



**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 9, 2025**

**NEKTARIOS OF AEGINA AND PENTAPOLIS, THE  
WONDERWORKER & SEVENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE  
MARTYRS ONESIPHOROS AND PORPHYRIOS OF EPHESUS; VENERABLE  
MATRONA OF CONSTANTINOPLE**

**القديس نيكتراريوس والأحد السابع من القديس لوقا الأنجيلي**

## **RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE FIVE**

Let us believers praise and worship the Word; coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For, He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death; and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

### **أبوليتيكيون القيامة بالحن الخامس**

لِنُسَبِّحْ نَحْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَنَسْجُدْ لِلْكَلِمَةِ، الْمُسَاوِي لِأَبِ وَالرُّوحِ فِي الْأَزَلِيَّةِ وَعَدَمِ الْإِبْتِدَاءِ، الْمَوْلُودِ مِنَ الْعَذْرَاءِ لِحَلَاصِنَا، لِأَنَّهُ سَرَّ بِالْجَسَدِ أَنْ يَغْلُقَ عَلَى الصَّلِيبِ، وَيَحْتَمِلَ الْمَوْتَ، وَيُنْهَضَ الْمَوْتَى بِقِيَامَتِهِ الْمَجِيدَةِ.

## **APOLYTIKION OF ST. NEKTARIOS OF AEGINA IN TONE ONE**

The offspring of Selyvria and the guardian of Aegina, the true friend of virtue who didst appear in the last years, O Nektarios, we faithful honor thee as a Godly servant of Christ, for thou pourest forth healings of every kind for those who piously cry out: Glory to Christ Who hath glorified thee. Glory to Him Who hath made thee wondrous. Glory to Him Who worketh healings for all through thee.

### **أبوليتيكيون القديس نكتاريوس بالحن الأول**

أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِنَكْرِمِ نِكْتَارِيُوسَ مَوْلُودَ سِيلِيفْرِيَا وَرَايَةَ آيِينَا، مَنْ آخَرَ الْأَزْمِنَةِ ظَهَرَ. مُحِبٌّ لِلْفَضِيلَةِ أَصِيلٍ، وَخَادِمٌ وَقُورٌ لِلْمَسِيحِ، مُنْبِعٌ فِي كُلِّ حَالٍ أَشْفِيَّةٍ لِمَنْ إِلَيْهِ يَصْرُخُونَ: أَلْمَجْدُ لِلَّذِي قَدْ مَجَّدَكَ، أَلْمَجْدُ لِمَنْ أَعْطَاكَ الْمُعْجَزَاتِ، أَلْمَجْدُ لِلَّذِي يَصْنَعُ بِكَ الْأَشْفِيَّةَ لِلْجَمِيعِ.

## **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 تَجَلَّى رَبَّنَا يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحَ بِالْحَنِّ السَّابِعِ

لَمَّا تَجَلَّيْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُ فِي الْجَبَلِ، أَظْهَرْتَ مَجْدَكَ لِلتَّلَامِيذِ حَسْبَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا، فَأَشْرِقْ لَنَا نَحْنُ  
الْحَطَاةُ نوركَ الْأَزَلِيِّ، بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِ، يَا مَانِحَ النُّورِ، الْمَجْدُ لَكَ.

### KONTAKION OF ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS IN TONE FOUR

The sacred treasury of God's holy glory, the greatly precious bridal chamber and Virgin, the Savior's most pure temple, free of stain and undefiled, into the House of the Lord on this day is brought forward and bringeth with herself the grace of the Most Divine Spirit; her do God's Angels hymn with songs of praise, for she is truly the heavenly tabernacle.

### قَتْدَاقُ عِيدِ دُخُولِ السَّيِّدَةِ بِالْحَنِّ الرَّابِعِ

الْيَوْمَ الْهَيْكَلُ الَّذِي لِلْمُخَلَّصِ، الْكَلْبِيُّ النِّقَاءِ، الْعَذْرَاءُ الْخِذْرُ ذُو النَّعْنَ الْجَزِيلِ، وَهِيَ الْكَنْزُ الطَّاهِرُ لِمَجْدِ  
الْإِلَهِ، إِذْ تَدْخُلُ بَيْتَ الرَّبِّ، تُدْخِلُ نِعْمَةَ الرُّوحِ الْإِلَهِيِّ مَعَهَا. فَلْتُسَبِّحْهَا مَلَائِكَةُ اللَّهِ، لِأَنَّهَا الْمِظْلَةُ  
السَّمَاوِيَّةُ.

