ: "إِنْ لَمْ يَسْمَعُوا مِنْ مُوسَى وَالْأَنْبِيَاءِ، فَإِنَّهُمْ، وَلَا إِنْ قَامَ وَاحِدٌ مِنَ الْأَمْوَاتِ، يُصَدِّقُونَهُ."

TRISAGION PRAYER

3-9 days memorial service in memory of Elias Youssef, offered by V. Rev. Fr. Samer Youssef, Kh. Julianna, Dimitry, Damian and Dominic, and the Youssef family.

TRISAGION PRAYER

6 Months memorial service in memory of George Khoury, offered by his son Richard, his sisters: Mary Kort and Basimah Farsoun, his brother Tony Khoury and the Khoury, Kort, and Farsoun families. Memory Eternal!



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: Fr. Samer Youssef, Kh. Julianna, Dimitry, Damian and Dominic for the good health of Fr. Samer's mother Victoria Khattouf and his siblings; Amer, Eiad, Lina and their families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Richard Khoury for the good health of his siblings and the Khoury, Kort and Farsoun families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Daniell, Joyce Otell and family in memory of beloved father and grandfather, Sami Otell (6 Years memorial). Memory Eternal!



COFFEE HOUR

Offered By: The Khoury, Otell and Youssef families

(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)

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.

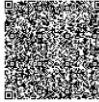
Orthodoxy 101 Class

Classes Schedule: November 2nd, 9th & 16th

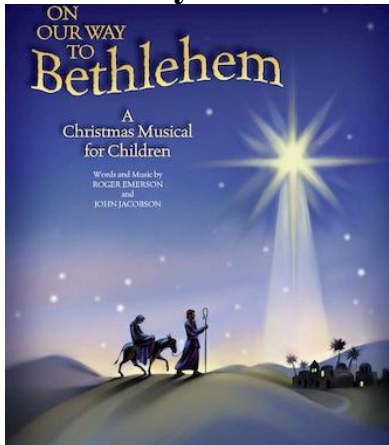
Sunday School Classroom after Sunday School is out

Join us as we explore one of the most beloved and inspiring works of early Christian faith. *On the Incarnation* by St Athanasius is a short, approachable book that beautifully explains why Christ came into the world and what His life, death, and resurrection mean for us today. Everyone is welcome—no theology background needed!

If you would like a copy, get it here!



"On Our Way to Bethlehem"



CHRISTMAS PLAY

Sunday December 21, 2025

This year's Sunday School Christmas pageant is "On Our Way to Bethlehem" to be performed after Divine Liturgy on Sunday December 21st.

We will begin casting after church this Sunday October 5, 2025, and rehearse every Sunday for about 1 hour following the end of Sunday School. Dress rehearsal will be on Saturday December 20 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM, and the play will be after Liturgy on Sunday December 21. Parents are requested to sign up their children this Sunday and to bring them to church/rehearsal

every Sunday. Thank you! --Nancy Godfrey—email any questions to:
pianogurl26@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE CHURCH

Please save the date

- **Advent Fast:** *Fast starts November 15- December 24.*
- **Blessing of the Girls:** *November 23, blessing of the girls after the Divine Liturgy. Please make sure to bring your daughter to church.*
- **Thanksgiving Agape:** *Potluck Luncheon on Sunday November 23 after the Divine Liturgy.*
- **St. Barbara Day:** *December 7, sponsored by the ladies auxiliary. Please bring a pot of our traditional Barbara to share with everyone.*
- **Christmas Play:** *December 21, Christmas play after the Liturgy.*
- **Christmas Services:** *Evening, Divine Liturgy for the Nativity on Dec 24th @ 8:00pm.*

On Artificial Living

By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

A couple once came to see me. They were constantly quarreling and blaming each other. As we spoke, it became clear that their problem was financial. Their spending far exceeded their income, forcing them to borrow money even though their income was not small compared to the average in our society.

I suggested a very simple solution: each of them should keep a small notebook and write down, every day, all their expenses. At the end of the month, they should sit together and categorize their spending—food, healthcare, communication, and so on. “After several months, you’ll know how much you truly need for each area of your life,” I told them. “You’ll also be able to distinguish between what is necessary and what is extra. Then you can set a fixed amount for each category. And if one month you must exceed a limit in one area, compensate by spending less in another, so you never fall into debt.”

They left relieved—but after the first month, they stopped. “We were shocked,” they told me later, “by how much we were spending, and we became afraid to continue budgeting.”

There are many couples like them. The strange thing in our society is that people are rarely taught, as children, the virtues of prudence and moderation in spending—and they seldom learn them as adults. So they end up being led by others, by the culture, and by the consumerist climate around them. Few truly lead themselves—living in a way that suits them, not others; choosing what benefits their soul, not what impresses their peers; and shaping their life according to what they see as good, not what others dictate.

