



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

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APRIL 19, 2026

**New Sunday or Anti-Pascha
Sunday of Thomas the Apostle, Called "The Twin"**

Hieromartyr Paphnoutios of Jerusalem; Tryphon, patriarch of
Constantinople

قُداس الأحد الجديد، أحد الرسولِ توما الرسولِ الذي يُقالُ له التَّوأم

THE FIRST ANTIPHON

Shout with joy to God, all the earth; sing to His Name, give glory to His praises.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Say to God: How awesome are Thy works; let all the earth worship Thee, and sing to Thee. Glory... Both now...

الأنتيفونا الأولى

هَلِّلُوا لِلَّهِ يَا جَمِيعَ الْأَرْضِ، رَتِّلُوا لِاسْمِهِ أَعْطُوا مَجْدًا لِتَسْبِيحَتِهِ.
بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِي، يَا مُخَلِّصُ خَلْصَنَا.
قُولُوا لِلَّهِ مَا أَرْهَبَ أَعْمَالِكَ، كُلُّ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَسْجُدُونَ لَكَ وَيُرْتَلُونَ لِاسْمِكَ
أَيُّهَا الْعَلِيِّ.
... الْمَجْدُ ... الْآنَ وَكُلَّ أَوَانٍ

THE SECOND ANTIPHON

May God have mercy upon us, and bless us, and may He cause His face to shine upon us, and have mercy upon us.

Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead; who sing to Thee.

Alleluia.

That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy salvation among all nations; let the people give thanks to Thee, O God, let all the people give thanks to Thee.

May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear Him.

Glory... Both now... O, only begotten Son and Word of God...

الأنتيفونا الثانية

لِيَسْرَأَفِ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَيُبَارِكُنَا، وَلِيُبْصِرَ بَوَجْهِهِ عَلَيْنَا وَيَرْحَمَنَا.
خَلْصَنَا يَا ابْنَ اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنَ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، لِنُرْتِّلَ لَكَ. هَلِّلُوبِيَا.
لِنُعْتَرِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ طَرِيقَكَ وَفِي جَمِيعِ الْأُمَمِ خَلَاصَكَ. تَعْتَرِفُ لَكَ الشُّعُوبُ يَا
اللَّهُ تَعْتَرِفُ لَكَ.
لِيُبَارِكُنَا اللَّهُ الْهَنَا، وَلِيُرْهِبَهُ جَمِيعُ أَقَاصِي الْأَرْضِ.
... الْمَجْدُ ... الْآنَ وَكُلَّ أَوَانٍ ... يَا كَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ، الْإِبْنَ الْوَحِيدِ

THE THIRD ANTIPHON

Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered, and let those who hate Him flee from before His face.

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death; and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life!

As smoke vanisheth, so let them vanish; as wax melteth before the fire.

So let sinners perish at the presence of God, and let the righteous be glad.

This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein.

الأنبغونا الثالثة

لِيُقْمِ اللَّهُ وَيَبَدِّدَ جَمِيعَ أَعْدَائِهِ، وَيَهْرُبُ مُبْغُضُوهُ مِنْ أَمَامِ وَجْهِهِ.
الْمَسِيحُ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، وَوَطِئَ الْمَوْتَ بِالْمَوْتِ، وَوَهَبَ الْحَيَاةَ لِلَّذِينَ
فِي الْقُبُورِ. كَمَا يَذُوبُ الشَّمْعُ مِنْ أَمَامِ وَجْهِ النَّارِ. كَذَلِكَ تَهْلِكُ
الْخَطَاةُ مِنْ أَمَامِ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ، وَالصَّادِقُونَ يَفْرَحُونَ وَيَتَهَلَّلُونَ أَمَامَ اللَّهِ،
وَيَتَعَمَّرُونَ بِالسُّرُورِ.
هَذَا هُوَ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي صَنَعَهُ الرَّبُّ، لِنَفْرَحُ وَنَتَهَلَّلَ بِهِ.

THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF PASCHA

In the gathering places bless ye God the Lord, from the springs of Israel. Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

إبصوديكون (ترنمة الدخول) لخدمة الفصح

فِي الْمَجَامِعِ بَارِكُوا اللَّهَ، الرَّبَّ مِنْ يَنَابِعِ إِسْرَائِيلَ. خَلِّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ
قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، لِتُرْتَلَّ لَكَ. هَلِّلُوبَا.