### THE EPISTLE

*Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*

*What shall I render to the Lord for all that he has given me?*

#### **The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians. (5:8-19)**

Brethren, walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

## الرسالة

كريم لدى الرب موت أبراره.

بماذا نكافئ الرب عن كل ما أعطانا.

**فصل من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول إلى أهل أفسس. (8:5-19)**

يا إخوة، اسلكوا كأولاد للنور (فإن ثمر الروح هو في كل صلاح وبرٍ وحقٍ) مختارين ما هو مرضي لدى الرب ولا تشتركوا في أعمال الظلمة غير المثمرة، بل بالأحرى وبخوا عليها. فإن الأفعال التي يفعلونها سرّاً، يفضح ذكرها أيضاً. لكن كل ما يوبخ عليه، يعلن بالنور، فإن كل ما يعلن هو نور ولذلك يقول: يستيقظ أيها النائم وفم من بين الأموات، فيضيء لك المسيح. فانظروا إذن أن تسلكوا بحذر، لا كجهلاء، بل كحكماء، مُقَدِّين الوقت فإن الأيام شريرة. فلذلك لا تكونوا أغبياء، بل افهموا ما مشيئة الرب. ولا تسكروا بالخمّر التي فيها الدعارة، بل امتلئوا بالروح، متكلمين بعضكم بعضاً بمزامير وتسابيح وأغاني روحية مرتمين ومرتلين في قلوبكم للرب.

## THE GOSPEL

**The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (8:41-56)**

At that time, there came to Jesus a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at Jesus' feet he besought Him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. As Jesus went, the people pressed round Him. And a woman, who had had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had spent all her living upon physicians, and could not be healed by anyone, came up behind Him, and touched the fringe of His garment; and immediately her flow of blood ceased. And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the multitudes surround Thee and press upon Thee! And Thou sayest, 'Who touched Me?'" But Jesus said, "Someone touched Me; for I perceive that power has gone forth from Me." And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before Him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed. And Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace." While Jesus was still speaking,

a man from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher anymore." But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she shall be well." And when Jesus came to the house, He permitted no one to enter with Him, except Peter and James and John, and the father and mother of the child. And all were weeping and bewailing her; but Jesus said, "Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But taking her by the hand Jesus called, saying, "Child, arise." And her spirit returned, and she got up at once; and Jesus directed that something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed; but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.

### الإنجيل

فصل شريف من بشارة القديس لوقا الإنجيلي البشير والتلميذ الطاهر. (8: 41-56)

في ذلك الزمان، دنا إلى يسوع إنسان اسمه يائرس، وهو رئيس للمجمع، وخرَّ عند قدمي يسوع، وطلب إليه أن يدخل إلى بيته، لأن له ابنةً وحيدة لها نحو اثنتي عشرة سنة قد أشرقت على الموت. وبينما هو منطلق، كان الجموع يرحمونه. وإن امرأة بها نرف دم منذ اثنتي عشرة سنة، وكانت قد أنفقت معيشتها كلها على الأطباء ولم يستطع أحد أن يشفيها. دنت من خلفه ومست هذب ثوبه، ولوقت وقف نرف دمها. فقال يسوع: "من لمسني؟" وإذ أنكر جميعهم، قال بطرس والذين معه: "يا معلم، إن الجموع يضايقونك ويرحمونك، وتقول، من لمسني؟" فقال يسوع: "إنه قد لمسني واحد. لأنني علمت أن قوة قد خرجت مني." فلما رأت المرأة أنها لم تخف، جاءت مرتعدة وخرت له، وأخبرت أمام كل الشعب لأية علة لمستته، وكيف برئت للوقت. فقال لها: "تقي يا ابنة. إيمانك أبرأك، فاذهبي بسلام." وفيما هو يتكلم، جاء واحد من ذوي رئيس المجمع وقال له: "إن ابنتك قد ماتت، فلا تشعب المعلم." فسمع يسوع، فأجابه قائلاً: "لا تخف. آمن فقط فتبرأ هي." ولما دخل البيت، لم يدع أحداً يدخل إلا بطرس، ويعقوب، ويوحنا وأبا الصبية وأمها. وكان الجميع يبكون ويلطمون عليها. فقال لهم: "لا تبكوا. إنها لم تمت ولكنها نائمة." فضحكوا عليه لعلمهم بأنها قد ماتت. فأمسك بيدها ونادى قائلاً: "يا صبية قومي." فرجعت روحها وقامت في الحال. فأمر أن تعطى لتأكل. فدesh أبواها، فأوصاهما أن لا يقولوا لأحد ما جرى.



