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

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF
THE REDEEMER
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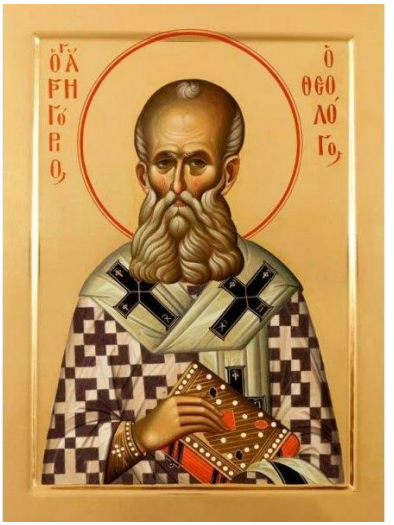

January 25, 2026

Gregory the Theologian, archbishop of Constantinople
& Fifteenth Sunday of Luke (Zacchaeus)

Venerable Demetrios the sacristan; New-martyr Auxentios of Constantinople

القدّيسِ غريغوريوس الثاوثوغوس
وألأحد الخامس عشر من القديس لوقا الانجيلي

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 الثامن

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

APOLYTIKION OF ST. GREGORY THE THEOLOGIAN IN TONE ONE

The shepherd's pipe of thy theology conquered the trumpets of the philosophers; for since thou didst search out the depths of the Spirit, beauty of speech was added to thee. But intercede with Christ God, O Father Gregory, that our souls be saved.

أبوليتيكيون القدّيس غريغوريوس الثاوثوغوس باللحن الأوَّل

إنَّ مِزْمارَ لاهوتِكَ الرعائيَّ غَلَبَ أبواقَ الخُطَباء. فَقَدْ بَحَثْتَ في أعْماقِ الروحِ وأُضِيفَ لكَ حُسْنُ التكلّم. فَتَشَفَّعْ إلى المسيحِ الإله، يا أبانا غريغوريوس، في خلاصِ نفوسِنا.

TROPARION OF TRANSFIGURATION – TONE SEVEN

When Thou was Transfigured on the mountain top, O Christ our God. Thou didst reveal thy glory to thy disciples as they could bear it. Enlighten us poor sinners as well with thine everlasting light through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Thou Giver of light, glory to Thee.

طروبارية التجلي على اللحن السابع

لما تجليت أيها المسيح الإله في الجبل, أظهرت مجدك للتلاميذ بحسبما استطاعوا. فأشرق لنا نحن الخطأة نورك الأزلي, بشفاعة والدةِ الإله, يا مانح النور المجد لك.

KONTAKION OF THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN TONE ONE

Thou, O Christ God, Who by Thy Birth, didst sanctify the Virgin's womb, and, as is meet, didst bless Simeon's arms, and didst also come to save us;

preserve Thy fold in wars, and confirm them whom Thou didst love, for Thou alone art the Lover of mankind.

قِنداق دخول السيّدِ إلى الهَيْكل باللحن الأول

أيُّها المَسيحُ الإلهُ، يا مَنْ بِمَوْلِدِهِ قَدَّسَ الْمُسْتَوْدَعَ البَتولِيّ، وبارَكَ يَدَيْ سِمْعانَ كَما لاقَ، وأدْرَكَنا الآنَ وخَلَّصَنا؛ إحْفَظْ رَعِيَّتَكَ بِسَلامٍ في الحُروبِ، وأيِّدِ المُلوكَ الذينَ أحْبَبْتَهُمْ، بِما أنَّكَ وَحْدَكَ مُحِبٌّ لِلْبَشَر.

THE EPISTLE

My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding. Hear this, all ye people.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (7:26-8:2)

Brethren, it was fitting that we should have such a High Priest, holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; He did this once for all when He offered up Himself. Indeed, the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son Who has been made perfect forever. Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a High Priest, one Who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent which is set up not by man but by the Lord. For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer.

الرسالة

فَمي يَتَكَلَّمُ بالحِكْمَةِ وقَلبي يَهُذُّ بالفَهْم.

إسمَعوا هذا يا شُعوب.