APOLYTIKION FOR THOMAS SUNDAY IN TONE SEVEN

While the tomb was sealed, Thou didst shine forth from it, O Life. While the doors were closed, Thou didst come in to Thy Disciples, O Christ God, Resurrection of all, renewing in us through them an upright spirit, according to the greatness of Thy mercy.

أبوليتيكون أحد توما باللحن السابع

إِذْ كَانَ الْقَبْرُ مَخْتُومًا، أَشْرَفْتَ مِنْهُ أَيُّهَا الْحَيَاةُ. وَلَمَّا كَانَتِ الْأَبْوَابُ
مُعْلَقَةً، وَإِقْبَتِ التَّلَامِيذُ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ، قِيَامَةُ الْكُلِّ. وَجَدَدْتَ لَنَا بِهِمْ رُوحًا
مُسْتَقِيمًا بِحَسَبِ عَظِيمِ رَحْمَتِكَ.

KONTAKION OF PASCHA IN TONE EIGHT

Though Thou didst descend into the grave, O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the power of Hades, and didst arise as victor, O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing women, Rejoice, and giving peace unto Thine Apostles, O Thou Who dost grant resurrection to the fallen.

قنِداق الفصح على اللحن الثامن

وَلَيْنُ كُنْتَ تَرَلْتِ إِلَى قَبْرِ يَا مَنْ لَا يَمُوتُ، إِلَّا أَنْكَ دَرَسْتَ قُوَّةَ الْجَحِيمِ، وَقُفْمَتْ
غَالِبًا أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ، وَلِلنَّسُوءِ حَامِلَاتِ الطَّيْبِ قُلْتَ "أَفْرَحْنَ!"، وَلِرُسُلِكَ
وَهَبْتَ السَّلَامَ، يَا مَانِحَ الْوَاقِعِينَ الْقِيَامَ.

THE EPISTLE

.Great is our Lord, and great is His strength

.Praise ye the Lord, for the Lord is good

The Reading from the Acts of the Holy Apostles. (5:12-20)

In those days, many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. None of the rest dared to join them, but the people magnified them. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the cities around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the chief priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the sect of the Sadducees, and filled with jealousy they laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said: "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life

الرسالة

عَظِيمٌ هُوَ رَبُّنَا وَعَظِيمَةٌ هِيَ قُوَّتُهُ. سَبَّحُوا الرَّبَّ قَائِمَةً صَالِحًا.

فَضْلٌ مِنْ أَعْمَالِ الرُّسُلِ الْقِدِّيسِينَ الْأَطْهَارِ.

في تلك الأيام، جَرَتْ عَلَى أَيْدِي الرُّسُلِ آيَاتٌ وَعَجَائِبٌ كَثِيرَةٌ فِي الشَّعْبِ. وكانوا كُلُّهُمْ يَتَفَسَّسُونَ وَاحِدَةً فِي رِوَاقِ سُلَيْمَانَ. وَلَمْ يَكُنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الْآخَرِينَ يَجْتَرِئُ أَنْ يُخَالِطَهُمْ، لَكِنْ كَانَ الشَّعْبُ يُعْظَمُهُمْ. وَكَانَ جَمَاعَاتٌ مِنْ رِجَالٍ وَنِسَاءٍ يَنْصَمُونَ بِكَثْرَةٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ بِالرَّبِّ. حَتَّى إِنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوا يَخْرُجُونَ بِالْمَرْضَى إِلَى الشُّوَارِعِ، وَيَضَعُونَهُمْ عَلَى فُرْشٍ وَأَسِرَّةٍ، لِيَقَعَ وَلَوْ ظَلَّ بُطْرُسَ، عِنْدَ اجْتِيَازِهِ، عَلَى بَعْضِ مِنْهُمْ. وَكَانَ يَجْتَمِعُ أَيْضًا إِلَى أورشليمِ جُمُهورُ المَدُنِ التي حَوْلَهَا، يَحْمِلُونَ مَرْضَى وَمُعَدِّبِينَ مِنْ أَرْوَاحِ نَجِسَةٍ، فَكَانُوا يُشْفَوْنَ جَمِيعُهُمْ. فَقامَ رَئيسُ الكَهَنَةِ وَكُلُّ الَّذِينَ مَعَهُ، وَهُمْ مِنْ شِيعَةِ الصِّدُوقِيِّينَ، وَامْتَلَأُوا عَيْرَةً. فَأَلْقَوْا أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَلَى الرُّسُلِ وَجَعَلُوهُمْ فِي الحَبْسِ العامِّ. فَفَتَحَ ملائِكَةُ الرَّبِّ أَبْوابَ السِّجْنِ لَيْلاً، وَأَخْرَجَهُمْ، وَقَالَ: امْضُوا وَقِفُوا فِي الهَيْكَلِ، وَكَلِّمُوا الشَّعْبَ بِجَمِيعِ كَلِمَاتِ هَذِهِ الحَيَاةِ.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (20:19-31)

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be to you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be to you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in His side, I will not believe." Eight days later, His disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be to you." Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in My side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus said to him, "Thomas, you have believed because you have seen Me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His Name.

