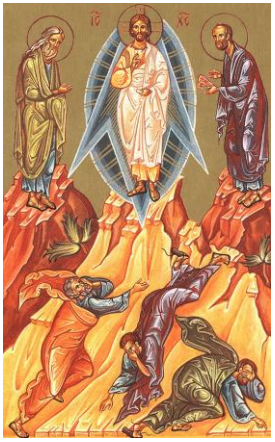

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN
ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA
Diocese of Los Angeles and the West

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF**
**THE REDEEMER**
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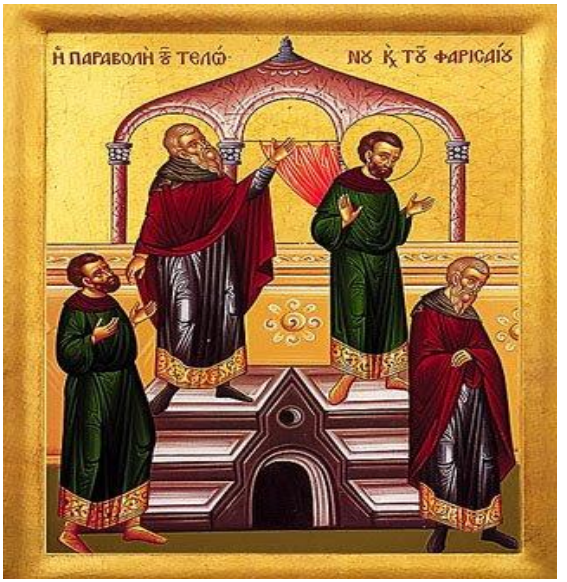


# FEBRUARY 1, 2026

## Sunday of the Pharisee and Publican & Forefeast of the Presentation (Meeting) of Christ

## أحد الفرّيسي والعشّار

## RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE ONE

While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of life. Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ, glory to Thy kingdom, glory to Thy providence, O Thou Who alone art the lover of mankind.

## أبوليتيكيون القيامة باللحن الأوَّل

إنَّ الحجَرَ لمَّا خُتِمَ مِنَ اليَهود، وجسَدَكَ الطاهِرَ حُفِظَ مِنَ الجُنْد، قُمْتَ في اليَوْمِ الثالِثِ أيُّها المُخَلِّص، مانِحاً العالَمَ الحياة. لِذلِكَ قُوّاتُ السَّماوات، هتَفُوا إليكَ يا واهِبَ الحياة: المَجْدُ لِقِيامَتِكَ أيُّها المَسيح، المَجْدُ لِمُلْكِكَ، المَجْدُ لِتَدْبيرِكَ، يا مُحبَّ البَشَرِ وَحْدَك.

## APOLYTIKION OF THE FOREFEAST IN TONE ONE

The Heavens' choir looked down from the vaults of the Heavens, and gazing on the earth, they beheld with amazement the First-born of all creation brought forth as a suckling babe to the Temple by a pure and virginal mother; and with us, they now do sing a hymn for the Forefeast, astonished and full of awe.

## أبوليتيكيون تقدمة العيد باللحن الأوَّل

لَقَدْ أَشْرَفَتِ المَصافَّاتُ السَماويّةُ من القَناطِرِ السَماويَّةِ مُتَطلِّعَةً علَى الأَرْض، فَنَظرَتْ بِكرَ كُلِّ الخَليقَةِ تَحْمِلُهُ إلى الهَيكَلِ طِفْلاً رَضِيعاً أُمٌّ لَمْ تَعْرِفْ رَجُلاً، فَدَهِشَتْ تُرتِلُ مَعَنا لِتَقْدِمةِ العِيدِ تَرتِيلاً رَهِيباً.

## 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 FOREFEAST IN TONE FOUR

On this day doth Simeon receive with gladness God, the giver of the Law; and he doth cry to Him in fear: Let me depart now, O Master Christ, for I have seen Thee, the glory of Israel.