فَصلٌ مِنْ رِسالَةِ القِدّيسِ بولُسَ الرَسولِ إلى العِبْرانيين. (7: 26-8: 2)

يا إخْوة، كَانَ يَلِيقُ بِنَا رَئِيسُ كَهَنَةٍ مِثْلُ هذَا، قُدُّوسٌ بِلاَ شَرّ وَلاَ دَنَسٍ، قَدِ انْفَصَلَ عَنِ الْخُطَاةِ وَصَارَ أَعْلَى مِنَ السَّمَاوَاتِ الَّذِي لَيْسَ لَهُ اضْطِرَارٌ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ مِثْلَ رُؤَسَاءِ الْكَهَنَةِ أَنْ يُقَدِّمَ ذَبَائِحَ أَوَّلاً عَنْ خَطَايَا نَفْسِهِ ثُمَّ عَنْ خَطَايَا الشَّعْبِ، لأَنَّهُ فَعَلَ هذَا مَرَّةً وَاحِدَةً، إِذْ قَدَّمَ نَفْسَهُ. فَإِنَّ النَّامُوسَ يُقِيمُ أُنَاسًا بِهِمْ

ضَعْفٌ رُؤَسَاءَ كَهَنَةٍ. وَأَمَّا كَلِمَةُ الْقَسَمِ الَّتِي بَعْدَ النَّامُوسِ فَتُقِيمُ ابْنًا مُكَمَّلاً إِلَى الأَبَدِ. وَأَمَّا رَأْسُ الْكَلاَمِ فَهُوَ: أَنَّ لَنَا رَئِيسَ كَهَنَةٍ مِثْلَ هذَا، قَدْ جَلَسَ فِي يَمِينِ عَرْشِ الْعَظَمَةِ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ خَادِماً لِلأَقْدَاسِ وَالْمَسْكَنِ الْحَقِيقِيِّ الَّذِي نَصَبَهُ الرَّبُّ لاَ إِنْسَانٌ. لأَنَّ كُلَّ رَئِيسِ كَهَنَةٍ يُقَامُ لِكَيْ يُقَدِّمَ قَرَابِينَ وَذَبَائِحَ. فَمِنْ ثَمَّ يَلْزَمُ أَنْ يَكُونَ لِهذَا أَيْضًا شَيْءٌ يُقَدِّمُهُ.

THE GOSPEL

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (19:1-10)

At that time, Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector, and rich. And he sought to see Who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Jesus, for He was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

الإنجيل

فَصْلٌ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بِشارَةِ القِدّيسِ لوقا الإنجيليّ البَشيرِ والتِّلْميذِ الطاهِرِ (19:1–10)

في ذلكَ الزمانِ، فيما يَسوعُ مُجْتازٌ في أريحا، إذا بِرَجُلٍ اسْمُهُ زَكَّا كانَ رَئيساً على العَشَّارينَ، وكانَ غَنِيّاً وكانَ يَلْتَمِسُ أنْ يَرى يسوعَ منْ هُوَ، فَلَمْ يكُنْ يَسْتَطيعُ مِنَ الجَمْعِ لأنَّهُ كانَ قَصيرَ القامَة فَتَقَدَّمَ مُسْرِعاً، وصَعِدَ إلى جُمَّيزَةٍ لِيَنْظُرَهُ، لأنَّهُ كانَ مُزمِعاً أنْ يَجْتازَ بها. فلَمّا انْتَهى يسوعُ إلى المَوْضِعِ، رَفَعَ طَرْفَهُ فَرَآهُ، فَقالَ لهُ: يا زكَّا أَسْرِعِ انْزِلْ، فاليَومَ يَنْبَغي لي أنْ أمْكُثَ في بَيْتِك. فَأَسْرَعَ ونَزَلَ وقَبِلَهُ فرِحاً. فَلمَّا رأى الجَميعُ ذلِكَ تَذَمَّروا قائلينَ: إنَّهُ دَخَلَ لِيَحُلَّ عِنْدَ رَجُلٍ خاطِئٍ." فَوَقَفَ زكَّا وقالَ لِيَسوع: هاءَنَذا، يا ربُّ، أُعْطي المَساكينَ نِصْفَ أَمْوالي. وإنْ كُنْتُ قَدْ غَبَنْتُ أَحَداً في شَيْءٍ، أَرُدُّ أَرْبَعَةَ

أَضْعافٍ فَقالَ لهُ يَسوعُ: اليَوْمَ قَدْ حَصَلَ الخَلاصُ لِهَذا البَيْتِ لأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَيْضاً ابْنُ إبْراهيم لأَنَّ ابْنَ البَشَرِ إنَّما أَتى لِيَطْلُبَ ويُخَلِّصَ ما قَدْ هَلَك.