الإنجيل المقدس

**فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بِيَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ يُوْحَنَّا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتَّلْمِيذِ
الطَّاهِرِ. (31-19:20)**

لَمَّا كَانَتْ عَشِيَّةُ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ، وَهُوَ أَوَّلُ الْأَسْبُوعِ وَالْأَبْوَابِ مُغْلَقَةً حَيْثُ كَانَ التَّلَامِيذُ مُجْتَمِعِينَ خَوْفًا مِنَ الْيَهُودِ، جَاءَ يَسُوعُ وَوَقَفَ فِي الْوَسْطِ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ: "السَّلَامُ لَكُمْ". فَلَمَّا قَالَ هَذَا أَرَاهُمْ يَدَيْهِ وَجَنْبَهُ، فَفَرِحَ التَّلَامِيذُ حِينَ أَبْصَرُوا الرَّبَّ. وَقَالَ لَهُمْ ثَانِيَةً: "السَّلَامُ لَكُمْ، كَمَا أَرْسَلَنِي الْآبُ كَذَلِكَ أَنَا أُرْسِلُكُمْ". وَلَمَّا قَالَ هَذَا تَفَحَّ فِيهِمْ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ: "خُذُوا الرُّوحَ الْقُدُسَ. مَنْ عَفَرْتُمْ خَطَايَاهُمْ تُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ وَمَنْ أَمْسَكْتُمْ خَطَايَاهُمْ أُمْسِكْتُمْ". أَمَّا تُوْمَا أَحَدُ الْإِثْنَيْ عَشَرَ الَّذِي يُقَالُ لَهُ التَّوَامُ فَلَمْ يَكُنْ مَعَهُمْ حِينَ جَاءَ يَسُوعُ، فَقَالَ لَهُ التَّلَامِيذُ الْآخَرُونَ "إِنَّا قَدْ رَأَيْنَا الرَّبَّ"، فَقَالَ لَهُمْ: "إِنْ لَمْ أَعَيْنُ أَثَرِ الْمَسَامِيرِ فِي يَدَيْهِ، وَأَصَعُ إِصْبَعِي فِي أَثَرِ الْمَسَامِيرِ، وَأَصَعُ يَدِي فِي جَنْبِهِ لَا أُوْمِنُ". وَبَعْدَ ثَمَانِيَةِ أَيَّامٍ كَانَ تَّلَامِيذُهُ أَيْضًا دَاخِلًا وَتُوْمَا مَعَهُمْ، فَاتَى يَسُوعُ وَالْأَبْوَابُ مُغْلَقَةً وَوَقَفَ فِي الْوَسْطِ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ: "السَّلَامُ لَكُمْ"، ثُمَّ قَالَ لِتُوْمَا: "هَاتِ إِصْبَعَكَ إِلَى هَهُنَا وَعَيْنُ يَدِي، وَهَاتِ يَدَكَ وَصَعْهَا فِي جَنْبِي، وَلَا تَكُنْ غَيْرَ مُؤْمِنٍ بَلْ مُؤْمِنًا". أَجَابَ تُوْمَا وَقَالَ لَهُ: "رَبِّي وَإِلَهِي". قَالَ لَهُ يَسُوعُ: "لَئِنَّكَ رَأَيْتَنِي يَا تُوْمَا آمَنْتَ؟ طُوبَى لِلَّذِينَ لَمْ يَرَوْا وَآمَنُوا". وَأَيَّاتٍ أُخْرَى كَثِيرَةً صَنَعَ يَسُوعُ أَمَّا تَّلَامِيذُهُ لَمْ تُكْتَبْ فِي هَذَا الْكِتَابِ. وَأَمَّا هَذِهِ، فَقَدْ كُتِبَتْ لِتُوْمِنُوا بِأَنَّ يَسُوعَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ، وَلِكَيْ تَكُونَ لَكُمْ، إِذَا آمَنْتُمْ، حَيَاةً بِاسْمِهِ.

MEGALYNARION FOR THOMAS SUNDAY IN TONE ONE

O most radiant lamp, the Theotokos, the immeasurable honor, which is more exalted than all creatures, with praises do we magnify thee.