## قِنداق تقدمة العيد باللحن الرابع

اليومَ يَتَقَبَّلُ سمعانُ بفرحِ الربَّ المعطيَ الناموس، ويصرُخُ إليهِ بخوفٍ، أطلِقْني الآنَ، أيها المسيحُ السيد، لأني رأيتُكَ يا مجدَ إسرائيل.

## THE EPISTLE

*Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us.*
*Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.*

**The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to St. Timothy. (3:10-15)**

My son Timothy, you have followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings, what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra. What persecutions I endured! And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Indeed all who would live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But people who are wicked and deceivers will proceed from worse to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and how from infancy you have known the sacred temple writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

## الرسالة

*لِتَكُن يا ربُّ رَحْمَتُكَ عَلَيْنا.*
*إبْتَهِجوا أيُّها الصِدّيقونَ بالرَّبّ.*

**فَصْلٌ مِنْ رِسالَةِ القِدّيسِ بولُسَ الرَّسولِ الثانية إلى تيموثاوس. (3:10-15)**

يا وَلَدي تيموثاوسَ، إنَّكَ قَدِ اسْتَقْرَيتَ تَعْليمي، وسِيرَتي، وقَصْدِي، وإيماني، وأنَاتِي، وَمَحبَّتي، وصَبري، واضْطهاداتي، وآلامي، وما أصَابني في إنطاكِيَة وأيقونيةَ ولِسترَةَ، وأيَّةَ اضْطهاداتٍ احْتَمَلْتُ،

وقَدْ أنْقذَني الرَّبُّ مِنْ جَميعِها. وجَميعُ الذينَ يُريدونَ أَنْ يَعيشوا بالتَقْوى في المَسيحِ يسوعَ يُضْطَهَدونَ. أمّا الأَشْرارُ والمُغْوُونَ مِنَ الناسِ، فَيَزْدادونَ شَرّاً، مُضِلّينَ ومُضَلَّينَ. فَاسْتَمِرَّ أَنْتَ على ما تَعَلَّمْتَهُ وأَيْقَنْتَ بِهِ، عالِماً مِمَّن تَعَلَّمْتَ، وأَنَّكَ مُنْذُ الطُّفولِيَّةِ تَعْرِفُ الكُتُبَ المُقَدَّسَةَ القادِرَةَ أَنْ تُصَيِّرَكَ حَكيماً لِلْخَلاصِ بالإيمانِ بالمسيحِ يسوع.

## THE GOSPEL

**The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (18:10-14)**

The Lord spoke this parable: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other men, extortionists, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to Heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

## الإنجيل

**فَصْلٌ شَريفٌ مِنْ بِشارَةِ القِدّيسِ لوقا الإنْجيلِيّ البَشير، والتلْميذِ الطاهِر. (18:10-14)**

قالَ الرَّبُّ هَذا المَثَل: إنْسانانِ صَعِدا إلى الهَيْكَلِ ليُصَلّيا، أَحَدُهُما فَرّيسِيٌّ والآخَرُ عَشَّارٌ. فَكانَ الفَرّيسِيُّ واقِفاً يُصَلّي في نَفْسِهِ هَكَذا، "اللَّهُمَّ إنّي أَشْكُرُكَ لِأَنّي لَسْتُ كَسائِرِ الناسِ الخَطَفَةِ، الظالمينَ، الفاسِقينَ، ولا مِثْلَ هَذا العشَّار. فإنّي أَصُومُ في الأسبوعِ مَرَّتَيْنِ، وأُعَشِّرُ كُلَّ ما هُوَ لي." أمَّا العَشَّارُ فَوَقَفَ عَنْ بُعْدٍ، ولَمْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يَرْفَعَ عَيْنَيْهِ إلى السَّماءِ، بَلْ كانَ يَقْرَعُ صَدْرَهُ قائِلاً، "اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْني أنا الخاطِئَ." أَقولُ لَكُمْ، إنَّ هَذا نَزَلَ إلى بَيْتِهِ مُبَرَّراً دونَ ذاكَ. لأنَّ كُلَّ مَن رَفَعَ نَفْسَهُ اتَّضَعَ، ومَنْ وَضَعَ نَفْسَهُ ارتَفَع.

