



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

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF
THE REDEEMER**

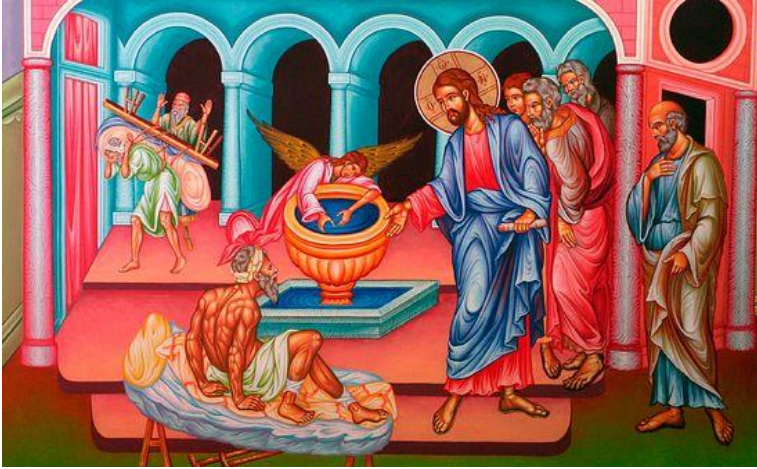
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V. REV. FR. SAMER YOUSSEF, D. MIN

REV. FR. THEODORE SAKELLAR, MTS



MAY 3, 2026

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA
SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC**

HIEROMARTYR MOKIOS, PRIEST IN MACEDONIA;
CYRIL AND METHODIOS, EQUALS-TO-THE-APOSTLES
AND ENLIGHTENERS OF THE SLAVS

الأحد الرابع للفصح (أحد شفاء المخلع)

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، رَبِّتُوا لِاسْمِهِ أَعْطُوا مَجْدًا لِتَسْبِيحَتِهِ.
بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِ، يَا مُخَلِّصُ خَلِّصْنَا.
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

لِيَتَرَأَفَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَيُبَارِكُنَا، وَلِيُضِيءَ بِوَجْهِهِ عَلَيْنَا وَيَرْحَمَنَا.
خَلِّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنَ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، لِئُرْتَلَّ لَكَ. هَلِّلُوبِيَا.
لِتُعْرَفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ طَرِيقُكَ وَفِي جَمِيعِ الْأُمَمِ خَلَاصُكَ. تَعْتَرِفُ لَكَ الشُّعُوبُ يَا اللَّهُ تَعْتَرِفُ لَكَ.
لِيُبَارِكُنَا اللَّهُ الْهُنَا، وَلِنُرْهَبُهُ جَمِيعَ 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.

الانتيفونا الثالثة

لِيُقَمِ اللهُ وَيَتَبَدَّدَ جَمِيعُ أَعْدَائِهِ، وَيَهْرُبُ مُبْغِضُوهُ مِنْ أَمَامِ وَجْهِهِ.
الْمَسِيحُ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، وَوَطِئَ الْمَوْتَ بِالْمَوْتِ، وَوَهَبَ الْحَيَاةَ لِلَّذِينَ فِي الْقُبُورِ.
كَمَا يُبَادُ الدُّخَانُ يُبَادُونَ، وَكَمَا يَذُوبُ الشَّمْعُ مِنْ أَمَامِ وَجْهِ النَّارِ. كَذَلِكَ تَهْلِكُ الْحَطَاةُ مِنْ أَمَامِ وَجْهِ
اللَّهِ، وَالصَّادِقُونَ يَفْرَحُونَ وَيَتَهَلَّلُونَ أَمَامَ اللَّهِ، وَيَتَنَعَّمُونَ بِالسُّرُورِ.
هَذَا هُوَ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي صَنَعَهُ الرَّبُّ، لِنَفْرَحَ 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.