تعطيمة أحد توما باللحن الأول
أَيُّهَا الْمِصْبَاحُ السَّاطِعُ الصِّيَاءِ وَأُمُّ الْإِلَهِ، وَالشَّرْفُ الَّذِي لَا قِيَاسَ لَهُ، الْأَرْقُعُ مِنَ
الْخَلَائِقِ جَمِيعِهَا، بِالتَّسَابِيحِ لَكَ تُعْظَمُ.

KOINONIKON (COMMUNION HYMN) OF THOMAS SUNDAY

(Psalm 147:1)

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. Alleluia.

كينونيكون (ترنيمه المناولة) لأحد توما
سَبِّحِي يَا أُورُشَلِيمُ الرَّبَّ، سَبِّحِي إِلَهَكَ يَا صِهْيُونَ. هَلِّلُوبِيَا.



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: Nickitas and Narimane Panayotou for the good health of their son Nino on the occasion of his birthday (April 14) and the good health of their son Troy and the Panayotou family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Maya Houcheime, Gabrielle, and Luka Hage for the good health of husband and father, Samuel Hage, on the occasion of his birthday (April 15th) and the good health of the Hage, Houcheime, Matar, Mapar, Farah, Lahoud, Nacol, Bechara and Moujaes families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Elaine Bateh for the good health of her husband Jad on the occasion of his birthday (April 15) and the good health of Michael, Jennifer, Shanyn, Zach, Sophia, Penelope, Emerson and the Bateh, Hanna, Jacobs and Elserougi families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Elias and Wardia Hanani, Bachar, Serafina, and Serena Alhadad for the good health of Norma Hanani on the occasion of her birthday

(April 17), and the good health of the Alhadad and Hanani families. Many Years!



COFFEE HOUR

Offered By: Marisa Filfli

(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)

*We are excited to announce that our Annual Middle Eastern Food Festival will take place on **September 12 & 13, 2026**, led by our co-chairs, Suleiman Araj and Janna Dughman.*

We are also pleased to introduce this year's Food Festival Raffle Prizes:

- **Grand Prize:** Tesla Model 3
- **Second Prize:** Two Round-Trip Airline Tickets
- **Third Prize:** \$500 Gift Certificate to Evvia Estiatorio in Palo Alto

Raffle tickets will be available for purchase soon.

Donation: \$50 per ticket or 3 tickets for \$100.

Thank you for your continued support!

Thank You

Many blessings to all our faithful parishioners who contributed so beautifully to the services throughout Great Lent. To all who served, sang, and especially to our beloved chanters and choir—your dedication helped us offer to our Lord the glory and honor due to Him at His Holy Resurrection.

A special thank you to our Parish Council members for organizing the Bright Saturday Celebration Picnic.

May the Risen Christ bless you and your families abundantly.

Christ is Risen!

PARISH COUNCIL 2026

The Parish Council members' of 2026. Chair President; Bassam Khoury, Vice-Chair; Linda Salah, Treasurer; Henry Veizades, Secretary; Rima Gannage, Maher Fasheh, Sana Eideh, Johnny Khamis, Jake Timothy, Edmund Khinno and Sal Hanhan. Roula Haddad 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), 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 Dimitry Youssef (President of the Young Adults in the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West) @ (408)364-5670, 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, Secretary; Mila Haddad, Treasurer; Gabreilla Ajlouni, Social Media Coordinator; Adriana Ajlouni.

Orthodoxy 101 Class

Confession 101 with Fr. Theodore Sakellar and Jake Timothy

Have you ever felt unsure about Confession — how to begin, what to say, or what to expect? You are not alone. This class is truly for everyone: those inquiring into the Orthodox Church, catechumens preparing to be received, and lifelong Orthodox Christians who may feel nervous, rusty, or simply ready to go deeper. Fr. Theodore will walk us through the meaning and practice of Confession, answering our questions with the goal of helping everyone feel comfortable and at peace.

Classes will resume after Bright Week on April 26. Blessed Pascha!



SUNDAY SCHOOL CORNER

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.

Our Sunday school is growing: We're excited to announce that we have added a Preschool Class! Preschoolers are invited to join a class just for them, featuring songs, stories, and age-appropriate activities. Parents are welcome to stay and participate! Please contact Caitlin Timothy, Joselyne Mikhael or Isabelle Achkar with any questions!

Bible Bowl Preparation Season is Open!

