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

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF
THE REDEEMER
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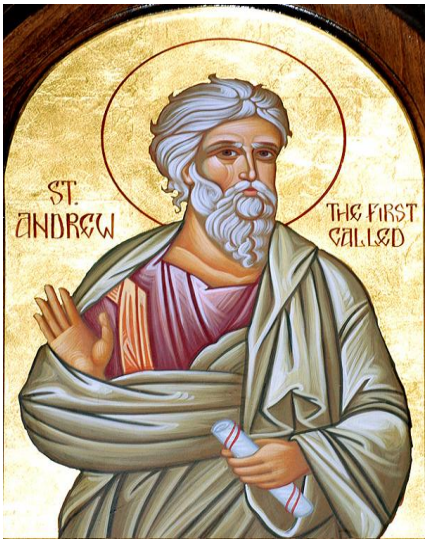


November 30, 2025

The Holy Apostle Andrew the First-Called

Frumentios, archbishop and enlightener of Ethiopia; Alexander, bishop of Methymna

الرسول القديس أندراوس المدعو أولًا

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE EIGHT

From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee.

أبوليتيكيون القيامة باللحن الثامِن

انْحَدَرْتَ مِنَ العُلوِّ يا مُتَحَنِّن، وقَبِلْتَ الدَّفْنَ ذا الثَّلاثَةِ الأيام، لِكَيْ تُعْتِقَنا مِنَ الآلام، فَيا حَياتَنا وقِيامَتَنَا، يا رَبُّ المَجْدُ لَك.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. ANDREW THE APOSTLE IN TONE FOUR

As the first called of the Apostles, and brother of their leader, O Andrew, entreat the Master of all that peace be granted unto the world and great mercy to our souls.

أبوليتيكيون القدّيس أندراوس باللحن الرابع

بما أنكَ في الرسُلِ مَدْعُوٌّ أولاً، وللهامَةِ أخًا، إبتهِلْ يا أندراوسُ إلى سَيِّدِ الكل، أنْ يَمْنَحَ المَسْكونَةَ السَّلامَ ونفوسَنا الرحمةَ العظمى.

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 تَجلّى ربّنا يَسُوعَ المَسِيح باللحن السابع

لمَّا تَجَلَّيْتَ أيُّها المَسيحُ الإلهُ في الجَبَلِ، أظْهَرْتَ مَجْدَكَ لِلْتلاميذِ حَسْبَما اسْتَطاعوا، فأَشْرِقْ لنا نَحْنُ الخَطَأة نورَكَ الأزَليّ، بِشَفاعاتِ والِدَةِ الإلهِ، يا مانِحَ النّورِ، المَجْدُ لك.

KONTAKION OF PREPARATION OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY IN TONE THREE

On this day the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth to God the Word ineffably, Who was before all the ages. Dance for joy, O earth, on hearing the gladsome tidings; with the Angels and the shepherds now glorify Him Who is willing to be gazed on as a young Child Who before the ages is God.

قِنداق تَقْدمَة المِيلاد باللحن الثَالث

اليومَ العَذْراء، تَأْتي إلى المَغارَة، لِتَلِدَ الكَلِمَة الذي قَبْلَ الدُّهُور، وِلادَةً لا تُفَسَّرُ ولا يُنْطَقُ بِها، فَافْرَحِي أَيَّتُها المَسْكونَةُ إذا سَمِعْتِ، ومَجِّدي مَعَ المَلائِكَةِ والرُّعاة، الذي سَيَظْهَرُ بِمَشيئَتِهِ طِفْلاً جَديداً وهُو إلهُنا الذي قَبْلَ الدُّهُور.

THE EPISTLE

His sound hath gone forth into all the earth.
The heavens show forth the glory of God.

The Reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (4:9-16)

Brethren, I think that God has exhibited us Apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and buffeted and homeless, and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the scourge of all things. I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. Though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel. I urge you, then, be imitators of me.