# 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 Parish Council members; Bassam Khoury, Sana Eideh, Jad Bateh, Johnny Khamis, Maher Fasheh, Linda Salah, Jake Timothy, Henry Veizades and their families. Many Years! Edmund Khinno, Sal Hanhan, Rima Gannage (replacing Jad Bteh for one year, Roula , Salem

**OFFERED BY**: Michel and Rima Gannage for the good health of the Gannage and Smine families. Many Years!

**OFFERED BY**: Manal, Tanya, Rema and their families for the good health of Spir and Jehan Batmani on the occasion of their 57$^{th}$ wedding anniversary (Jan 21). For the good health of the Batmani, Bari, Sunstrum and Joseph families. Many Years!

**OFFERED BY**: Mitch and Maria Segal on the occasion of their birthdays (Jan 29 & 31) and the good health of the Segal, McCrea and Snowden families. Many Years!

**OFFERED BY**: François and Maya Haddad for the good health of their son Marc on the occasion of his birthday (Feb 2), and the good health of their daughter Mila and the Haddad and Matar families. Many Years!

**OFFERED BY**: Robert and Claudia Mackoul for the good health of their children Jaden and Julia on the occasion of their birthday (Feb 2), and the good health of the Machoul family. Many Years!

**OFFERED BY**: Michel and Rima Gannage in memory of Rima's Mother, Wadad Smine. Memory Eternal!

**OFFERED BY**: Mitch and Maria Segal in memory of their beloved son Andrew. Memory Eternal!

**COFFEE HOUR**

Offered By: Rima Gannage

*(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.

## PARISH COUNCIL 2026

The Parish Council members' of 2026. Bassam Khoury, Linda Salah, Maher Fasheh, Sana Eideh, Johnny Khamis, Jake Timothy, Henry Veizades, Edmund Khinno, Sal Hanhan and Rima Gannage (Will replace Jad Bateh for one year). Roula Haddad will represent the Antiochian Women Committee and Salem Aweiss will represent the Men Fellowship Committee.

***There will be Installation of the new members of the parish council this Sunday before Communion. Officers' elections will take place after the Divine Liturgy.***

## 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), Diana Khoury (Myrrh Barrier), 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.

## *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.

# SPECIAL BLESSINGS FOR THE BOYS

## February 2: The Presentation of our Lord in the Temple

Forty Days after the birth of Jesus, Mary and Joseph took him to Jerusalem to the Temple, there to present him in Thanksgiving to God. It was a law that the first born son of a family should be offered to God and his service, as soon as a period of purification was past. This custom has continued down to our own day for both male and female children and every mother who brings her new-born child to Church on the 40th day is remembering the Presentation of the Lord Jesus. The Story of Christ's Presentation is told in the Gospel (Luke 2:22-40).

*Said or sung:*
You, O Lord, Who are the Lover of man, were brought into the temple and shown forth the light of revelation to the Gentiles. Let us rejoice along with the Virgin Theotokos from whom shone the Sun of Righteousness enlightening those who sat in darkness. Let us rejoice with the righteous elder, Simeon, who accepted in his arms the Redeemer of our souls.

Let us pray to the Lord . . . . . Lord, have mercy.

O God, our heavenly Father, who loves mankind, and are most merciful and compassionate, have mercy upon Your servants, these boys, who are being presented, for whom I humbly pray You, and commend to Your gracious care and protection. Be, O God, their guide and guardian in all their endeavors, lead them in the path of your truth and draw them nearer to you, that they may lead a godly and righteous life in your love and fear doing your will in all things. Give them grace that they may be temperate, industrious, diligent, devout and charitable. Defend them against the assaults of the enemy, and grant them wisdom and strength to resist all temptation and corruption of this life: and direct them in the way of salvation through the merits of Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, and intercessions of His Holy Mother and Thy blessed saints. Amen.