If you are interested in participating in this year's Bible Bowl, please join the group in the Church App or message Alia Nystrom about joining the WhatsApp interest group. We will meet via Zoom one night a week to read the book of Exodus and prepare for the Bible Bowl.

If you would just like to read with us or if you are not sure whether you will join the official team, still register your interest!

Open to everyone ages 10 and up.

Bookstore Corner

Our bookstore is open, and new merchandise is arriving each week. Stop by and see what's new!

Book Spotlight: Great Lent by Alexander Schmemmann. This classic book is a spiritual guide to understanding the meaning of Great Lent in the Orthodox Christian tradition, walking through the liturgical journey

Book Club

Book club is now open with our first book; "The Art of Myrrh Bearing". If you enjoy reading and are interested to join the ladies' Book Club, please see Roula B Haddad to purchase the book.

Part One of the book will be discussed on Saturday May 23, 2026, 10:00 AM- 1:00 PM, along with a knitting and crocheting workshop, and a light lunch.

Workshop finished goods will be donated to nearby shelters.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE CHURCH

Please save the date

- **May 23:** *Book Club, Saturday May 23rd @ 10:00 AM*
- **July 1-5:** *2026 Parish Life Conference, PLC in San Diego*
- **July 23-27:** *Camp Three Holy Youths, July 23rd – July 27th @Daybreak Camp, Ben Lomond. <https://campthy.com/camper-registration/>*
- **Food Festival Sept 12 & 13:** *Our Annual Food Festival will be on September 12th & 13th*

The Sanctifying Dimension, Part One

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Ispër)

Once, a woman said to me, with the tone of someone who had just discovered something incredible: “At your request, the parish priest came to our home and offered the Service of the Sanctification of Water. Truly, the evil spirit has left the house, Your Eminence, and we are no longer experiencing strange occurrences.” She had told me that a series of evil events had been taking place in their home, and they did not know the cause. She was not convinced by my answer about the cause—although she is a woman with advanced academic degrees, and she and her husband are deeply committed to their faith and their church.

This is the condition of many people for whom faith has become an ideological, intellectual conviction—mixed with religious practices—while the living sanctifying dimension is absent from their lives, practically rather than merely theoretically.

The sanctifying dimension of life is essential to Christian faith, and it is the Church’s function, especially through the liturgy. That our lives be sanctified does not mean that they are limited only to good deeds and virtuous behavior. This path is certainly necessary for those who believe in the Gospel teachings. But the presence of God and His action in life—His effect upon it, and its transformation into a true fullness from Him—is an indispensable matter of faith, if we desire a truly living faith.

The liturgical dimension is among the foundations of faithful and vibrant Christian living. It is indispensable and cannot be replaced by something else. The world in which we live is saturated with the evil spirit, and nothing removes it except the Spirit of God. From here, we understand the priestly function in the Church: the priest is the person established, by divine grace, to be a means for sanctifying life and drawing down the grace of God. And when he says to someone, “May God bless you,” his words have real effect; they are not merely a pious wish.

From this angle we also understand the liturgical sacraments. Baptism may unfortunately be merely a social event for some; yet their lack of awareness of its spiritual action does not negate it. It is a true new birth, in which the baptized becomes a child of God and receives divine grace that preserves him—if he preserves it—from the evil spirit and its works.

Through the Eucharist, Christians receive Christ Himself: He dwells in them, sanctifies them, and gives them spiritual strength by which they confront the evil powers that continuously wage war against them, seeking to distance them from their Lord and cast them into sin, so as to rob them of salvation and lead them to spiritual death—and even bodily death in some cases. And so it is with the rest of the sacraments.

According to Orthodox faith, the divine sacraments are not limited to seven, as legal catechesis shaped by Western thought often teaches. Rather, every prayer service that a priest performs at the request of a believer is, in a real sense, a sacrament. These prayerful services touch the lives of believers in all their details: from the blessing of water and the blessing of the home with it, to the service of Holy Oil and anointing the sick with it, to the blessing of a new car, to prayers for a child when he goes to school for the first time, and so on.

The believers live by the grace of God, and they express their longing for it through these prayerful acts which sanctify their life in its entirety. In this way they live, always drawing upon divine grace. The sanctifying dimension is not merely a ritual composed of a few actions, nor is it a talisman like those some people hang around their necks. It is a sanctifying act for which the believer asks, and that is performed by a canonical priest who has received—through the Holy Spirit—the grace of the priesthood, so that he may sanctify our lives.

A sacrament is the presence of God in an unseen manner, yet one that is felt by believers who experience it.