الرسالة

في كُلِّ الأَرْضِ خَرَجَ صوْتُهُ.
السَّمَاوَاتُ تُذِيعُ مَجْدَ اللهِ.

فَصْلٌ مِنْ رِسالَةِ القِدّيسِ بولُسَ الرَّسولِ الأولى إلى أَهْلِ كورِنْثُوس. (4:9-16)

يا إِخْوَةُ، إِنَّ اللهَ أَبرَزَنا نَحْنُ الرُسُلَ آخِرِي الناسِ، كأَنَّنا مَجْعولونَ لِلْمَوْتِ. لأَنَّا قَدْ صِرْنا مَشْهَداً للعالَمِ والملائكةِ والبَشَرِ. نحنُ جُهَّالٌ مِنْ أَجْلِ المَسيحِ، أَمَّا أَنْتُمْ فَحُكَماءُ في المَسيحِ. نَحْنُ ضُعَفاءُ، وأَنْتُمْ أَقْوِياءُ. أَنْتُمْ مُكَرَّمُونَ، ونَحْنُ مُهانونَ. وإِلى هذهِ الساعةِ، نَحْنُ نَجوعُ ونَعْطَشُ ونَعْرَى ونُلْطَمُ ولا قَرارَ لَنَا. ونَتْعَبُ عامِلِينَ. نُشْتَمُ فَنُبارِكُ، نُضْطَهَدُ فَنَحْتَمِلُ. يُشَنَّعُ عَلَيْنا فَنَتَضَرَّع. قَدْ صِرْنا كَأَقْذارِ العالَمِ وكأوساخٍ يَسْتَخْبِثُها الجَميعُ إِلى الآن. وَلَسْتُ لأُخَجِلَكُم أكتبُ هذا، وإِنَّما أَعِظُكُمْ كَأَوْلادي الأَحِبَّاءِ. لأَنَّهُ ولَوْ كانَ لَكُمْ رِبْوَةٌ مِنَ المُرشِدينَ في المَسيحِ، لَيْسَ لَكُمْ آباءٌ كثيرونَ. لأَنّي أَنَا وَلَدْتُكُمْ في المَسيحِ يسوعَ بالإِنجيلِ. فأَطلُبُ إِليكُم أَنْ تَكونوا مُقْتَدِينَ بي.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (1:35-51)

At that time John was standing with two of his disciples; and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. Jesus turned, and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" And they said to Him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where art Thou staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him, and said, "So you are Simon the son of Jonah? You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter). The next day, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathaniel, and said to him, "We have found Him of Whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathaniel said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw

Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” Nathaniel said to Him, “How do you know me?” Jesus answered him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” Nathaniel answered Him, “Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!” Jesus answered him, “Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these.” And He said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

الإنجيل

فَصْلٌ شَريفٌ مِنْ بِشارَةِ القِدّيسِ يوحنا الإنْجيليّ البَشيرِ والتِّلْميذِ الطَّاهِر. (1:35-51)