إيسوديكون (ترنيمه الدخول) لخدمة الفصح

فِي الْمَجَامِعِ بَارِكُوا اللَّهَ، الرَّبَّ مِنْ يَنْابِيعِ إِسْرَائِيلَ. خَلِّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ،
هَلِّلُويَا.. لِنُرْتِّلَ لَكَ

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE THREE

Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

أبوليتيكيون القيامة باللحن الثالث

لِتَفْرَحِ السَّمَاوِيَّاتُ وَتَبْتَهِجِ الْأَرْضِيَّاتُ، لِأَنَّ الرَّبَّ صَنَعَ عِزًّا بِسَاعِدِهِ، وَوَطِئَ الْمَوْتَ بِالْمَوْتِ، وَصَارَ بِكُرِّ الْأَمْوَاتِ، وَأَنْقَذَنَا مِنْ جَوْفِ الْجَحِيمِ، وَمَنَحَ الْعَالَمَ الرَّحْمَةَ الْعُظْمَى.

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 الخطاة نورك الأزلي، بشفاعة والدة الإله، يا مانح النور المجد لك.

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.

قنடاق الفصح على اللحن الثامن

وَلَيْتُنْ كُنْتَ نَزَلْتَ إِلَى قَبْرِ يَا مَنْ لَا يَمُوتُ، إِلَّا أَنْكَ دَرَسْتَ قُوَّةَ الْجَحِيمِ، وَقُمْتَ غَالِباً أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهَ، وَلِلنِّسْوَةِ حَامِلَاتِ الطَّيِّبِ قُلْتَ "أَفْرَحْنَ!"، وَلِرُسُلِكَ وَهَبْتَ السَّلَامَ، يَا مَانِحَ الْوَاقِعِينَ الْقِيَامَ.

THE EPISTLE

O chant unto our God, chant ye. Clap your hands, all ye nations.

The Reading from the Acts of the Holy Apostles. (9:32-42)

In those days, as Peter went throughout all regions, he came down also to the saints who dwelt at Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who was bedridden for eight years and paralyzed. And Peter said to him: "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; arise and make your bed." And immediately he arose. And all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned back to the Lord. Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha (which means Gazelle). She was full of good works and of

charitable deeds which she did. And it came to pass in those days that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her, they placed her in an upper chamber. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him entreating him: "Come to us without delay!" So Peter arose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him into the upper chamber. All the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and other garments which Tabitha made while she was with them. But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body, he said: "Tabitha, arise!" And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up. Then he called the saints and widows and presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

الرسالة

رَتِّلُوا لِإِلَهِنَا رَتِّلُوا. يَا جَمِيعَ الْأُمَّمِ صَقِّقُوا بِالْأَيَادِي.
فَصَلِّ مِنْ أَعْمَالِ الرُّسُلِ الْقَدِيسِينَ الْأَطْهَارِ.

في تلك الأيام، فيما كان بطرس يطوف في جميع الأماكن، نزل أيضاً إلى القديسين الساكنين في لُدَّة. فوجد هناك إنساناً اسمه أينايس، مضطجعا على سرير منذ ثماني سنين، وهو مخلع. فقال له بطرس: "يا أينايس، يشفيك يسوع المسيح؛ فم وافترش لنفسك." فقام للوقت. ورأه جميع الساكنين في لُدَّة وسارون فرجعوا إلى الرب. وكانت في يافا تلميذة اسمها طابيتا، الذي تفسيره طيبة، وكانت هذه ممتلئة أعمالاً صالحةً وصدقاتٍ كانت تعملها. فحدث في تلك الأيام أنها مرضت وماتت. فغسلوها ووضعوها في العليَّة. وإذ كانت لُدَّة بقرُب يافا، وسمع التلاميذ أن بطرس فيها، أرسلوا إليه رجلين يسألانه أن لا يبطن عن القدوم إليهم. فقام بطرس وأتى معهم. فلما وصل، صعدوا به إلى العليَّة، ووقف لُدَّة جميع الأرامل يبكين، ويرينه أقمصةً وثياباً كانت تصنعها طيبةً معهن. فأخرج بطرس الجميع خارجاً، وجثا على ركبتيه وصلى. ثم انفتحت إلى الجسد وقال: "يا طابيتا قومي." ففتحت عينيها. ولما أبصرت بطرس جلست. فناولها يده وأنهبها. ثم دعا القديسين والأرامل، وأقامها لديهم حيَّة. فشاغ هذا الخبر في يافا كلها، فآمن كثيرون بالرب.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (5:1-15)