## **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:** The Ladies Auxiliary for the good health of Ibtisam Kreitem and her family, wishing her a speedy recovery. Many Years!

**OFFERED BY:** Hanna and Rania Haddad on the occasion of their 28<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (Nov 8) and the good health of their children; Rami, Rabih, Rita, Roula and the Haddad family. Many Years!

**OFFERED BY:** Hala Elmasu for the good health of her husband Osama on the occasion of his birthday (Nov 8) and the good health of the Elmasu family. Many Years!



## **COFFEE HOUR**

Offered By: Wardeh Asfour

*(To host the Coffee Hour, please contact Wardeh Asfour @408-718-3339)*

[office@orthodoxredeemer.org](mailto:office@orthodoxredeemer.org)

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

***" Holiday drive"***

***Grant wishes to kids and adults in need this Christmas in our community. Please see either Randa Hanani or Sheila Veizades in the narthex after liturgy***

## **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

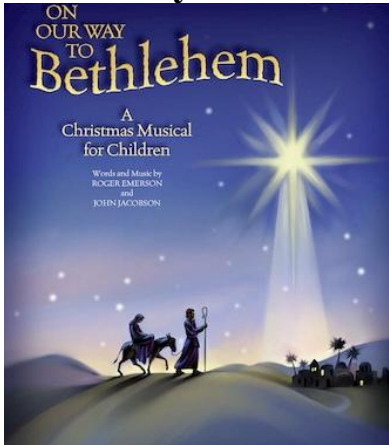
Join us as we explore one of the most beloved and inspiring works of early Christian faith. *On the Incarnation* by St Athanasius is a short, approachable book that beautifully explains why Christ came into the world and what His life, death, and resurrection mean for us today. Everyone is welcome—no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

### **\*\*SPECIAL NOTE ON THE NATIVITY FAST\*\***

On November 15, we began, with God's help, the forty-day Nativity Fast in preparation for the great feast of the Nativity of Christ on December 25. Throughout this period, we abstain from meat, poultry, eggs and dairy. According to the Patriarchate of Antioch, it is not necessary to fast from oil, but people may choose to do so.

From November 15-December 11, fish, wine and oil are allowed every day, except Wednesdays and Fridays. But fish, wine and oil are allowed on November 21, the Entrance of the Theotokos, regardless on which day of the week it falls. From December 12-24, we observe a strict fast with katalysis (relaxation) for wine and oil on Saturdays and Sundays, on commemorations of vigil-rank and intermediate-rank saints such as Nicholas and Ignatius, and for church patronal saints.

# **"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](mailto:pianogurl26@gmail.com)

## **Annual Thanksgiving Potluck Luncheon**

Sunday, November 23rd – Following the Divine Liturgy

Join us for our Annual Thanksgiving Potluck Luncheon, hosted by the Ladies Auxiliary Community. Let us come together in gratitude to share a meal and celebrate our blessings.

Please sign-up during Coffee Hour or contact a member of the Ladies Auxiliary to let us know what dish you'll bring.

Items Needed: Cooked turkeys, hams, hashweh, salad, dessert, yogurt, macaroni & cheese, or any favorite dish to share.

Thank you for your continued love and support!

Ladies Auxiliary Community

## **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 Burbara 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.*

## **Impressions of a Visit, Part One**

*By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

The recently established Antiochian Archdiocese of the British Isles and Ireland includes one Arabic-speaking parish, with about 450 registered families, along with fifteen English-speaking parishes and four missions made up primarily of people of British origin.

The largest parish is in London, whose church—spacious and beautiful— was rented from the Anglican Church under a twenty-year renewable lease. The church was restored to the Anglican church two years ago, while the community is seeking a permanent home to serve as its own church.

Those serving the large Arabic-speaking parish explain that many families—both long-settled and newly arrived in the United Kingdom—are not officially registered with the parish. Reaching and caring for them requires continuous pastoral effort to nurture their relationship with the Church.

As for the other parishes, whose members are mainly of local British background, they joined the Antiochian Orthodox Church in the 1990s, which numbered nine parishes at the time. Fr. Michael Harper, who led the first group, has written the fascinating story of how they entered Orthodoxy.