## 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 8th**, 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 29:*** *Sunday School Open House*
- ***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*

# Apologetic Theology Today

*By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

The discipline (science) of theology is divided into several fields. Instruction in the faith that focuses on Holy Scripture is called biblical theology; instruction concerned with doctrine is called dogmatic theology; and so forth. Instruction in the faith that confronts erroneous concepts or teachings, responds to heresies and distortions, or clarifies the nature and essence of the right faith is called apologetic theology.

The Christian Church has known apologetic theology since its very beginnings. From the apostolic age, especially in the second century, the Church found itself facing many challenges: prevailing religions, heresies and false teachings, moral deviations contrary to the Gospel, and even false accusations. This compelled the Church to clarify the true teaching, defend the Christian faith, and present it as it truly is. Moreover, Christianity's missionary nature required that the faith be explained in light of the religious and philosophical concepts of the time. This is what the Apostle Paul did when he "spoke to the Jews and the devout persons in the synagogue, and daily in the marketplace to those who happened to be there" (Acts 17:17). We recall, for example, how he addressed the people of Athens and even quoted their poets.

Many Christian thinkers played a major role in developing apologetic theology. Presenting the Christian faith to the world was one of the reasons for the writing of the New Testament itself. This also explains why there are four Gospels: each presents the Gospel to a particular audience, addressing them according to their culture. Matthew the Evangelist, writing for Christians of Jewish background, frequently cited the Old Testament to show its fulfillment in Jesus. Mark, addressing Christians in Rome, made no reference to the Old Testament, since they were unfamiliar with it, but focused instead on Christ's power and miracles more than on His teaching, in keeping with the Roman understanding of the relationship between divinity and power. The letters of the Apostle Paul are likewise filled with explanations as well as responses to questions and incorrect practices that arose in newly founded churches.

Very quickly, the world began to attack the new faith, distorting its image or misunderstanding it. At the same time, many who attempted to present and explain Christianity were unsuccessful, falling into heresies or being influenced by prevailing philosophies. This made it necessary to refute false teachings and

to preserve the Christian faith from heresy and error. For this reason, the first Apostolic Council was convened (Acts 15), addressing the question of whether converts from paganism were required first to observe the Mosaic Law. From that point on, councils became a tradition in the Church, and it was understood that the Church is conciliar (synodal), a term derived from the Greek meaning "to walk together."

The need to strengthen the faith of Christians, to invite non-Christians to enter the faith, and to engage both prevailing philosophies and the accusations leveled against Christians and their worship played a major role in the flourishing of apologetic theology and engaging in dialogue with others.

Beginning in the second century, theologians who wrote in defense of the faith came to be known as the Apologists: among them, Justin the Philosopher (Martyr), Aristides, Quadratus, Athenagoras, and Origen. There has never been a time, after Christianity spread throughout the inhabited world, when such defenders were lacking. The Church has always needed to address the world in which it lives, to engage it in dialogue, and to strengthen believers in their faith.

Christians acted in accordance with the words of the Apostle Peter: "Always be ready to give a reasoned answer to anyone who asks you about the hope that is within you" (1 Peter 3:15). They did not hesitate, withdraw into themselves, or fear engaging others in dialogue. Nor did they fear studying the surrounding culture and acquiring the skills needed to use it in presenting the Christian faith, or even adapting it so that the faith might be expressed clearly and intelligibly to those to whom the Fathers of the Church proclaimed it.

Christian apologists drew upon the culture of their time, making use of history and its evidence, philosophy and its arguments, science and its theories, preaching, rhetoric, dialogue, and every means available to them. A well-known modern example of our own era is the work of C.S. Lewis in twentieth-century Britain.

As long as the Church exists, and as long as the world exists, apologetic theology will continue to exist. It is the Church's responsibility to preserve the faith, proclaim it, strengthen believers in it, and engage both those who doubt it and those who oppose it.