At that time, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Hebrew called Bethesda, which has five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and troubled the water; whoever stepped in first, after the troubling of the water was healed of whatever disease he had. One man was there, who had been ill for 38 years. When Jesus saw him and knew that he had been lying there a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is troubled, and while I am going another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your pallet, and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his pallet and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, it is not lawful for you to carry your pallet." But he answered them, "The man who healed me said to me, 'Take up your pallet, and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your pallet, and walk'?" Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. Afterward, Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse befalls you." The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus Who had healed him.

الإنجيل المقدس

فصلٌ شريفٌ من بشارَةِ القديسِ يوحنا الإنجيليِّ البشيرِ والتلميذِ الطاهرِ.

في ذلك الزمان، صعدَ يسوعُ إلى أُورشليمَ. وإنَّ في أُورشليمَ عندَ بابِ العنَمِ بركةً، تُسمَّى بالعِبرانيَّةِ بَيْتَ حِسدا، لها حَمْسَةُ أَرْوَاقَةٍ. كانَ مُضطَّجِعاً فيها جُمهورٌ كثيرٌ منَ المَرضى منَ عُميانٍ وعُرجٍ ويابِسِي الأَعْضاءِ، يَنْتَظِرُونَ تَحريكَ المَـاءِ. لأنَّ مَلاكاً كانَ يَنْزِلُ أحياناً في البركةِ ويُحَرِّكُ المَـاءَ. والذي كانَ يَنْزِلُ أولاً منَ بَعدِ تَحريكِ المَـاءِ، كانَ يُبرأُ منَ أيِّ مَرَضٍ اعْتراه. وكانَ هُناكَ إنسانٌ بهِ مَرَضٌ مُنذُ ثَمانِ وَثَلاثينَ سَنَةً. هذا إذْ رآه يَسوعُ مُلقًى، وعَلِمَ أنَّ لَهْ زماناً كثيراً، قالَ لَهْ: "أتريدُ أنْ تَبْرأَ؟" فأجابَه المَريضُ: "يا سيِّدُ، لَيسَ لي إنسانٌ مَتى حُرِّكَ المَـاءُ يُلقيني في البركةِ، بلَ بَينما أكونُ آتياً، يَنْزِلُ قَبلي

أَحْرُ. " فَقَالَ لَهُ يَسُوعُ: "قُمْ، اْحْمِلِ سَرِيرَكَ وَاَمْشِ. " فَلِلْوَقْتِ بَرِيَ الرَّجُلُ، وَحَمَلَ سَرِيرَهُ وَمَشَى. وَكَانَ فِي ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ سَبْتٌ. فَقَالَ الْيَهُودُ لِلَّذِي شَفِيَ: "إِنَّهُ سَبَبْتُ، فَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ أَنْ تَحْمِلَ السَّرِيرَ. " فَأَجَابَهُمْ: "إِنَّ الَّذِي أَبْرَأَنِي هُوَ قَالَ لِي "اْحْمِلِ سَرِيرَكَ وَاَمْشِ. " فَسَأَلُوهُ مَنْ هُوَ الْإِنْسَانُ الَّذِي قَالَ لَكَ "اْحْمِلِ سَرِيرَكَ وَاَمْشِ؟" أَمَا الَّذِي شَفِيَ فَلَمْ يَكُنْ يَعْلَمُ مَنْ هُوَ. لِأَنَّ يَسُوعَ اعْتَرَلَ، إِذْ كَانَ فِي الْمَوْضِعِ جَمْعٌ. وَبَعْدَ ذَلِكَ وَجَدَهُ يَسُوعُ فِي الْهَيْكَلِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: "هَا قَدْ عُوْفَيْتَ، فَلَا تَعُدْ تُخْطِئُ لِنَلَأٍ يُصِيبُكَ أَشْرٌ. " فَذَهَبَ ذَلِكَ الْإِنْسَانُ، وَأَخْبَرَ الْيَهُودَ أَنَّ يَسُوعَ هُوَ الَّذِي أَبْرَأَهُ.