The main reason they discovered the authenticity of the Orthodox Church was the radical transformations that took place in their former church—the Anglican Church—over the past forty years. Winds of change began to blow there in the 1970s, and soon the snowball began to roll and grow rapidly. Within a single decade, the Anglican Church began ordaining women to the priesthood and accepting homosexual clergy, alongside other developments too numerous to mention here.

Many of its faithful and clergy rejected these changes and did all they could to resist the growing influence of secular and worldly thought. When they realized they could not stop it, they left their church and searched for one with deep, authentic roots. Some discovered the Orthodox Church, which at that time was little known in Britain except among immigrant communities from traditionally Orthodox countries—communities that often functioned as ethnic enclaves.

Why did the Anglican Church become so deeply affected by secular culture?

The reason lies mainly in two factors.

First, its decisions—even matters of faith—are made by vote, according to a democratic process. This means that truth is determined by the majority of voices rather than by the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church or by a rooted tradition of right belief and knowledge of God.

The second reason is the loss of the early Christian roots and, consequently, the loss of the sacred tradition that guards right faith from deviation. A solid theological heritage helps preserve sound understanding and enables the Church to face contemporary challenges with discernment—knowing what in faith is unchanging and what can be expressed in new ways.

Anglicanism once prided itself on being “neither Eastern nor Western,” claiming to unite both. Yet its rapid decline before the waves of modernity—and now postmodernity—is very sad. Britain today is among the most secular countries in the West. European secularization, though varying from one country to another, has in most places separated religion entirely from public life. God has been pushed out of society and reduced to a private matter for individuals. Thus, man himself has become the only reference of values, morals, and laws.

In the 1990s, Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Christodoulos of Greece tried to insert the phrase “*The cultural roots of the European Union are Judeo-Christian*” into the European Union’s Constitution, but failed. When God is excluded from social order, humanity loses its only stable reference point for moral and human values. If man alone is the source of truth and law, then nothing is fixed and relativism reigns.

In our theological language, we say that humanity is in a fallen state, and Christ became man to raise us up and restore us to our original life in Paradise. When people exclude God from their lives, they exclude life itself. The disintegration of the family and the confusion about its meaning in the Western world is just one example of what happens when God is absent from society.

During a conversation with a professor of theology at an Anglican seminary—who happens to be the wife of the Anglican Bishop of London (their bishops may marry)—she told me that their faith is “protected” by the seven Ecumenical Councils. Yet, she admitted that the freedom of interpretation and belief within Anglicanism has created such a wide range of views that some even deny the core doctrines of Christianity. It is possible, for instance, to find an Anglican bishop who does not believe in the bodily Resurrection of Christ!

I was struck by her humility when she asked me, as we spoke about the challenges facing their youth: “What would you advise us to do to recover the sense of spirituality our young people are searching for, to help them face the challenges of modern life?”

A young Anglican bishop also told me that the controversy over women’s ordination is still unresolved, and that a schism of the African Anglican churches—with their millions of adherents—is a real possibility.

The current state of the Anglican Church raises pressing questions about the relationship between faith and culture:

- To what extent can culture influence or change faith and its interpretation?
- Where are the boundaries of legitimate theological reflection?
- What is God’s role in shaping the expression of faith within a deeply secular environment?
- How does the living presence of God in the Church protect it from deviation and give it strength to face the spiritual suffocation of modern secular society that is spreading across the world?
- Can religion exist independently of the surrounding culture?

- Does a closed culture produce a closed, defensive, and distorted religiosity?
- And does an open culture risk bending religion to its own desires, emptying it of its substance and spirituality?

Faith in the modern West has become like a branch of philosophy, with man as its only reference point. This shift began with the Great Schism and the growing exaltation of human reason at the expense of the Holy Spirit, who enlightens and sanctifies the mind to understand divine truth. Man became the final authority, and the spiritual and theological heritage that illuminated it grew weak. As a result, the living action of God has largely faded from view.

In the East, however, God remains the Alpha and Omega, ever-present in His Church through the Holy Spirit. Decisions of Church councils are still made in the spirit of the Apostolic phrase: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” (Acts 15:28). Of course, practice does not always reach the level of the teaching. A council may err, since its members are human and not necessarily illumined. But faith itself remains preserved by the steadfast holy tradition and by the saints, who correct deviations. Only God, acting in His saints who are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, preserves the Church’s integrity.