In our present age, where borders have fallen and the world has become a single electronic village, challenges have become largely shared across the globe, though with varying intensity from one region to another. This has made it

necessary for churches to exchange experiences, especially regarding contemporary challenges of faith and ethics.

Today, we observe, in many religions, a tendency to withdraw from engagement with the modern world and to limit faith to its practice and repetition, relying on an uncritical recycling of inherited legacies. Groups have emerged here and there that read the Church's tradition literally, outside its context, and reject dialogue with the sciences and other cultures. Meanwhile, the world moves on with or without us, and vast numbers of people, especially young people, need a presentation of the faith explained in their own language and cultural framework. This has always been available within the Church. It is precisely the approach taken by the Holy Fathers of the Church, whose teachings are today often distorted by some who claim to follow them.

There are unavoidable questions that must be asked. Why is there such fear of modernity that it leads to cutting off dialogue with those who think differently from us? Why do we unconsciously replace the principle of "Scripture alone" with "the Holy Fathers alone," and thus fall into a literalism that ignores the circumstances, motives, and needs that shaped specific teachings? Why do we act as though the Holy Spirit has ceased to work in the Church? Why do we not learn from the great Fathers of the Church how to understand the culture of our time, so that we may dialogue with it, defend our faith, and proclaim it using tools that help others grasp it as it truly is? Why, for example, was the Apostle Paul able to quote pagan poets in his sermon in Athens? Why did the Holy Fathers adapt the concept "of one essence" (homoousios) to serve the Christian faith, while many today reject contemporary theological readings despite their faithfulness to doctrine? And finally, why do some today present the faith only through aggressive comparison with others?

In an age of dialogue, why do we refuse dialogue? This is a question addressed to all believers.

# في اللاهوت الدفاعي حاضراً

بقلم المطران سابا (اسبر)

يتوزّع علم اللاهوت على حقول عدّة. فالتعليم الإيماني المختصّ بالكتاب المقدّس يُسمى لاهوتاً كتابياً، والمختصّ بالعقيدة لاهوتاً عقائدياً أو عقدياً وهكذا. أمّا التعليم الإيماني الذي يتصدّى لمفاهيم أو تعاليم إيمانية خاطئة، أو يواجه البدع والهرطقات، أو يوضح ماهية وجوهر الإيمان المستقيم فيُسمى لاهوتاً دفاعياً.

عرفت الكنيسة المسيحية اللاهوت الدفاعي منذ بدء تأسيسها. فمنذ العصر الرسولي، ومع القرن الثاني الميلادي بخاصّةٍ، وجدت المسيحية نفسها في مواجهة جبهات عديدة كالديانات السائدة والبدع والهرطقات والانحرافات الإيمانية والأخلاق المتعارضة مع الإنجيل والاتهامات الكاذبة، ممّا اضطّرها تالياً إلى تبيان التعليم القويم والدفاع عن الإيمان المسيحي وإظهاره على حقيقته. كما أنّ طبيعة المسيحية التبشيرية دفعت إلى شرح الإيمان المسيحي على ضوء المفاهيم الدينية والفلسفية السائدة. هذا ما فعله بولس الرسول الذي كان "يخاطب اليهود والمتعّبدين في المجمع، ومن يلقاهم كلّ يوم في ساحة المدينة". لنتذكّر، على سبيل المثال، كيف خاطب أهل أثينا واستشهد ببعض شعرائهم (أع ١٧: ١٧).