في ذلكَ الزمانِ، كانَ يوحنا واقِفاً هوَ واثنانِ منْ تلاميذِهِ، فَنظرَ إلى يسوعَ ماشِياً فقالَ: هوذا حَمَلُ الله، فَسَمِعَ التلميذانِ كلامَهُ فَتَبِعا يسوعَ، فالتفَتَ يسوعُ فأبْصَرَهُما يتبعانِهِ، فقالَ لهما: ماذا تطلبان؟ فقالا له: رابي (الذي تفسيرُهُ يا معلم) أين تمكُثُ؟ فقالَ لهما: تعاليا وانظرا. فأتيا ونظرا أينَ كانَ يمكُثُ، ومَكَثا عندَهُ ذلكَ اليوم، وكانَ نحوَ الساعةِ العاشرةِ، وكانَ أندراوسُ أخو سِمعانَ بطرسَ واحدًا منَ الإثنينِ اللذينِ سَمِعا يوحنا وَتَبِعا يسوع. فهذا وَجَدَ أوّلاً سِمعانَ أخاهُ فقالَ لهُ: قدْ وَجَدْنا مَسِيّا الذي تفسيرُهُ المسيح، وجاءَ بهِ إلى يسوع. فَنَظَرَ إليهِ يسوعُ وقالَ: أنتَ سمعانُ بنُ يونا، أنتَ تُدْعى صَفا الذي تفسيرُهُ بطرس. وفي الغدِ أرادَ يسوعُ الخروجَ إلى الجليلِ، فَوَجَدَ فيلبسَ فقالَ له: اتبعْني، وكانَ فيلبسُ مِنْ بيتَ صيدا مِنْ مدينةِ أندراوسَ وبطرس. فَوَجَدَ فيلبسُ نثنائيلَ فقالَ لهُ: إنَّ الذي كتبَ عنهُ موسى في الناموسِ والأنبياءِ قدْ وَجَدْناهُ وهوَ يسوعُ بنُ يوسفَ الذي من الناصرة، فقالَ لهُ نثنائيل: أَمِنَ الناصرةِ يُمكنُ أنْ يَكونَ شيءٌ صالحٌ؟ فقالَ لهُ فيلبس: تعالَ وانظُرْ. فرأى يسوعُ نثنائيلَ مُقْبِلاً إليهِ فقالَ عنهُ: هوذا إسرائيليٌّ حقّاً لا غِشَّ فيه. فقالَ لهُ نثنائيل: مِنْ أينَ تعرِفُني؟ أَجابَ يسوعُ وقالَ لهُ: قبلَ أنْ يَدعوَكَ فيلبسُ وأنتَ تحتَ التينةِ رأيتُك. أجابَ نثنائيلُ وقال: يا معلمُ، أنتَ ابنُ الله، أنتَ ملكُ إسرائيل. أجابَ يسوعُ وقالَ له: ألِأَنَّني قلتُ لكَ إني رأيتُكَ تحتَ التينةِ آمنتَ؟ إنك ستُعاينُ أعظمَ منْ هذا. وقالَ له: الحقَّ الحقَّ أقولُ لكمْ، إنكمْ منَ الآنَ تَرَوْنَ السماءَ مفتوحةً، وملائكةَ اللهِ يَصْعَدونَ وَيَنْزِلونَ على ابنِ البشر.

KOINONIKON (COMMUNION HYMN) FOR ST. ANDREW IN TONE EIGHT

His sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. Alleluia.

كينونيكون للِقدّيسِ أندراوس باللحن الثامِن

في كُلِّ الأَرْضِ خَرَجَ صوْتُهُ، وإلى أقاصي المَسْكونَةِ كَلامُهُ. هَلِلويا.

TRISAGION PRAYER

3-9 Day Memorial Service in memory of Margaret Sakhel, offered by her daughter Adele and her husband George Kreitem, son Alex and his wife Rula Sakhel, and their families.

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: George and Adele Kreitem for the good health of their daughters: Jenny Smith, Joanna Shiels, Sandra Elhihi and their families, and the Kreitem and Sakhel families. Many Years1

OFFERED BY: James and Gretchen Stroud for the good health of their granddaughter Ivy Lucia on the occasion of her birth (November 22) and for the good health of her parents, Alexander and Madison, and for the good health of the Stroud and Pobis families.

OFFERED BY: Adrena Liwi for the good health of Anita Liwi on the occasion of her birthday (Nov 30) and the good health of the Liwi family. Many Years!

COFFEE HOUR

Offered By: George and Adele Kreitem

(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)

DECORATING THE ALTAR

Thank you for your donation:
Chip & Jennifer Lutton: For the good health of the Lutton family. In memory of Gladys and Richard Lutton, Michael Smith, Helen and Elias Bodron.