When the imperial envoy said to St. Maximus the Confessor in the seventh century, “Hundreds of bishops and three patriarchs have signed the imperial decree. Orthodoxy has fallen—what are you waiting for?” the saint replied, “I am Orthodoxy.” And so it proved. The imperial doctrine of “one will” in Christ disappeared forever, while the Orthodox teaching of two wills—divine and human—prevailed in most Christian churches in the East and West. St. Maximus suffered the cutting of his right hand and tongue for this confession when he was eighty years old.

In the face of the spiritual emptiness produced by the dominance of today’s Western culture, the responsibility—and the judgment—of the Orthodox East are far greater than we may imagine.

## انطباعات زيارة، الجزء الأول

بقلم المتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

تضم أبرشية الجزر البريطانية وإيرلندا، الأنطاكية المستحدثة، رعيةً من الناطقين بالعربية، تعدُّ أربعمائة وخمسين عائلة مُسجَّلة، وخمس عشرة رعية، وأربع إرساليات، ناطقة بالإنكليزية، ومن أصول بريطانية. مدينة لندن مركز الرعية الأولى والأكثر عددًا. كنيستها كبيرة وجميلة. استأجرتها الرعية من الكنيسة الأنغليكانية، بعقد يتجدد كلَّ عشرين سنة، وقد استعادتها الآن، بينما تبحث الرعية عن مكان آخر ليكون بمثابة كنيسة.

يؤكد القائمون على خدمة الرعية الكبرى وجود الكثير من العائلات التي قَدِمت إلى المملكة المتحدة، قديمًا وحديثًا، وهي غير مُسجَّلة في قوائم الرعية. هذا يستدعي جهداً رعايياً مُجهداً، من أجل متابعتهم والوصول إليهم، ورعاية علاقتهم بالكنيسة.

أمَّا الرعايا الأخرى، التي تعود أصول عائلاتهما إلى سگان البلد، فقد انضمت إلى الكنيسة الأنطاكية الأرثوذكسية، في تسعينيات القرن الماضي، وكانت آنذاك تسع رعايا فقط. وقد روى الأب مايكل هاربر، رئيس المجموعة الأولى، قصّة انضمامها هذه، بتفصيلٍ ممتع.

يعود السبب الرئيس في اكتشافها أصالة الكنيسة الأرثوذكسية، إلى ما شهدته كنيستها الأم، الأنغليكانية، من تحولات وتغيّرات جذرية، في السنوات الأربعين الأخيرة. فقد هبّت رياح التغيير على هذه الكنيسة، في سبعينيات القرن العشرين، وسرعان ما بدأت كرة الثلج تندرج وتكبر، بتسارع هائل. فخلال عقد من الزمن، فقط، بدأت بقبول المرأة في سلك الكهنوت، وكذلك المثليين والمثليات، إلى جانب قضايا أخرى لا تتسع هذه المقالة لها.

رفض قسم كبير من شعب هذه الكنيسة وكهننتها هذه التحولات، وسعوا، بقدر ما استطاعوا، إلى إيقاف حركة التأثير بالفكر الدنيوي الدهري السائد. وعندما أدركوا عجزهم عن تحقيق ذلك، تركوا كنيستهم، وبحثوا عن الكنيسة ذات الجذور الثابتة والأصيلة. فاكتشف بعضهم الكنيسة الأرثوذكسية، غير المعروفة كثيراً في بريطانيا، إلا في رعايا المهاجرين من بلاد أرثوذكسية، الذين يشكّون، في الواقع، كنائس جاليات.

لماذا تأثرت الكنيسة الأنغليكانية بالثقافة الدهرية إلى هذا الحدّ؟ قد يكمن السبب في أمرين: أولهما أنّها تعتمد مبدأ التصويت، على الطريقة الديموقراطية في اتخاذ قراراتها، حتّى الإيمانية. ما يعني أنّ اعتماد قرار ما أو تحديد إيماني ما، يتم بناء على عدد الأصوات التي يحصل عليها، لا

على الروح القدس الحاضر في الكنيسة، ولا استناداً إلى تراث راسخ في استقامة الرأي ومعرفة الله.