لعب العديد من المفكّرين المسيحيين دوراً بارزاً في تطوير اللاهوت الدفاعي. تقديم الإيمان المسيحي للعالم كان أحد أسباب كتابة العهد الجديد، وهو ما يفسّر أسباب وجود أربع نسخ لبشارة المسيح؛ حيث اهتمّت كلّ نسخة بتقديم هذه البشارة لفئة من الناس مخاطبة إيّاهم بحسب ثقافتهم. فمتّى الإنجيلي، الذي وجّه كتابه إلى المسيحيين من أصل يهودي، أورد استشهادات كثيرة من العهد القديم كي يثبت تحقّقها في يسوع. أمّا مرقس، الذي وجّهه إلى مسيحيي مدينة روما، فلم يذكر شيئاً من العهد القديم لأنّهم لا يعرفونه، بل اهتّم بإظهار قوّة يسوع ومعجزاته أكثر من تعليمه، وهو ما يتناسب مع فهم الرومان آنذاك للعلاقة القائمة بين الآلهة والقوة. أمّا رسائل بولس الرسول فتَحْفَل بشروح وأجوبة على أسئلة كثيرة أو ممارسات خاطئة كانت تحصل في الكنائس الناشئة حديثاً.

سرعان ما بدأ العالم يهاجم الإيمان الجديد، مشوّهاً صورته، أو فاهماً إيّاه بطريقة خاطئة. كذلك لم يوفَّق كثيرون في مسعاهم إلى تقديم الإيمان الجديد وشرحه، فوقعوا في الهرطقات وتأثروا بالفلسفات السائدة، ما دعا إلى تفنيد هذه التعاليم الخاطئة وحفظ الإيمان المسيحي من الهرطقات والبدع. هذا ما دعا إلى انعقاد المجمع الرسولي الأوّل (أع ١٥)، الذي واجه مسألة مطالبة المهتدين من الوثنية إلى المسيحية بتطبيق ناموس موسى أوّلاً. مذ ذاك صار انعقاد المجمع تقليداً في الكنيسة المسيحية، وعُرف أنّ الكنيسة مجمعية (سينودُسية) والكلمة من اليونانية وتعني "السير معاً."

لعبت الحاجة إلى تثبيت إيمان المسيحيين، ودعوة غير المسيحيين إلى الدخول في الإيمان المسيحي، والتعاطي مع الفلسفات السائدة والتهم التي أُلصقت بالمسيحيين وعباداتهم، دوراً مهمّاً في ازدهار اللاهوت الدفاعي، والدخول في حوار مع الآخرين.

سُمي اللاهوتيون الذين كتبوا، لاهوتاً دفاعياً، بدءاً من القرن الثاني، بالآباء المدافعين، مثل يوستينوس الفيلسوف وأريستيذس وكوارتوس وأثيناغوراس وأوريجانوس. ولم يخلو زمنٌ من هؤلاء المدافعين من بعد انتشار المسيحية في أرجاء المسكونة، وحاجتها إلى مخاطبة العالم الذي تعيش فيه والحوار معه وتثبيت المسيحيين في إيمانهم.

عمل المسيحيون بكلمة بطرس الرسول: "كونوا دائماً مستعدين لأن تقّدموا جواباً مقنعاً لكلّ من يسألكم عن سبب الرجاء الذي في داخلكم" (١ بط ٣:١٥). لم يتردّدوا أو ينغلقوا على أنفسهم أو يخافوا من مواجهة الآخرين والدخول في حوار معهم أو من در .اسة الثقافة العالمية، واكتساب مهارة استخدامها في تقديم الإيمان المسيحي، أو تطويعها للتعبير عنه بشكل دقيق ومفهوم من قِبَل الذين يقدّم لهم آباء الكنيسة إيمانَهم المسيحي.

استعان الدفاعيون المسيحيون بالثقافة السائدة، فاستخدموا التاريخ وأدّلته، والفلسفة وحججها، والعلوم ونظرياتها، والوعظ والخطابة والحوار، وغيرها مما استطاعوا إليه سبيلاً. لعلّ كتابات س. إس. لويس في بريطانيا القرن العشرين شاهد معاصر معروف جيداً لدى أبناء زمننا.

طالما أنّ الكنيسة موجودة وكذلك العالم فسيستمر اللاهوت الدفاعي في الوجود. فواجب الكنيسة أن تحفظ الإيمان وتبّشر به وتثّبت المؤمنين فيه وتحاور المشكّكين به والمعادين له.