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CARD

Thank you for your donation:
Jennifer & Chip Lutton & family.

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; Riad Akery, Vice-President; Christina Alnweisser Secretary; Mila Haddad, Treasurer; Gabreilla Ajlouni, Social Media Coordinator; Adriana Ajlouni.

SOYO Activity:

The Youth Group will have **White Elephant Potluck** hosted by the Labban family on **December 12th at 6:00pm**. Please save the date for the youth age 12-17. Please contact the advisers; Dominic Youssef and Caesar Haddad RSVP.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CORNER

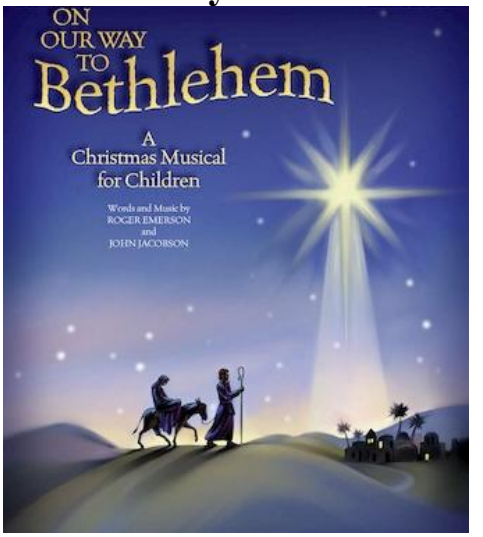
Sunday School Registration is now open. Please register your children ASAP. Registration forms are available at the church hall or on church Website: http://www.orthodoxredeemer.org/schoolregistration

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.

"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*
- **St. *Barbara Day:*** *December 7, sponsored by the ladies auxiliary. Please bring a pot of our traditional Burbara to share with everyone*
- ***SOYO Event:*** *White Elephant Potluck, December12th @ 6:00pm.*
- *Hosted by the Labban family. More details will be posted soon.*
- ***Christmas Get Together:*** *December 13th, 4:00pm – 8:00pm. More info will be posted soon.*
- ***St. IGNATIUS & Parish Council****: Annual dinner December18. Please see flyer for details*
- ***Christmas Play:*** *December 21, Christmas play after the Liturgy*
- ***Christmas Services:*** *Evening, Divine Liturgy for the Nativity on Dec 24th @ 8:00pm*

Let Us Give Thanks and Rejoice

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

Gratitude, my dear friends, is a quintessential Christian virtue. A person who appreciates God's grace and understands the importance of His blessings in their life is always grateful. The Holy Scriptures repeatedly urge us to always give thanks without ever growing weary of it. Grateful persons rejoice in what they have, whether much or little. They are content with what they have, whether great or small. They are satisfied with what they possess and calmly seek better things, without fuss, without agitation, without inner turmoil. They are filled with their Lord and look to Him first and foremost, and from Him they draw every other gift. As long as God, the source of life, is with them, they never feel lacking.

When we grumble, when we complain, when we are not satisfied with what we have, and when we are troubled because we want more, we are expressing, indirectly, that we have not yet had enough of our Lord, and that we have not yet grasped, as we should, the purpose of the Christian life.

Our era, my dear friends, is a consumerist era par excellence. As you know, it compels us to work harder to earn more money so that we can spend more. The cycle continues in a closed loop, and we remain in a frantic pursuit of more work, more earnings, more

spending, and so on. But the real tragedy lies in the fact that the further we progress on this economic journey, the more possessions we feel we need, and so we remain dissatisfied, constantly demanding, forgetting even to appreciate what we have and what we possess.

Joy has become rare in these troubled times. Moments of delight may be available from time to time, but true joy is far away. Why? Because the desire for what we need – or what we think we need – is stronger than the joy of enjoying what we have.