TRISAGION PRAYER

3-9 Day Memorial service in memory of Hani Ghawi, offered by the Ghawi, Khamis, Ghanaim, Zako, Sakkab and Srouji 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, the Clergy and the parishioners for the good health of the nominees for the Parish Council and for the members of the Parish Council who are continuing their membership; Salem Aweiss, Jad Bateh, Sana Eideh, Maher Fasheh, Rima Gannage, Johnny Khamis, Linda Salah, Bassam Khoury, Jake Timothy, Edmund Khinno, Henry Veizades and their families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Marwan and Yara Akkary for the good health of their daughter Sophia on the occasion of her churching and the good health of their daughter Emma and the Akkary and Salloum families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Hanna and Suad Eideh for the good health of Sana Eideh, Lena, Nick, Michelle, Elias and Marissa Khoury. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Samuel, Maya and Luka Hage for the good health of Gabrielle on the occasion of her 9th birthday (Jan 22) and the good health of the Hage family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Cristina Anagnos for the good health of her husband Gus on the occasion of his birthday (Jan 26) and the good health of their children Lukas, Chris and the Anagnos family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Fr. Samer and Kh. Julianna Youssef for the good health of their son Damian on the occasion of his 21st birthday (Jan 27) and for the good health of their children Dimitry and Dominic and the Youssef and Neyman families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Ramza Haddad for the good health of her husband Sami on the occasion of his birthday (Jan 31) and the good health of their children and the Haddad and Sarkis families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Hanna, Suad and Sana Eideh in memory of Imad Eideh on the occasion of his heavenly birthday (Jan 22). In memory of Awad and Olga Eideh, Hanna, Juliette and Simon Hanhan. Memory Eternal!

OFFERED BY: Maria Zubko in memory of her friend Andrei Shevchenko, who fell asleep in the Lord on January 8th. Memory Eternal!

Churching

Churching baby girl, Sophia Akkary. Her parents Marwan and Yara Akkary and her sister Emma. Congratulations.

COFFEE HOUR

Offered By: Parish Council Members

(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)

HOME BLESSING 2026

As a tradition in the Orthodox Church, the priest will take the Holy Water which was blessed at the church, and bless the homes of the parishioners. Fr. Samer will start the home visitations and blessings on January 7th, 2026. You will receive a phone call from the office or Fr. Samer the day before to schedule your home blessing. You will receive your 2026 Church Calendar at the home blessing. If you like to schedule your own home blessing, please contact the office by phone at 650-941-1570 or by email at office@orthodoxredeemer.org , or you can contact Fr. Samer Youssef at 408-375-5673.

General Parish Meeting Jan 25, 2026

The General Meeting of our Parish will take place this Sunday, **January 25**, following the Divine Liturgy. Please join us **in person or via Zoom at 12:30 PM**. Thank you to all parishioners who participated in the vote—we have received your ballots. The Zoom meeting link has been emailed to all members.

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 2026. Roula Haddad (Chairwoman), Dania Amireh (Vice- Chairwoman), Ibtisam Kreitem (Secretary/ Communication), Wardeh Asfour (Kitchen/Coffee Hour), Rima Gannage (Bookkeeping) and Diana Khoury (Myrrh Barrier).

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 Dimitry Youssef or 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.

Orthodoxy 101 Class

In our next 101 class, we will turn to the Eucharist—the *Sacrament of sacraments*, the climax of the Divine Liturgy, and the heartbeat of our life in Christ. Fr. Theodore will set up a table and walk us through the Preparation of the Gifts, helping us see more clearly what takes place before the Liturgy and how we participate in it. We will also answer practical questions, including how to prepare to receive Holy Communion and what to do if you are not able to receive.

Join us after liturgy at 12:15 pm in the church!
Jan 25 - No Class (Church Meeting)
Feb 1 - The Eucharist
Feb 8 - No Class
Feb 15 - The Divine Liturgy
Led by Fr Theodore and Jake Timothy (pursuing the Certificate in Orthodox Theology from the Antiochian House of Studies). Overseen by Fr Samer.

All are welcome! Registration is open for inquirers and catechumens via the QR code below.

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.