MEGALYNARION FOR PARALYTIC SUNDAY IN TONE ONE

The angel spake to her that is full of grace, saying, O pure Virgin, rejoice; and I say also, Rejoice; for thy Son is risen from the tomb on the third day.

We believers in unison bless thee, O Virgin, crying: Rejoice, O gate of the Lord. Rejoice, O living city. Rejoice, O thou from whom didst rise upon us from the dead the Light of Resurrection, He Who was born of thee.

تعظيمة أحد المخلع بالحن الأول

إِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَقَوَّهَ نَحْوَ الْمُنْعَمِ عَلَيْهَا، أَيُّهَا الْعِذْرَاءُ النَّقِيَّةُ اِفْرَحِي، وَأَقُولُ أَيْضاً اِفْرَحِي، لِأَنَّ ابْنَكَ قَدْ قَامَ مِنَ الْقَبْرِ فِي الْيَوْمِ الثَّالِثِ.

أَيُّهَا الْبَتُولُ، نُغَيِّطُكَ نَحْنُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، بِأَصْوَاتٍ مُنْقَفَةٍ هَاتِفِينَ: اِفْرَحِي يَا بَابَ الرَّبِّ، اِفْرَحِي يَا مَدِينَةَ مُنْتَفِسَةً، اِفْرَحِي يَا مَنْ بِهَا أَشْرَقَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ، مِنْ الْأَمْوَاتِ، نُورُ قِيَامَةِ الْمَوْلُودِ مِنْكَ

KOINONIKON (COMMUNION HYMN) OF PASCHA IN TONE EIGHT

Receive ye the body of Christ; taste ye the Fountain of immortality.

كينونيكون (ترنيمة المناولة) للفصح بالحن الثامن

جَسَدَ الْمَسِيحِ خُذُوا، وَالْيَنْبُوعَ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ دُوقُوا.



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: Dorina Vukadin for the good health of Alexander, Alexandra and Stefan on the occasion of their birthdays (April 13, 17 & 24). For the good health of Boka, Vukadin, Nila, Boronna, Nagukic and Lotreanu families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Nick and Sonia Azar on the occasion of their 55th Wedding Anniversary (May 2), and the good health of the Azar family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Malakah Keshek for the good health of her son George on the occasion of his birthday (April 28), and the health of the Keshek Family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Richard, Jimmy, Anne Bateh and their families for the good health of their mother Nawal on the occasion of her 85th birthday (April 29), and the good health of Amanda, Jerry and their son Nicholas. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Nabil and Basma Batmani for the good health of their daughter Mona on the occasion of her birthday (April 30) and the good health of their son Alfred and the Batmani family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Nick and Sonia Azar in memory of Jamil, Fayka, Basil, Valerie, Mike, David and Johnny. Memory Eternal!

OFFERED BY: Nawal Bateh and her children in memory of beloved husband and father, Ribhi Bateh. Memory Eternal!



COFFEE HOUR

Offered By: Malakah and George Keshek

*(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)

Honoring The Graduates of 2026

We offer thanks to God for giving our parish such educated members who graduated from different levels of schooling. The Church is so proud of you and your children. We pray that Christ our God gives them a bright future with faithfulness to His teachings. Please send us your children's name and which school and degree they are graduating this year to put in the bulletin and honor them on a special Sunday.