In one of his letters, the Evangelist John warns us that everything in this world is driven by the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). The Apostle Paul urges believers to beware of and avoid these desires (Gal. 5:19-21). Why? Because the desires of this world are endless, never truly satisfying, and consequently, they drive us to constantly seek them. Experience teaches us that the disappointment that follows is immeasurably greater than the pleasure of indulging in them. The pursuit of desires leads from one disappointment to another.

The fountain of life is within us, yet we go, as the prophet Jeremiah says, to dig broken cisterns that cannot hold water (2:13). We have "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), yet we neglect it and pursue a glittering allure that captivates our hearts and deceives us with the illusion of attaining fulfillment. We forget what He has given us and forget this ever-flowing, inexhaustible fountain, and instead seek polluted waters in different places.

The tragedy of our modern world is that it makes us forget gratitude, and consequently, all the blessings we enjoy. Our world constantly tries to open our eyes to new, deceptive, and illusory things, making us believe they are essential and indispensable. This is why the wise, guided by the Gospel, rejoice in what they have and thank God for it. We enjoy good health, but we only appreciate it when we fall ill! We can see. Isn't sight a blessing? We only truly appreciate it when we see a blind person! We can walk. Well, that too is a blessing. But we don't give thanks for it, nor do we recognize its value, until we see a disabled person! There are countless things in our lives that should make us give thanks joyfully and gratefully, and we must truly see them.

One of our contemporary spiritual fathers said, "If we were to give thanks for everything, we would have no time to complain." Complaining means not being thankful, not being grateful, and not being content with the good things the Lord has

given us. It also means that we are not satisfied with our Lord and that we are not content with our situation.

Someone might ask: Should we be content with what we have and not strive for better? Doesn't a Christian have the right to be ambitious? Don't we, as Christians, have the right to ask for the best? Yes, certainly. We have all these rights, but with a spirit of gratitude, a spirit of contentment and joy, a spirit of thankfulness for what we have. We ask for the best quietly, not noisily. We ask for the best knowing that the very best is to be in the Lord's presence, and from there, by the Lord's grace, we improve not only ourselves but the whole world around us. This is not only a right, but also our duty. It is our duty to make our world a reflection of the Kingdom of Heaven. But if we are always angry, always complaining, always resentful, always sad, always restless, always agitated, how can we improve ourselves and improve our world?

Once there was a priest thrown into solitary confinement during the days of communist religious persecution in Russia. He spent many years in his solitary cell. There was only a small window at the top of the room through which light entered. Every day, he would recite a prayer of thanksgiving, which he had written on the walls of his cell. It was a prayer overflowing with gratitude to God, thanking Him that there were people who could see the light of heaven and rejoice, that there were people who could hear the birds chirping and rejoice, that there were people who could eat and drink whatever they wanted and rejoice. He, deprived of everything, thought of others who had been given what they needed, and he rejoiced for them and thanked God for giving it to them. Where are we in relation to such a contemporary example?

This example encourages us to rise to the required Christian spiritual level, and teaches us to give thanks at all times, not just with our lips, but with our hearts.

Let us learn well and remember today that true joy is found in Christ. "I bring you good news of great joy: to you a Savior has been born" (Luke 2:10-11). Does not the Gospel begin with this good news? Let us not forget, beloved, that the greatest joy is within us; we only need to open our eyes and see it. May God perpetuate joy in your lives, in your hearts, and in your homes, always. Amen.