أما السبب الثاني، فيعود إلى فَقْد الجذور الأولى للمسيحية، وتالياً فَقْد التقليد الشريف، الذي يحفظ استقامة الإيمان، ويقيه من الانحراف. فالتراث اللاهوتي المتين يساعد على حفظ استقامة الرأي، ومواجهة التحديات المعاصرة، بروح التمييز بين الثابت والمتغير في الإيمان وتعبيراته.

لطالما افتخرت الأنغليكانية، بأنها لا شرقية ولا غربية، بل تجمع بين الاثنين. لكن تقهقرها السريع أمام موجة الحداثة، وما بات يُعرف الآن بما بعد الحداثة، أمر محزن جداً. تُعَدّ بريطانيا البلد الأكثر إحداً في الغرب. والعلمنة الأوروبية، وإن تفاوتت في موقفها من الدين، بين بلد وآخر، إلا أنها عندما فصلت الدين عن الدولة، أبعدت الله كلياً عن المجتمع، وجعلته إله أفراد فقط. فصار الإنسان المرجع الوحيد للقيم والأخلاق والتشريع.

حاول البابا يوحنا بولس الثاني ورئيس أساقفة اليونان كريستودولوس، في التسعينيات، إدخال عبارة "جذور الاتحاد الأوروبي الثقافية مسيحية - يهودية"، في دستور الاتحاد الأوروبي، ولم يفلح. عندما يُستبعد الله من التنظيم الاجتماعي، يفقد البشر المرجع الثابت الوحيد للقيم الاجتماعية والإنسانية. أن يكون الإنسان، وحده، مصدر القيم والتشريع، يعني أن ما من قيم ثابتة، وأن النسبية هي الحكم.

نقول بلغتنا اللاهوتية إنَّ البشر، حالياً، في حالة السقوط، وقد تجسّد المسيح من أجل إنقاذهم وعودتهم إلى حالتهم الفردوسية الأولى. لذلك، فهم عندما يستبعدون الله من حياتهم، فإنَّما يُبعدون الحياة عنهم. وما تفكّك العائلة ومفهومها، في العالم الغربي، إلا أحد الأمثلة على ما يقود إليه غياب الله عن المجتمع.

في حديث مع أستاذة العقيدة في كلية اللاهوت الأنغليكانية، وهي زوجة أسقف لندن (يسمح بالزواج للأساقفة الأنغليكان) قالت إنَّ العقيدة عندهم محمية بالمجامع المسكونية السبعة. ولكن حرية التفسير والاعتقاد، جعلت الأنغليكانية تحوي مروحة واسعة جداً ممّن يحملون اعتقادات مختلفة، قد تصل إلى حدّ إنكار العقائد الأساسية في المسيحية!! فتجد، على سبيل المثال، أسقفاً لا يعتقد بقيامة المسيح بالجسد!

لفتني تواضعها الجَمِّ، عندما سألتني، في معرض حديثنا عن تحدّيات الشبيبة عندهم، فقالت: ماذا ننصحنا بخصوص استعادة الروحانية، التي يبحث عنها شبابنا، لمواجهة تحدّيات الحياة المعاصرة؟

علمت من أحد الأساقفة الشباب أنّ النزاع حول كهنوت المرأة، لا يزال قائماً عندهم، وأنّ احتمال انفصال الكنائس الإفريقيّة، وعدد أتباعها بالملايين، أمر محتمل.

يطرح واقع الكنيسة الأنغليكانية، بحدّة، العلاقة ما بين الإيمان والثقافة:

- إلى أيّ حدّ قد تلعب الثقافة دوراً في تغيير الإيمان وتفسيره؟
- ما هي الحدود التي يقف الاجتهاد عندها؟
- أين دور الله في صياغة التعبير الإيماني ضمن بيئة دهرية متجدّرة، بعمق، في كلّ مناحي الحياة؟
- كيف يؤثّر حضور الله، فعلياً، في الكنيسة، ليقبها خطر الانحراف، من جهة، ويمنحها القوة، لكي تواجه التحدّيات الخطرة، التي يفرزها مجتمع الحداثة الدهري، الخانق روحياً، والذي يسود العالم تدريجياً؟
- هل يمكن للمفهوم الديني أن يكون مستقلاً عن الثقافة العامّة؟
- ألا تدفع الثقافة المغلقة نحو تدبّين منغلق، وعدائي، ومشوّه للإيمان؟
- ألا تقود الثقافة المنفتحة نحو تدبّين قد يصل إلى حدّ تطويع الإيمان لها، وإفراغه، تالياً، من مضمونه وروحانيّته؟

تكاد ترى الإيمان وقد صار كحقل من حقول الفلسفة، التي منشؤها ومرجعها الإنسان وحده. نحا الغرب هذا المنحى منذ الانشقاق الكبير، وتضخم دور العقل البشري، على حساب الروح القدس المنير والمقدّس للعقل، في فهم الإيمان وصياغته والتعبير عنه. فغدا الإنسان المرجع الرئيس، وضعف الإرث اللاهوتي - الروحي الاستناري، فغاب فعل الله الحيّ، إلى حدّ كبير.