Unfortunately, this concept has largely disappeared in recent years. Faith for many has become a mental conviction of certain doctrines that then “require” a particular lifestyle with specific spiritual practices—by which one simply “fulfills a religious duty.”

If knowledge is essential for believers—and if it requires discernment between conscious faith and superstition—this discernment does not mean turning the spiritual life into a matter of principles alone. Faith touches every dimension of the human person: the intellectual, the spiritual, the bodily, and the practical.

A person does not live by intellectual convictions separated from life. True faith is the living embodiment of these convictions in daily life.

Even priests have become estranged from this concept. Their sanctifying ministry has weakened greatly, and for many it has come to be limited to fulfilling the “duties” of

the Divine Liturgy, baptism, funerals, and weddings— treated as necessary religious ceremonies. For example, the blessing of homes at Theophany has become a burden that some consider heavy and therefore neglect. So how much more the Service of the Sanctification of Water in a home when the need arises?

We are witnessing an unconscious deviation of priestly ministry from its essential function—and it is being replaced by social services and various activities that do not fall under sanctification and are not the heart of the priest's work. Any work a priest does apart from his sanctifying ministry is not the core of his vocation. By “work” here I mean administration, accounting, and various social activities, including charitable work. These have come to occupy most of his time and ministry, and because of them, he enters into conflict with the faithful, thinking they are diminishing him when they fulfill their own role and duty. There may be occasions when necessity calls him to work in this area or that, but he must remain aware of the importance of handing such tasks over—at the earliest opportunity—to those in his parish who are qualified, so that he may devote himself to the ministry of confession, the other sanctifying services, visiting the faithful, and nourishing his own life of prayer.

Why have we reached this low point of the absence of sanctifying life? The reasons are many, and there is no room to enumerate them here. But responsibility falls on all of us. The home is the first and primary educator. Whoever grows up in a household devoid of piety will find it difficult to live and understand piety when he becomes older, even if he becomes a priest or a monk. More so the believer living in the heart of society!

Perhaps cultivating the spirit of piety—which makes a person alert to the presence of God at all times—is among the greatest needs of the human person today. Truly, what does it profit a person if he gains the whole world and loses himself? What does he offer himself if he lives far from God, even if he bears God's name and fights for Him? Life with God is first experienced in the heart, before anything else. God addresses your heart and touches it, and you are changed to become like Him; otherwise, you are deceiving yourself that you belong to Him.

You truly belong to Him when you give Him your heart. And the heart, in the Christian spiritual understanding, is the whole being. When the grace of God touches your heart, you leap for joy like a deer, and you want this joy for the world around you. Begin to sanctify your life and nourish yourself well on the abundant graces God has given to your Church. Live them. Activate them. Do not be content with social-religious appearances, which often become the very reason your heart is walled off so that the grace of God does not enter it.

البعد التقديسيّ ، الجزء الأول بقلم المتربوليت سابا (اسبر)

قالت لي، بنبرة من اكتشاف شيئاً ما كان قابلاً للتصديق: "لقد أتى كاهن الرعيّة إلى بيتنا، بناء على طلبك، وأقام خدمة تقديس الماء فيه. حقاً لقد زالت الروح الشريرة من البيت، يا سيّدنا. ولم نعد نتعرّض لأحداث غريبة." كانت قد أخبرتني بأنّ ثمة أحداثاً شريرة متتالية، تتم في بيتهم، ولا يعرفون سبباً لها. لم تكن مقتنعة بجوابي، وهي السيدة الحاصلة على شهادات علمية عالية، والملتزمة، وزوجها، بإيمانها وكنيستها، إلى حدّ كبير.

هذه حال الكثيرين ممّن بات الإيمان، عندهم، فناعة إيديولوجيّة عقلية، مشوبة بممارسات دينية. بينما الوجه التقديسيّ الحيّ غائب من حياتهم، عملياً لا نظرياً.

البعد التقديسيّ للحياة أساسيّ في الإيمان المسيحيّ، وهو وظيفة الكنيسة، بواسطة الليتورجيا خاصّة. أن تتقدّس حياتنا، لا يعني أن تنحصر في أفعال وسلوكيات صالحة فقط. هذا مسرى لا بدّ منه للمؤمنين بالإنجيل. لكن حضور الله وفعله في الحياة، وتأثيره فيها، وتحويلها إلى امتلاء حقيقيّ منه، قضية إيمانية لا غنى عنها، إن ابتغينا إيماناً حياً حقاً.