لنشكر فنفرح

بقلم المتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

الشُّكرُ، يا أحبّة، فضيلةٌ مسيحيةٌ بامتياز. والإنسان الذي يشعرُ بقيمة نعمة الله، ويعي أهميّة بركته في حياته، هو إنسانٌ شكورٌ في كلِّ حين. ويطالبنا الكتاب المقدَّس، مِراراً وتَكراراً، بأن نقدِّم الشكرَ في كلِّ حين، غيرَ متعَبين منه. الإنسانُ الشَّكورُ إنسانٌ فَرِحٌ بما عندَه، أكانَ كثيراً أم قليلاً. إنّه إنسانٌ راضٍ عمّا حصَّله، أكانَ عظيماً أم بسيطاً. هو إنسانٌ مُكتَفٍ بما عنده، ويطلبُ الأفضل بهدوءٍ، من دون صَخَبٍ، من دون قلاقل، من دون اهتياجٍ داخلي. إنّه إنسانٌ شَبعان من ربِّه، ويتطلَّع إليهِ أوّلاً وقبل أيّ شيءٍ آخر، ومنهُ يستمدُّ كلَّ عطيَّةٍ أخرى. طالما أن الله، مصدرُ الحياةِ معه، فإنَّه لا يشعرُ بالنُّقصانِ أبداً.

عندما نتذمَّر، عندما نتشكَّى، ولا نرضى بما عندنا، ونضطرب لأننا نريد المزيد، فإننا نعبّر، بطريقة غير مباشرة، عن أنَّنا لم نكتفِ من ربِّنا بعد، وأنَّنا لم نُدركْ، كما ينبغي، غاية الحياة المسيحية بعد.

عصرُنا هذا، أيُّها الأحبَّة، عصرٌ استهلاكيٌّ بامتياز. وكما تعلمون، يجعلنا نعمل كثيراً لكي نحصلَ على مدخول ماليّ أكثر، لكي نصرفَ أكثر؛ وهكذا دواليك، تبقى الدائرة تدورُ مغلقةً، ونبقى في سعيٍ محمومٍ نحو العملِ أكثر، لنحصّلَ أكثر، لنصرِفَ أكثر. لكنّ الطامةَ الكبرى تكمن في أنَّنا كلَّما تقدَّمنا في مسيرتنا الاقتصادية هذه، نشعرُ بأنَّنا نحتاج إلى الأكثر، ولذلك نبقى في عدم الرضى، ونستمر في الطلب، وننسى حتى أن نفرحَ بما حصَّلناه، وبما صارَ عندَنا.

صار الفرحُ، في هذا الزَّمن الرَّديء، نادراً. قد تكون أويقات البهجة متوفرة من حين إلى آخر، لكنّ الفرح بعيد. لماذا؟ لأنَّ المطالبة بما نحن بحاجةٍ إليه، أو هكذا نظن، لهو أقوى من فرح التمتُّع بما حصَلنا عليه.

نبَّهَنا الإنجيلي يوحنا، في إحدى رسائله، إلى أن كل ما في هذا العالم، هو شهوةُ العين وشهوة الجسد وتعظُّم المعيشة (١ يو ٢: ١٦). ويحث الرسول بولس المؤمنين على أنْ يتجنَّبوا هذه الشهوات ويحذروها،(غلا ٥: ١٩-٢١) لماذا؟ لأنَّ شهوات هذه الدُّنيا لا تنتهي، كونها لا تُشبعنا، وتالياً، تجعلنا نجدّ في طلبها باستمرار. والواقع يعلّمنا، بالخبرة، أن الخيبة التي تليها، أقوى من لذة التمتع بها، بما لا يقاس. طلب الشهوات يقود الإنسان من خيبة إلى أخرى.

نبعُ الحياة عندنا ونحن نذهب، كما يقول إرمياء النبي، لنحفرَ آباراً مشقَّقةً لا تضبطُ الماء (أر ٢: ١٣). عندنا "الطَّريقُ والحقُّ والحياة" (يو ١٤: ٦)، ومع ذلك نهمله ونسعى وراء بريق يأخذ بألبابنا، ويخدعنا بوهم الحصول على الملء. ننسى ما أعطانا وننسى هذا النَّبع الذي يفيض باستمرارٍ ولا ينضبُ أبداً، ونطلبُ مياهاً ملوَّثةً من هنا وهناك.