Candle Decorating for the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord

All Sunday School children are invited to a **candle decorating activity on Sunday, February 1st**, in celebration of the **Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple (February 2nd)**. Young adults are also encouraged to participate and help with the craft.

The candles will be **blessed in church on Sunday, February 9th**, and then returned to the children to use during **Palm Sunday and Holy Week services.**

This is a beautiful way for our children to participate in the life of the Church and prepare for the upcoming Lenten season.

We hope you'll join us!

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE CHURCH

Please save the date

- ***February 5:*** *Mother Agapia Stephanopoulos presentation @ 6:30PM*
- ***February 6:*** *All committees meeting and potluck on Friday night @6:30 at the church*
- ***February 15:*** *Judgement Sunday/ Meatfare*
- ***February 21:*** *All you can eat Crab & Seafood dinner*
- ***February 22:*** *Forgiveness Sunday/ Cheesefare. Potluck luncheon*
- ***February 23:*** *Great Lent begins*
- ***March 1:*** *Sunday of Orthodoxy*
- ***March 21:*** *Annunciation and Tea Party. More info will be posted soon*
- ***March 31:*** *Easter Kaak Workshop @ 10:00AM*
- ***April 5:*** *Palm Sunday/ Bake sale*
- ***April 10:*** *Good Friday*
- ***April 11:*** *Holy Saturday/ midnight potluck*
- ***April 12:*** *Easter/ Pascha. Egg Hunt*

Antiochian Orthodox Church of the Redeemer

380 Magdalena Avenue
Los Altos Hills, CA 94024

Phone: 650 941 1570

WWW.orthodoxredeemer.org

V. Rev. Fr. Samer Youssef, Pastor. DMin.

Dear Beloved Parishioners, January 2, 2026

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

As we begin this New Year with gratitude to God for His many blessings, we warmly invite you to attend our Annual Parish Meeting. This gathering is not only an opportunity to reflect on the past year but also to look forward together with faith and hope as we continue to serve Christ and build His Church.

The annual parish meeting will be held after the Divine Liturgy on **Sunday, January 25, 2026 @ 12:30 pm.** We invite each family to attend in person if you wish or to log onto this Zoom link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88037247195?pwd=ybCHbu40D2W9W1DC5oiEDLrPyKFQtO.1

The following individuals are the current nominees for election to the Parish Council. Four will be elected for a term of two years:

Bassam Khoury	**Johnny Khamis**	**Jake Timothy**	**Edmund Khinno**
Henry Veizades	**Rima Gannage**	**Salem Aweiss**	

The following Parish Council Members will continue their last year of their two-year terms:

Jad Bateh	**Sana Eideh**	**Maher Fasheh**	**Linda Salah**

The voting this year will be by mail. The ballot is included in this envelope. Please vote for only four (4) members from the nominees above. Place the ballot in the return envelope and send it to the church office. Please return all ballots no **later than 20th of January in order to be counted on January 25th, 2026.**

The agenda for the meeting is as follows:
1-Call to Order, 2-Opening Prayer, 3-Priest's Report, 4-Parish Council Chairman's Report, 5- Auxiliary Reports, 6 - Treasurer's Report 7 - Build Committee Report, 8- Election results, and 9-Adjournment.

Your presence is truly valued as we gather to reflect on the life of our parish, share important updates, and make key decisions for the year ahead. Let us come together in unity, prayer, and love, strengthening our bond as a church family.

May our Lord Jesus Christ continue to bless the ministry of the Church of the Redeemer. Wishing you all a joyful and blessed New Year!

Yours in Christ,

V. Rev. Fr. Samer Youssef, DMin
Pastor

Bassam Khoury
Parish Council Chairman

Divine Education: The Old Testament

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

Divine revelation in Christianity is founded on God's own initiative to reveal Himself. God revealed Himself fully in Jesus Christ: "Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9); "No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6); "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). Yet this divine self-revelation required preparing human beings to become capable of receiving it. God patiently endured centuries of human frailty until He formed a faithful remnant—people who, through the spiritual maturity they attained, were able to respond to His transcendent truth. This spiritual growth came about through a direct, gradual, and formative divine education, beginning with Abraham and culminating in John the Baptist. God's salvific plan required that He Himself take the initiative, drawing near to humanity step by step and revealing, at each stage of human spiritual development, something new about Himself.