Economically speaking, as inflation continues to weigh on most people, we see that rising prices seldom push them to reorganize their lives wisely and peacefully. They do not begin with simple steps like conserving energy in their homes. Instead, they live under constant tension, striving to appear wealthier than they are—even if it means borrowing and weighing themselves down with more debt. The result is more anxiety, more complaints, and more exhaustion.

Because the spiritual dimension of their lives is shallow, they find no true relief from their worries. So they throw themselves deeper into the same whirlwind of endless activity—believing that entertainment and distraction will free them from their stress and emptiness. But once the diversion ends, they return to the same anxiety and fatigue. And so the cycle repeats, grinding them down until their life is spent.

Faced with the relentless grind of consumer society, which crushes people and drains their physical, spiritual, and material resources, we are in dire need, first and foremost, of courage and faith in God and in ourselves. Following that, we need to learn the art of moderation and managing our daily affairs in the best way possible, not merely the easy way.

Within every human being lies a desire to appear admirable before others. This desire may vary in intensity from one person to another, yet the need to exist in the eyes of others, rather than in our own, remains strong.

Do we notice how fashion constantly changes? Or how the images of celebrities shape our behavior? How much do these things push us toward a life of pretense—toward extravagant celebrations and “luxurious” weddings that exhaust us?

A wise woman once said to me, describing her family: “They don’t live for themselves—they live for others. They are enslaved by their desire to look good in others’ eyes, even falsely, and they pay for it with their happiness and health.”

Today’s world leaves no room for our carelessness. Life has become profoundly consumerist, built on the illusion that happiness comes from shopping and spending. In truth, happiness is born from contentment with what is essential. Luxuries have never been a source of lasting joy; they are only brief moments of pleasure that fade quickly.

True happiness wells up from within—from the peace that comes through God’s presence in our lives; from a soul that knows the meaning of its existence; from one who has learned to distinguish between what is necessary and what is superfluous; from one who wishes to live according to what truly suits him and not what others expect.

Such a person has the courage to live by their spiritual convictions rather than by social trends. In short, happiness belongs to the one who is secure enough to seek what is right and pleasing to God and conscience, even when it contradicts the customs of society.

The wise seek approval in the eyes of God, and then in their own—not in the opinions of others. They do not care if others look down on them for living simply, because their sense of worth comes not from human praise but from the joy of God’s approval and the integrity of their soul.

We still resist the first step in the ladder of priorities—the call to simplicity—even though deep down everyone longs for it. The Gospel invites us again and again:

- “Give us this day our daily (essential) bread...” (Matt. 6:11)
- “Do not be anxious about what you will eat or drink...” (Matt. 6:25)

- “One thing is needful... Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her...” (Luke 10:42)
- “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you...” (Matt. 6:33)
- “Flee from the love of money, from the love of power, and from the pride of life...” (see 1 Tim. 6:10, 2 Tim. 2:22, 1 John 2:16)

Do we ever ask ourselves, when we act extravagantly or live beyond our means, whether we are contradicting the Gospel? Or are we simply unaware, misusing the popular saying, “Everything has its time,” as our excuse?

How much careful discernment we need to gain that blessed spiritual sensitivity that helps us tell what is necessary from what is not, what benefits from what harms, what is essential from what is excessive!

How much courage and confidence we need to show our true selves, to live according to our convictions without shame, and to despise what contradicts our principles instead of feeling ashamed by them!

How much trust in ourselves and in our beliefs we need, so that we do not rush to imitate others out of fear of seeming lesser than they!

When will we realize that we grow in stature when we resist the tide of consumerism and rejoice in simple living, content with God’s presence in our lives—and that we shrink when we chase after artificial living, which gives fleeting excitement but steals our lasting joy?

“Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful” (Luke 10:41–42).

في العيش المتكثف بقلم المتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

قصدني زوجان يتخاصمان، باستمرار، ويشكوان بعضهما بعضاً. فاتضح، من حديثهما، أن المشكلة اقتصادية. فمصرفهما يفوق دخلهما بكثير، ما يضطرهما إلى الاستدانة؛ مع العلم أن دخلهما ليس بقليل، قياساً إلى الدخل العام السائد.

اقترحت عليهما حلاً بسيطاً جداً، يقوم على أن يقتني كلُّ منهما دفترًا صغيراً، يسجل فيه، يوميًا، كلَّ مصاريفه. ويقومان، في نهاية الشهر، بعملٍ مشتركٍ، يصنّفان فيه ما صرفاه، ويؤبانه في حقول مخصّصة لكلِّ نوع منه: طعام، طبابة، اتصالات، إلخ. قلت لهما: هكذا ستعرفان، بعد عدّة أشهر، مقدار ما تحتاجانه، شهريًا، لأيِّ حقل من حقول معيشتكما. وكذلك ستستطيعان تمييز اللازم من النافل. ومن ثمّ تُلزمان أنفسكما بمبلغ محدّد لكلِّ حقل. وإذا ما اضطررتما، مرّة، إلى اجتياز الحدّ المخصّص لأحد الحقول، تقتصدان المبلغ من حقل آخر، حتّى لا تقعا في العجز.