تكمن تجربةُ عالمنا المعاصر، في أنه يُنسينا الشُّكرَ، وتالياً، كلَّ النِّعَم التي نحن فيها. يحاول عالمنا، بشتى الطرق، أن يفتحَ عيوننا دائماً على أمورٍ جديدة، خادعة ووهمية. يجعلنا نظنُّها أموراً لازمةً لا نستطيع الاستغناء عنها. من هنا الحكيم السائر على هدي الإنجيل، يفرحُ بِما عنده ويشكرُ الله عليه. نحنُ بصحةٍ جيدة لا نقدِّرُها إلا عندما نمرض! نحن نرى. أو ليس النظر نعمة؟! لا نقدِّرها إلا عندما نرى ضريراً! نحن نمشي. حسناً هذه نعمة أيضاً. لكننا لا نشكر عليها ولا نعرف قيمتها إلا عندما نرى إنساناً مُقعَداً! هناك أمورٌ كثيرةٌ، أكثر من أن تُعَدّ، في حياتنا تجعلُنا نشكرُ ونشكرُ بفرحٍ وامتنان، وعلينا أن نبصرَها جيّداً.

يقول أحد آبائنا الروحيين المعاصرين: "لو شكر الإنسان على كلِّ شيء، لما وجدَ وقتاً للتذمُّر." التذمُّرُ يعني عدمَ الشُّكر، وعدمَ الامتنان، وعدم الاكتفاء بما أعطانا الرب من الصالحات. كما يعني أننا لم نشبع من ربنا، وأننا غير راضين عما نحن فيه.

قد يقول قائل: أنقبل بما عندنا ولا نسعى إلى الأحسن؟ ألا يحقُّ للمسيحي أن يكون طموحاً؟ ألا يحقُّ لنا، مسيحيين، أن نطلبَ الأفضل؟ بلى بالتأكيد. يحقُّ لنا هذا كلُّه ولكن بروحِ الشُّكران، بروحِ الرِّضى والابتهاج، بروح الامتنان لما عندنا. نحن نطلب الأفضل بهدوءٍ، لا بصخَب، نطلب الأفضل ونَعلمُ أنَّ أفضلَ الأفضل هو أن نكون في كنف الرَّب، ومن هناك وبنعمة الرَّب نحسِّن، لا أنفسنا فقط، بل كلَّ العالم الذي حولنا. هذا ليس حقٌّ فقط، بل هو واجبٌ علينا. واجبنا أن نجعلَ عالمنا صورةً عن ملكوت السموات. ولكن إن كنَّا في الغضبِ دوماً، في التذمُّرِ دوماً، في السَخَطِ، في الحزنِ، في القلقلة، في الاضطراب، كيف لنا أن نحسِّنَ أنفسَنا ونحسِّنَ عالمنا؟

قضى أحدُ الكهنة، الذين أُلقوا في زنزانةٍ فرديةٍ، أيام الاضطهاد الديني الشيوعي في روسيا، سنواتٍ طويلة، في زنزانته المنفردة تلك؛ لم يكنْ فيها سوى طاقة صغيرة في أعلى الغرفة، يدخل منها النور. وكان يردد يومياً، صلاة شكر، كتبها على جدران زنزانته، صلاة مفعمةً بالامتنان للرَّب، يشكر الله فيها لأن ثمّة أناسٌ يرَون نورَ السماء ويفرحون، ولأنّ ثمّة أناسٌ غيره يسمعون زقزقة العصافير ويفرحون، ولأنّ ثمّة أناسٌ يأكلون ما يُريدون ويشربون ما يُريدون ويفرحون... كان يفكِّرُ، وهو المحروم من كلِّ شيء – كان يفكِّرُ بالآخرين، الَّذين أُعطي لهم ما يحتاجونه، ويفرحُ لهم ويشكرُ الله لأنَّه أعطاهم هذا. أين نحن من شهادةٍ معاصرةٍ كهذه؟!