After the fall of the first humans from Paradise, humanity lost the path back and became incapable of walking it. Yet the image of God within humanity, though distorted by the fall, continued to long for its original source and archetype. Humanity imagined its god to be found in the forces that frightened it or sustained its life, and so it worshiped the sun, the wind, the rain, and the like. Christianity understands the rise of pagan religions as the expression of humanity's longing for its origin—an origin it no longer recognized. When a child is thirsty, he puts whatever is available into his mouth, thinking it will quench his thirst—whether water or alcohol, because cannot tell the difference. Only when he tastes does he realize his mistake. This is what happened to humanity. For this reason, no people before Christ existed without some form of religion.

We may liken the relationship between God and humanity after the fall of our first parents to two persons separated by many translucent silk curtains. God chose to remove these curtains one by one, to protect the eyes of His beloved—humanity—from the blinding brilliance of His light. This is what we call God's salvific dispensation in the Old Testament. Thus, He began with Abraham, and the process continued until John the Baptist. Then "when the

fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). Jesus Christ was born, and "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Humanity's spiritual hardness compelled God to educate it anew, until it reached a level capable of receiving God as He truly is.

Was it by chance that God chose, on the one hand, a backward and uncivilized people? Certainly not. Had He revealed Himself to a highly civilized people, others would have regarded Him as the product of human thought. And was it coincidence, on the other hand, that Christ came at the heart of a civilized world, already prepared by philosophy that had reached the acknowledgment of one God? Many historians agree that the Roman Empire had attained a spiritual stage in which the true but unknown God, in the eyes of many at the time, lay hidden behind idols fashioned by human hands and minds. Consequently, esoteric religions reached their peak just before and during the time of Christ's incarnation. Christ came at the most opportune moment, when humanity was spiritually mature and yearning for the true God. This is what is meant by the "fullness of time."

What did God do in practice? He chose a backward people, distant from civilization, and through them revealed Himself to all humanity. "The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth—not because you were more numerous than any other people, for you were the fewest of all" (Deut. 7:6–7). Some translations even say, "the most insignificant." Why? So that the power might be shown to belong not to human beings but to God. Some believe that God is a human invention. Our divine revelation teaches the opposite: human beings are God's creation, and He is the One who revealed Himself to them and led them toward His true image.

Did all of them come to know Him? No. And can someone with poor eyesight perceive the delicate beauty of nature? The sight required to know God is spiritual sight. You know God to the extent that you are pure, humble, and loving. God delights in dwelling in pure hearts, and such hearts can taste His sweetness and delight in it.

God first revealed Himself through His actions. Thus the earliest community came to know Him and spoke of Him as "the God of our fathers," "the God who delivered us from slavery," "who drowned Pharaoh and his chariots," "the God who fed us with manna in the wilderness," "who brought water from the rock," "who healed us from the bite of serpents," and so forth. Then, through the Law, He began to raise them from the savage law of vengeance—"Sevenfold vengeance shall be taken on Cain, but on Lamech seventy-sevenfold" (Gen. 4:24)—to the law of justice, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Deut. 19:21), and finally to the law of mercy: "Learn to do good; seek justice; rescue the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow" (Isa. 1:17). He moved them from a law written on stone to a law engraved on hearts, from the circumcision of the flesh to the circumcision of the heart. He refined them through exile and dispersion, so that they came to understand that He is not bound to a single temple or a single land. After the exile, they recognized that God is the God of all nations and that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Psalm 23:1).

It was a long and patient journey, in which God truly manifested His "long-suffering." This practical revelation bore fruit in the "faithful remnant"—those who had matured spiritually to receive His full revelation, disclosed in the incarnation of His Word, Jesus Christ. Among them were the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, Simeon the Elder, Anna the Prophetess, John the Evangelist, and many others.

Jesus Christ is the center of Holy Scripture. In the Old Testament, there is an expectation of Him that unfolds gradually. In the New Testament, this expectation reaches its fulfillment in His complete manifestation: "that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes… and our hands have touched" (1 John 1:1). If we remove Him from our Scriptures, we strip ourselves of the traces of Jesus Christ revealed throughout His long plan of salvation and dispensation, and hand them over to others. Does fidelity in love mean discarding the traces of the beloved? The challenge is not met by casting our heritage aside, but by preserving it and revealing its true meaning.