غادراني مرتاحين، لكنّهما لم يتابعا تنفيذ الاقتراح، بعد الشهر الأول، وذلك، على حدّ قولهما، لأنّهما دُهِشا بكثرة المصاريف، فخافا المتابعة.

كم هم كثيرون أمثال هذين الزوجين! الغريب في أمر الناس، في مجتمعنا، أنّهم، في طفولتهم، لم ينشأوا على ثقافة التدبير والاقتصاد في النفقات، ولم يهتموا بتربية أنفسهم عليها، عندما كبُرُوا! لذا تراهم مَسوقين، في مجتمع الاستهلاك بخاصّة، من الآخرين والمجتمع والمناخ العامّ باستمرار. وقلّما تجد من يسوقُ نفسه حقًا، فيعيش كما يناسبه هو لا الآخرين، ويتصرّف بما يُفيده هو لا رفاقه، ويبني ذاته كما يرى الصالح له هو، لا كما يراه غيره.

فإذا أخذنا الناحية الاقتصادية، وقد بدأت تضغط على الكثيرين، نرى أنّ الغلاء المتزايد لا يقودُ الغالبية العظمى من الناس إلى تدبّر أمور معيشتهم، بالتي هي أحسن، وهم مرتاحون نفسيًا. لا يبدوون بترشيد استهلاك الطاقة انطلاقًا من بيوتهم حتّى. تراهم متوتّرين يسعون إلى الظهور بمظهرٍ معاكسٍ لإمكاناتهم الاقتصادية، ولو استدانوا، وراكموا على أنفسهم أثقالاً إضافية. فيحصلون المزيد من القلق والتدبّر والتشكّي.

ولأنَّ البُعْدَ الروحيَّ لحياتهم ضحلٌّ، لا يجدون متنفّساً لهم، من الهموم المعيشيّة، إلاّ المزيد من رعي أنفسهم في دوامة الحياة الطاحنة، التي يعانون منها، في ما يعتقدونه سبيلاً للترفيه والخروج من الروتين وضيق الروح، وهذا ما يعيدهم، بعد الانتهاء منه، إلى المزيد من القلق والهمّ والتذمّر. وهكذا دواليك، يدخلون في دوامةٍ لا تنتهي، تطحنهم حتّى يحينَّ أجلُّهم.

أمام طاحون المجتمع الاستهلاكيّ، الذي يطحن البشرَ، ويمتصّ مقدّراتهم، الجسديّة والروحيّة والماديّة، كم نحن بحاجة، وقبل كلّ شيء، إلى الشجاعة والثقة بالله وبالذات. وتالياً تعلّم فن الترشيد وتدير شؤوننا اليومية بالطريقة الفضلى لا السائدة.

ثمّة توقُّ، في داخل كلّ إنسان، إلى الظهور أمام الآخرين بمظهرٍ يسترعي الإعجاب. قد يتفاوت هذا التوق في شدّته من إنسان إلى آخر، لكن هاجس أن نوجَد في عيون الآخرين، لا في عيوننا يبقى حاضراً.

هل ننتبه إلى تغيير الموضبة المستمر، وإلى تأثير صور نجوم المجتمع علينا؟ وإلى أيّ حد يدفعنا هذا إلى حبّ العيش المتكلّف، والمناسبات الباذخة، والأعراس القاتلة؟

وصفت سيدة فاضلة أفراد عائلتها قائلة: إنَّهم لا يعيشون لأنفسهم، بل للآخرين. يقتلهم حبّ الظهور في عيون الآخرين، ولو كان ظهوراً كاذباً مخالفاً لحقيقتهم، ويدفعون ثمنه من سعادتهم وصحّتهم!

لم يعد الزمن يسمح لنا بترك أنفسنا على عفويّتها، واستبعاد تنظيم أمور الحياة عنّا. فالحياة المعاصرة استهلاكيّة بامتياز، وتقوم على ترسيخ القناعة بأنّ السعادة تكمن في ثقافة الصرف shopping، بينما هي تنشأ، في الحقيقة، من ثقافة الاكتفاء بما هو ضروري. لم تكن النوافل، مرّة، مصدراً للسعادة، بل بهجّةً وقتيّةً، تزول بزوالها.

السعادة شعور ينبع من الداخل، من الطمأنينة الناجمة من حضور الله في حياتنا، ومن النفس التي وجدت معنى حياتها، والتي عرفت كيف تميّز بين الضروريات والكماليّات، والتي تعي بأنّها ترغب بالعيش كما يناسبها، لا كما يريد الآخرون لها.