في زمننا الحالي الذي سقطت فيه الحدود وصار العالم قرية الكترونية واحدة، صارت التحديات شبه واحدة في كلّ العالم، ولكن على تفاوت شديد أو ضعيف بين منطقة وأخرى. هذا ما جعل الكنائس بحاجة إلى تبادل الخبرات في شأن بعض التحديات الإيمانية والأخلاقية بخاصّة.

يُلاحَظ حالياً، في معظم الديانات، حركةُ انكفاء عن مواجهة العالم الحالي والاكتفاء بممارسة الإيمان وعيشه وعرضه باجترار ما وصلنا في التراث. ثمّة جماعات تتكّون هنا وهناك تقرأ تراث الكنيسة حرفياً، خارج سياقه، وترفض الحوار مع العلوم والثقافات الأخرى. فيما العالم يجري فينا ومن دوننا، باتت أعداد هائلة من الناس والشبيبة بخاصّة بحاجةٍ إلى خطاب وشرح الإيمان باستخدام لغتهم وثقافتهم. وهو ما كان متوفراً في الكنيسة دائماً. وهذا ما اتّبعه آباء الكنيسة الذين يتعّرضون اليوم إلى تشويه تعاليمهم من قِبل الذين ينادون بهم أيضاً.

ثمّة أسئلة، في هذا المجال، لا بد من طرحها. لماذا الخوف من الحداثة وما فيها إلى درجة مقاطعة الآخر الذي لا يقول قولنا؟ لماذا نستبدل دونما وعي مبدأ "الكتاب وحده" بمبدأ "الآباء وحدهم"، ونقع تالياً في التفسير الحرفي الذي لا يأخذ بالاعتبار الظرف والدافع والحاجة الذي صاغ تعليماً محدداً؟ لماذا نتصرّف وكأنّ الروح القدس قد توقف عن العمل في الكنيسة؟ لماذا لا نتعلّم من آباء الكنيسة الكبار معرفة ثقافة زمننا جيداً، حتّى نحاورها وندافع عن إيماننا ونبّشر به، ممتلكين الأدوات التي تساعد الآخرين على أن يفهموه على حقيقته؟ لماذا، على سبيل المثال لا الحصر، استطاع بولس الرسول الاستشهاد بشعراء وثنيين في خطبته في أثينا؟ ولماذا طوّع الآباء القدّيسون مفهوم "من نفس الجوهر" (أوموأوسيوس) ليخدم الإيمان المسيحي، بينما يرفض كثيرون قراءات إيمانية معاصرة على الرغم من أمانتها للعقيدة؟ وأخيراً، لماذا لا يعرض بعضهم اليوم الإيمان إلا بمقارنة هجومية على الآخرين.

في عصر الحوار، لماذا لا نقبل الحوار؟ سؤال برسم جميع المؤمنين.

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).

## Please join the Orthodox Church of the Redeemer for an in-person discussion with Mother Agapia

# CHRISTIANS IN PALESTINE

Mother Agapia's connection to the Holy Land spans over many years. Her voice carries the weight of lived experience, the intimate truths that never make headlines, and the moral clarity that only emerges from proximity. She reminds us that the Palestinian people's struggle is spiritual, cultural and profoundly human.

**Stories & Conversation**
**Followed by Refreshments**

Mother Agapia, Orthodox nun, St. Nicholas Convent (ROCA) located in Owego, New York.

RSVP (Free Event)

**Thursday, Feb 5th at 6:30 pm**
**Orthodox Church of the Redeemer**
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# BUILDING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER
## End-of-Year Campaign Update

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- Raised: $3.5M for the new hall & learning center
- County requirements nearly complete
- Promising discussions with school operators
- Goal: Break ground by mid-2026
- Remaining need: **$750,000** for loan approval

If you are able, please consider an end-of-year tax-deductible gift to support our parish's future.

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