أمّا في الشرق، فبقي الله، الحاضر، بالروح القدس، في وسط كنيسته، الأول والأخير. كذلك، بقي مبدأ اعتماد أيّ قرار صادر عن مجامع الكنيسة، قائماً على صيغة "رأى الروح القدس ونحن" (أعمال الرسل ١٥: ٢٨). لكن الممارسة ليست بمستوى التعليم دوماً. قد يُخطئ المجمع الكنسي، باعتبار أعضائه بشرًا، وغير مستنيرين بالضرورة، في حكم الواقع. لكن الإيمان يبقى

محفوظاً بالتقليد الشريف الراسخ، وبالقدّيسين الذين يقومون الانحرافَ الحاصل. وحده الله  
الفاعل في قديسيه، المستنيرين بالروح القدس، يحفظ الاستقامة في الكنيسة.

قال ممثّل الإمبراطور للقدّيس مكسيموس المعترف، في القرن السابع: "مئات الأساقفة وثلاثة  
بطاركة وقّعوا على المرسوم الإمبراطوري. ماذا تنتظر؟ لقد سقطت الأرثوذكسيّة." فأجابه  
القدّيس: "أنا الأرثوذكسيّة." وهذا ما تحقّق. فقد ذهب التعليم بالمشيئة الواحدة، الذي نادى  
به الإمبراطور، إلى غير رجعة، وبقي التعليم الأرثوذكسي بمشيئتي المسيح، الإلهيّة والبشريّة،  
سائداً عند كلّ الطوائف المسيحيّة، شرقاً غرباً، حتّى الآن؛ وهو التعليم الذي دافع عنه القدّيس  
مكسيموس، ودفع مقابل موقفه هذا قطع يده اليمنى ولسانه، وهو في الثمانين من عمره!

أمّام الخواء الروحي العميم والمعمّم بطغيان الثقافة الغربية الحالية، تصير مسؤولية الشرق  
الأرثوذكسي، ودينونته، أكبر، بكثير، ممّا قد تصوّر.

### THE DISMISSAL

**Priest:** May He Who rose from the dead, Christ our true God, through the  
intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; by the  
might of the Precious and Life-giving Cross; by the protection of the  
honorable Bodiless Powers of Heaven; at the supplication of the honorable,  
glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John; of the holy, glorious and all-  
laudable apostles; of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom,  
archbishop of Constantinople, whose Divine Liturgy we have now celebrated;  
of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs; of our venerable and God-  
bearing Fathers, *of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community*;  
of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; **of our father  
among the saints Nektarios the wonderworker of Aegina, Metropolitan of  
Pentapolis**, whose memory we celebrate today, and of all the saints: have  
mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.

**Priest:** Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God,  
have mercy on us and save us.

**Choir:** Amen.

## COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD

Sunday school is having a Community Christmas Card fundraiser. This card is used to spread the greetings of Christ's birth to families and friends throughout the community. This Christmas, as you reflect your blessing and perhaps even on some of the challenges that have helped you grow; **take a minute to support the Sunday school in raising money that will go towards Four Homes of Mercy and to the Sunday school program.** By making a donation your name will appear inside the Community Christmas Card and it will be mailed to all members of the church. You can help donate by completing the form attached to this letter and return it to church office by December 8, 2025.

Thank you for your participation and efforts in support of the Community Christmas Card Program!



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Donation    \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_



### **DECORATING THE ALTAR**

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas. We invite all the parishioners to participate in decorating our Church Altar by donating Poinsettias as a tradition for the good health or in memory of your beloved ones. Please fill out the attached form and submit to the church office.

#### **Poinsettias for the Altar**

**This is my Donation to get poinsettia(s) for Christmas to decorate the Altar.**

\_\_\_\_\_ (Number) of poinsettias @ \$10 each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Please Print)

For the Good Health of: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_