يُعدّ البعد الليتورجيّ من أساسيات العيش المسيحيّ الأمين والحيوي، الذي لا غنى عنه، ولا يُستبدل بآخر. فالعالم الذي نحيا فيه مشبع بالروح الشرير، الذي لا يزيله سوى روح الله. من هنا نفهم الوظيفة الكهنوتية في الكنيسة. فالكاهن هو الإنسان المقام، بالنعمة الإلهية، لكي يكون سبيلاً لتقديس الحياة، واستجلابِ نعمة الله. وعندما يقول لأحد: ليباركك الله، يكون لقوله فعل حقيقي، وليس مجرد دعاء.

من هذه الزاوية نفهم الأسرار الليتورجية أيضاً. قد تكون المعمودية مجرد حدث اجتماعي عند بعضهم، للأسف، لكن عدم وعي هؤلاء لفعلها الروحي لا ينفيه. إنّها ولادة جديدة حقيقية، يصير فيها المعتمد ابناً لله، ويحصل على نعمة إلهية تحفظه، إن حافظ عليها، من روح الشرير وأفعاله.

وفي الإفخارستيا يأخذ المؤمن المسيح ذاته، فيسكن فيه ويقدّسه ويعطيه قوّة روحية، يواجه، بها، القوى الشريرة، التي لا تنني تحاربه باستمرار، قاصدة أن تبعده عن ربّه، وتوقعه في

الخطيئة، لكي تُفقد خلاصه، وتقوده إلى الموت الروحي، وحتىّ الجسدي في بعض الحالات. وهكذا بقية الأسرار.

بحسب الإيمان الأرثوذكسيّ، لا تقتصر الأسرار الإلهية على سبعة، كما يقول التعليم القانوني، المتأثر بالفكر الغ. ربي. فكلّ خدمة صلاة يقوم بها الكاهن، بناء على طلب المؤمن، إنّما هي سرّ. وتطال هذه الصلاتية حياة المؤمنين، بتفاصيلها، من خدمة تقديس الماء وتبريك البيت بها، إلى خدمة الزيت المقدّس ومسح المريض به، إلى خدمة تبريك السيارة الجديدة، إلى خدمة الصلاة على الولد عند ذهابه، للمرّة الأولى، إلى المدرسة، وهلم جرا.

يحيا المؤمن بنعمة الله، التي يعبر عن توفقه إليها، بهذه الأفعال الصلاتية، التي تقدّس حياته بكليتها. هكذا يحيا مستمداً النعمة الإلهية في كلّ وقت. فليس البعد التقديسيّ مجرد طقس يتألّف من بضعة أفعال. لا وليس هو تعويذة، كذلك التي يعلّقها بعضهم في رقبتهم. إنّ فعل تقديسيّ، يطلبه المؤمن، ويتمّمه كاهن قانونيّ، حصل، بالروح القدس، على نعمة الكهنوت، لكي يقّدس حياتنا.

السرّ هو حضور الله بشكل غير منظور، ولكنه محسوس عند المؤمنين، الذين يختبرونه.

للأسف، غاب هذا المفهوم، أو كاد، في السنين الأخيرة. فقد صار الإيمان عند الكثيرين قناعة عقليّة بمسلمات إيمانية معيّنة، تستدعي نمط حياة معيّن، فيه ممارسات روحية محدّدة، بها يتمّم المرء الواجب الدينيّ!

إذا كانت المعرفة أساسية عند المؤمنين، وتتطلّب تمييزاً ما بين الإيمان الواعي والشعوذة. فلا يعني هذا التمييز جعل الحياة الروحية قضية مبادئ فقط. فالإيمان يطال أبعاد الإنسان كلّها: العقلية والروحية والجسدية والعملية. لا يحيا الإنسان بقناعات عقلية مفصولة عن الحياة. الإيمان الحقّ تجسيد حيّ لهذه القناعات في الحياة اليومية.

حتىّ الكهنة باتوا في غربة عن هذا المفهوم، وباتت خدمتهم التقديسية ضعيفة إلى حدّ كبير وتقتصر، عند الكثيرين منهم، على أداء واجبات القدّاس الإلهيّ والمعمودية والدفن والزواج. باعتبارها مراسم دينية لا غنى عنها. بات، على سبيل المثال، تبريك البيوت، في عيد الغطاس، عبئاً يستنقله بعضهم، ويهمله. فكيف بإقامة خدمة تقديس الماء في البيت عندما تدعو الحاجة؟!!!