التربية الإلهية: العهد القديم

بقلم المطران سابا (اسبر)

يقوم الوحي الإلهي في المسيحيّة على مبادرةٍ من الله، مفادها كشفه عن ذاته. لقد كشف الله ذاته للبشر بشكل كامل في يسوع المسيح "من رآني رأى الآب" (يو١٤/٩)، "ما من أحد يأتي إلى الآب إلا بي" (يو١٤/٦)، "أنا والآب واحد" (يو ١٠: ٣٠). لكن هذا الكشف الإلهي اقتضى تهيئة بشر قادرين على اقتباله. هذا صبَرَ الله عليه قروناً، حتّى هيّأ بقيةً أمينة له، وقادرةً، بالسمو الروحي التي بلغته، على التجاوب مع حقيقته تعالى. تحقّق هذا السمو الروحي عبر تربية إلهيّة تدريجيّة وتنمويّة مباشرة، ابتداءً بإبراهيم وصولاً إلى يوحنا المعمدان. اقتضى تدبير الله الخلاصي أن يأخذ المبادرة بنفسه. فبدأ يتقرّب من الإنسان تدريجيّاً كاشفاً له، في كل تطور روحي بلغه الإنسان، شيئاً جديداً عن ذاته.

بعد سقوط الإنسان الأوّل من الفردوس، أضاع الطريق إليه، وما عاد قادراً على سلوكها. لكن صورة الله التي فيه، وإن تشوّهت بالسقوط، إلا أنّها بقيت تحنّ إلى أصلها ومثالها. ظنّ الإنسان أنّ إلهه في القوى التي تخيفه، أو تؤمّن حياته، فعبد الشمس والريح والمطر...إلخ. تعزو المسيحية نشوء الأديان الوثنيّة، إلى حنين الإنسان إلى أصله، الذي بات لا يعرفه. عندما يعطش الطفل يضع في فمه ما تيسّر له ممّا يظنّه يرويه، ماءً كان أم كحولاً! هو لا يميّز! يعرف خطأ فعلته عندما يذوق، خطأً، ما قد ظنّه ماءً. هذا ما حدث مع الإنسان. ولذلك، ما وُجد شعبٌ قبل المسيح لم يكن له دين.

يمكننا تشبيه الحال بين الله والبشر، بعد سقوط الجدّين الأولين، بشخصين بعيدين عن بعضهما، تفصل، بينهما، مجموعة كبيرة من الستائر الحريريّة الشفّافة. ارتأى الله أن ينزعها ستارةً ستارةً، حفاظاً على عينيّ محبوبه، الإنسان، من سطوع نوره. هذا ما ندعوه تدبير الله الخلاصي في العهد القديم. وهكذا بدأ بإبراهيم، ومن ثمّ تتالت العمليّة حتّى يوحنّا المعمدان. آنذاك "حلّ ملء الزمان فأرسل الله ابنه مولوداً من امرأة" (غلا٤/٤). فوُلد يسوع المسيح "والكلمة صار بيننا" (يو١/١٤). قسوة الإنسان روحيّاً اضطرّت الله إلى تربيته من جديد، لكي يبلغ إلى مستوىً يستطيع فيه تقبّل الله على حقيقته.

أتراه عبثاً اختار، من جهة أولى، مجموعة متخلّفة؟ بالتأكيد لا. لأنّه لو كشف ذاته لشعب متحضّر لاعتبره البشر نتاج فكر بشري؛ ومن جهة ثانية، أتراه صدفة أتى في قلب عالم متحضّر، كان قد رعاه بالفلسفة، التي وصلت إلى الإقرار بإله واحد؟ يُجمع كثرة من المؤرخين على أنّ الإمبراطوريّة الرومانيّة بلغت مستوى روحيّاً، بات فيه الإله الحقيقي غير المعروف، بنظر الكثيرين آنذاك، يختبئ وراء أصنام الآلهة المخلوقة بأيدي البشر وفكرهم. ولذلك بلغت نسبة الأديان السرّانيّة حدّها الأعلى قبل زمن تجسّد المسيح وخلاله! جاء المسيح في الزمن الأفضل من حيث نضج البشريّة روحيّاً وتلهّفها إلى الإله الحقّ. هذا هو المقصود بملء الزمان.