والتي تمتلك الشجاعة الكافية، لكي تسلك في أمور معيشتها وفق قناعتها الروحيّة، لا وفق الدارج في أعراف الآخرين. باختصار، السعادة يعيشها من كان واثقاً بنفسه، إلى درجة الشجاعة، التي تجعله يطلب ما يراه مفيداً له، ومُرضياً لضميره وقناعاته، وفق تعليم إنجيله؛ ولو خالف، في ذلك، المألوف في مجتمعه.

الإنسان الحكيم، هو الذي يرى صحّة سلوكه في عيون الله، وذاته تالياً، لا في عيون الآخرين. لا يهتمّ ما يقولون عنه كونه لا يجاريهم في أسلوب معيشتهم. هو لا يستمدّ وجوده من رضاهم عليه، بل من رضى ربّه وذاته.

ما زلنا نرفض الدرجة الأولى في سلّم الأولويّات؛ أعني العيش ببساطة. ولو كان الجميع يتوق في داخله إليها. وعلى الرغم من أنّ الإنجيل يدعو إليها مراراً:

- "خبزنا الجوهري أعطنا اليوم ... " (متى ١١: ٦)
- "لا تهتمّوا بما تأكلون وبما تشربون ... " (متى ٢٥: ٦)
- "إنّما الحاجة إلى واحد... مريم اختارت النصيب الصالح، الذي لن يُنزع منها ... " (لوقا ١٠: ٤٢)
- "اطلبوا أولاً ملكوت الله وبرّه، والباقي يُزاد لكم ... " (متى ٣٣: ٦)
- "اهربوا من حبّ المال وحبّ السلطة وتعظّم المعيشة..." (انظر ١ تيموثاوس ٦: ١٠ ، ٢ تيموثاوس ٢: ٢٢ ، ١ يوحنا ٢: ١٦)

أترانا نسأل أنفسنا، أمام تصرفٍ باذخ ومتكلّف وفي غير محله، إن كنّا نخالف الإنجيل، ونسير سيرة مناقضة له، أم أنّنا لا نعي هذا الأمر، متبنّين المبدأ السائد، والمناقض للإنجيل: "كلُّ شيء له وقته"؟

كم يلزمنا من التدقيق والفحص الصادق لضميرنا المؤمن، حتى نقتني حسَّ التمييز المبارك، الذي يجعلنا واعين لما يلزم ولما لا يلزم، لما يفيد ولما يؤذي، لما هو ضروري ولما هو كمالي!

كم يلزمنا من الشجاعة والثقة، لكي نُظهر أنفسنا على حقيقتها، وقناعاتنا دونما خجل، ونحتقر ونستخفّ بما يخالف مبادئنا، بدلاً من الخجل منها!

كم يلزمنا من الثقة بالذات وبالمبادئ التي نتبناها، بدلاً من المسارعة إلى تقليد الغير، لئلا نظهر دونهم!

متى نعي أننا نكبرُ عندما لا ننساق مع التيار الاستهلاكي، ونفرحُ بالعيش البسيط، مكتفين بحضور الله في حياتنا؛ وأتينا نصغرُ عندما نركض وراء العيش المتكلف، الذي يمنحنا شعوراً وقتياً بالبهجة، ليسرق منا الفرح الحقيقي الدائم؟

"مرتا مرثا إنك مهتمة ومضطربة بأمور كثيرة، وإتما الحاجة إلى واحد" (لوقا ١٠ : ٤١-٤٢).

Slavyanka Chorus

On Sunday, November 16th at 3:30 PM, sixty singers of the Slavyanka Chorus will give a performance of Sergei Rachmaninoff's *All Night Vigil* (aka, "*Vespers*") in the sanctuary. Written in 1915, many consider this sublime piece the high point of Russia's golden age of sacred music -- and a window into a 1000 year old spiritual tradition little known in the West. In the musical richness and spiritual depth of this music you can hear the liturgical chants of ancient Russia --and the harmonies and rhythms of an enormously gifted composer giving those ancient chants new life for a modern era. More information at <http://www.slavyankachorus.org>.

SLAVYANKA CHORUS PRESENTS
Rachmaninoff's All-Night Vigil



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR IRINA SHACHNEVA

<i>Thursday, November 13 at 7:30 pm</i> Church of the Redeemer 380 Magdalena Avenue Los Altos Hills, CA	<i>Friday, November 14 at 7:30 pm</i> St. Mark's Church 2300 Bancroft Way Berkeley, CA	<i>Sunday, November 16 at 3:30 pm</i> Star of the Sea Church 4430 Geary Boulevard San Francisco, CA
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TICKET RESERVATION:
www.slavyankachorus.org