مثاله هذا يشجّعُنا على أن نرتفعَ إلى المستوى الروحيّ المسيحيّ المطلوب، ويعلّمنا أن نشكرَ في كلِّ حين، لا منَ الشفاه فقط، بل من القلب.

فلنتعلَّم جيداً ولنتذكَّر اليوم، أنَّ الفرح يكون بالمسيح. "إني أبشّركم بفرحٍ عظيم، وُلدَ لكم مخلِّص" (لوقا ٢: ١٠-١١). ألا يبدأ الإنجيل بهذه البشرى!! فلا ننسَ أيُّها الأحبة أنَّ الفرح الأعظم هو عندنا، علينا فقط أن نفتح أعيننا ونراه. أدامَ الله الفرح في حياتكم، وفي قلوبكم، وفي بيوتكم، دوماً، آمين.

🎄Holiday Wish Drive 🎁

Help bring joy to children and adults in need this Christmas!

This season, our community is coming together to make holiday wishes come true. Please visit the Christmas Tree in the church Narthex and choose a card to sponsor a child or adult. Each card lists a special wish you can help fulfill.

Your generosity will make a meaningful difference and share the spirit of Christ's love this Christmas.

✨ Together, we can make the season brighter for everyone! ✨

Let's celebrate together!

ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

SOYO CHRISTMAS PARTY

WHITE ELEPHANT

12 December | 15543 Toyon Dr. Los Gatos, CA 95030 | 6:00 pm

Dr. George & Ghazal Labban's House

Please bring a White Elephant gift ($25) to exchange

RSVP to the Advisers
Dominic Youssef
& Caesar Haddad

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA DEANERY

ORDER OF ST. IGNATIUS & PARISH COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

Invites you and your spouses to the
Annual Christmas Dinner

$60 PER PERSON

DECEMBER 18, 2025 @ 6:30 PM

CAFE VITALE
987 FREMONT AVE. LOS ALTOS HILLS, CA 94024

RSVP BY DEC 6TH

KH. JULIANNA YOUSSEF(CO-CHAIR FOR THE ORDER OF ST. IGNATIUS OF THE DIOCESE)
408-375-5539, JULIANNA3DS@GMAIL.COM

OR

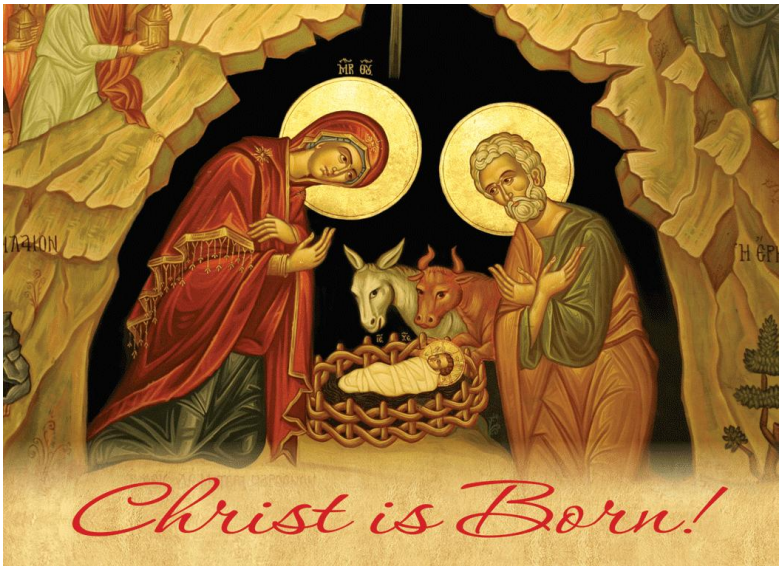
OFFICE@ORTHODOXREDEEMER.ORG

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.

Online Donation Link: https://orthodoxredeemer.breezechms.com/give/online

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.

Online Donation Link: https://orthodoxredeemer.breezechms.com/give/online

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: _____