ماذا فعل الله عمليّاً؟ اختار فئةً متخلّفةً بعيدةً عن الحضارة، ليكشف ذاته، عبرها، لكلّ البشر. "اختاركم له من بين جميع الشعوب التي على وجه الأرض لا لأنّكم أكثر من جميع الشعوب فأنتم أقلّها" (تث ٧/٧). وفي بعض الترجمات "لعلّكم أحقرها." لماذا؟ ليكون فضل القوّة لا للبشر بل لله. يعتقد البعض أنّ الله صنيعة البشر. بينما العكس هو الصحيح في وَحينا الإلهي؛ البشر هم صنيعة الله، وهو من عرّفهم بنفسه وقادهم إلى صورته الحقّ.

أتراهم عرفوه جميعاً؟ لا. وهل يرى جمال دقائق الطبيعة من لا يملك بصراً جيداً؟ البصر المطلوب، في ما يخصّ الله، هو الروحي. أنت تعرف الله بقدر ما تكون نقيّاً ومتواضعاً ومحبّاً. يستعذب الله السكنى في القلوب الطاهرة، وتلك بإمكانها تذوّق حلاوته، وتالياً استعذابه.

كشف عن ذاته أولاً من خلال أفعاله. فعرفته الجماعة الأولى وعرّفته بـ "إله آبائنا،" "الإله الذي نجّانا من العبودية،" "الذي غرّق فرعون ومركباته،" "الإله الذي أطعمنا منّاً في البريّة"؛ "الذي فجّر ماءً من الصخرة؛" "الذي شفانا من لدغة الأفاعي"...إلخ. ثم بدأ، بواسطة الشريعة، يسمو بهم من شريعة الانتقام المتوحش: "لقايين يُنتقم سبعة أضعاف وأمّا للامك فسبعة وسبعين" (تك٤/٢٤)، إلى شريعة العدل: "العين بالعين والسن بالسن" (تث ١٩/٢١)، إلى شريعة الرحمة: "تعلّموا الإحسان واطلبوا العدل. أغيثوا المظلوم وأنصفوا اليتيم وحاموا عن الأرملة" (أش١/١٧). نقلهم من شريعة مكتوبة على الحجر إلى شريعة منقوشة في القلوب. درّجهم من ختانة الجسد إلى ختانة القلب. محّصهم بالغربة

والنفي ففهموا أنّه غير مرتبط بهيكل محدّد وأرض محددة. وعرفوا، بعد السبي، أنّ الله إله جميع الأمم وله "الأرض وملؤها" (مز ٢٣: ١).

كانت رحلة طويلة صبورة أظهر فيها، حقّاً، "طول أناته." وكان أن أثمر وحيه العملي هذا، "البقية الأمينة"، أي من نضجوا روحيّاً لاقتبال وحيه الكامل، الذي انكشف في تجسّد كلمته، يسوع المسيح. من هؤلاء مريم العذراء، ويوحنّا المعمدان، وسمعان الشيخ، وحنّة النبيّة، ويوحنّا الإنجيلي، وكثر غيرهم.

يسوع المسيح محور الكتاب المقدّس. في العهد القديم انتظار له يتكشّف تدريجيّاً، وفي العهد الجديد اكتمال هذا الانتظار بظهوره الكامل "الذي سمعناه، الذي رأيناه بعيوننا، ولمسته أيدينا" (١يو١/١). إن حذفناه من كتابنا المقدّس، نكون قد استغنينا عن آثار يسوع المسيح المتكشّفة عبر تدبيره الخلاصي الطويل السنين، وأعطيناه لغيرنا. أو هل تفترض أمانة الحبّ رمي آثار المحبوب؟ لا يُواجَه التحدّي برمي التراث للغير، بل بالاحتفاظ به، وإظهار معانيه الحقيقيّة؟

The Phoenix Room was founded 12 yrs. ago and is 100% volunteer run. They get some funding from the county to help with expenses but not enough to cover the volume, they rely on donations. The Phoenix Room used to be under the umbrella of Downtown Streets Team which is affiliated by the City of San Jose. Today Hunger at Home adopted the program and is the fiscal sponsor of The Phoenix Room.

Last Year, the Phoenix Room provided over 800 moves- In kits for formerly homeless individuals moving into housing. They supply each person with bedding set which consists of comforters, blankets, sheets, towels, pillows, toilet paper and a full size hygiene kit to help get them established in their new home. In addition to this, the also receive kitchen items and cleaning set.

Currently, all orders that come through are for Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH),
Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid Rehousing (RRH).

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Stories & Conversation
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