نشهد انحرافاً، لا واعياً، للخدمة الكهنوتية عن وظيفتها الأساسية. فبمّ استبدالها بخدمات اجتماعية وأنشطة مختلفة، لا تصبّ في خانة التقديس، و ليست من صلب عمل الكاهن. أيّ عملٍ للكاهن سوى خدمته التقديسيّة ليس من صلب وظيفته. والمقصود بالعمل هنا: الإدارة والمحاسبة والأنشطة الاجتماعية المختلفة، بما فيها الخيرية. هذه باتت تحتلّ جلّ وقته وخدمته، ويدخل بسببها في صراع مع المؤمنين، ظانّاً أنّهم يحجمونه، عندما يقومون بدورهم وواجبهم. قد تستدعيه الحاجة إلى هذا العمل في هذا الحقل وذاك، لكنّه يجب أن يبقى واعياً إلى أهميّة تسليمه، في أقرب وقت، إلى من هو أهل للقيام به من أبناء رعيتّه، ليتفرغ هو لخدمة الاعتراف والخدم التقديسيّة الأخرى، وافتقاد المؤمنين، وليغدّي حياة الصلاة عنده.

لماذا وصلنا إلى هذا الدرك من غياب الحياة التقديسيّة؟ الأسباب كثيرة، ولا مجال لتعدادها في هذه العجالة.. لكن المسؤولية تقع علينا جميعاً. والبيت هو المرَبّي الأساسي الأوّل. فالذي ينشأ في بيت خالٍ من التقوى، سيستصعب عيشها وفهمها، عندما يكبر، ولو صار كاهناً، وحتى راهباً، فكيف بالمؤمن العائش في قلب المجتمع!!!

قد تكون تنمية روح التقوى، الذي يجعل الإنسان يقضاً لحضرة الله، بشكل دائم، هي أكثر ما يحتاج إليه الإنسان اليوم. حقاً ماذا ينفع الإنسان لو ربح العالم كلّه وخسر نفسه؟ ماذا يقَدّم لنفسه إذا عاش بعيداً عن الله، ولو تسمّى به، وقاتل من أجله؟ الحياة مع الله تُختبّر في القلب أولاً، وقبل كلّ شيء. يخاطب الله قلبك ويلمسه، فتتغيّر، لتتشبّه به، وإلا فأنت واهم بأنك له.

تكون له حقاً، عندما تعطيه قلبك. والقلب في المفهوم المسيحيّ الروحيّ هو الكيان كلّه. عندما تلامس نعمة الله قلبك، تظفر كالأيل فرحاً وتريد هذا الفرح للعالم المحيط بك. ابدأ بتقديس حياتك، واغتذ جيّداً بالنعمة الوافرة، التي أعطها الله لكنيستك. عشها. فعّلها. ولا تكتف بمظاهر اجتماعيّة دينيّة، كثيراً ما تكون السبب في تسوير قلبك، لئلا تدخل نعمة الله إليه.



CAMP ST. NICHOLAS



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Calling all 2026 high school
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A week long full of camp-like activities for graduating seniors that bridges together the transition from high school to college and prepare themselves for the next chapter that is to come in their lives!



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www.campstnicholas.org





**Orthodox Church
of the Redeemer**
380 Magdalena Ave.,
Los Altos Hills, CA



**Join us for a Blessed
Pascha Celebration!**

April 18th at 3:00 PM

Organized by the Parish Council

Enjoy a joyful afternoon with:

- ✦ **Delicious Food including Roasted Lamb**
- ✦ **Fun Kid's Games**
- ✦ **and Festive Music**

Donation: \$20 Per Person

Kids Under 12 Free

(All proceeds will go toward The Building Fund)

Get your donation tickets by Easter Sunday



Get your donation tickets by Easter Sunday

SAVE THE DATE



Antiochian Orthodox Church
Of The Redeemer
Presents



Our 43rd Middle Eastern Food Festival

SEPTEMBER 12 & 13, 2026

GET READY FOR TWO UNFORGETTABLE DAYS OF FUN, DELICIOUS FOOD,
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CHURCH TOUR, KIDS ZONE, AND MORE! ☒☒☒



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Grand Prize: Tesla Model 3

Second Prize: Two Round-Trip Airline Tickets:
SF to Istanbul by Turkish Airlines

Third Prize: \$500 Gift Certificate to Evvia Estiatorio in Palo Alto



Donation: \$50 per ticket or 3 tickets for \$100.

(650) 941-1570 380 Magdalena Ave, Los Altos Hills,
CA 94024

orthodoxredeemer.org



BUILDING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER End-of-Year Campaign Update



- 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.

GIVE TO ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE
REDEEMER



<https://www.orthodoxredeemer.org/funds>