- **Mona Batmani:** Graduated with honors from Chicago-Kent College of Law with a Juris Doctor degree.
- **Taleen Ammari:** Graduating from Presentation High School and will be attending Santa Clara University.
- **Christina Labban:** Graduating from Saratoga High School and will be attending NYU.
- **Maya Otell:** Graduating 8th grade from Bret Harte Middle School and will be attending Leland High School.
- **Angelina Labban:** Graduating from Redwood Middle School and will be going to Saratoga High School.

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

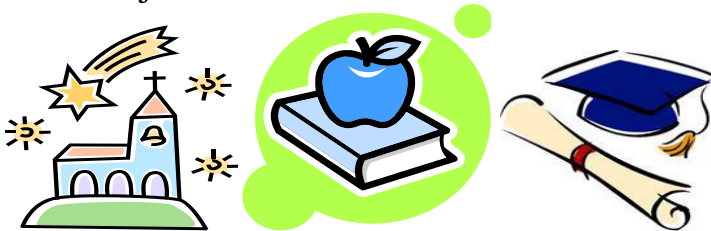
The Antiochian Women Committee Leaders of 2026. Roula Haddad (Chairwoman), Dania Amireh (Vice- Chairwoman), Ibtisam Kreitem (Secretary/ Communication), Wardeh Asfour (Kitchen/Coffee Hour), Rima Gannage (Bookkeeping), Diana Khoury (Myrrh Barrier), and Hala Aboujudom (Sunshine).

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.



SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADUATION May 17, 2026

Sunday **May 17**, we are celebrating Sunday School Graduation immediately after Divine Liturgy. An Achievement Certificate will be given to all the participants with a gift. Please make sure the students are present on this Special Day.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Ice cream social will follow the ceremony. Hope to see you there!

Teachers: Samuel Hage, Hussam Ibrahim, Dimitry Youssef, Heather Simonovich, Randa Hanani and Jocelyn Mikhael. Caitlin Timothy and Alia Nystrom as back-up/support.

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 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.

Discussion will be on Saturday June 13, 2026, 2:00 PM- 5:00 PM, along with knitting and crocheting workshop, *and a light dinner.*

June 13 is open to all ladies, but only the ones that read the book will discuss what’s read so far of the book.

Workshop finished goods will be donated to nearby shelters.

UPCOMING EVNTS AT THE CHURCH

Please save the date

- **June 13:** *Book Club, Saturday May 23rd @ 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM*
- **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 Two

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

Some have attributed the decline of the sanctifying dimension in the lives of believers to the neglect of the clergy. Yet to place responsibility on priests alone while ignoring the responsibility of the faithful is not accurate. Not all clergy are saints, nor are all believers. There are many good priests, but they are often discouraged by the pressure placed upon them to be everything except sanctifiers. Thus, while the responsibility of the clergy is indeed great, there is also a great responsibility resting upon the faithful. In the [previous article](#), I referred to the role of all of us, and to the importance of the home in spiritual formation.

For this reason, I would like to expand a little further on this topic and speak about prayer, its role, and some of the current obstacles, especially those caused by believers themselves. I hope to shed light on our shared responsibility, clergy and laity alike, for this absence of prayer, so that together we may rise to a more active life of sanctification.

Let us begin by speaking of the richness of the Orthodox rite, in particular the Byzantine rite. This rite is distinguished by its liturgical richness and by the way it liturgically embraces the full range of human life. The Church accompanies the believer with her prayers from conception to birth, to the child's first entrance into the church, then through Baptism, Holy Communion, and spiritual growth. She blesses life through the divine sacraments, blesses the home through the sanctification of water, and likewise blesses fields and possessions. She accompanies the faithful in sickness, travel, study, engagement, marriage, and even to the moment of departure from this life. Nor does she cease afterward, for she continues to pray for the repose of the soul.

The concern of the Church is to embrace and spiritually nourish the human person, so that he may become a citizen of the heavenly Kingdom, receive the saving and salvific gifts of God, and have the abundant life (John 10:10) which Christ came to give.

For this reason, the Orthodox rite has been enriched with salvific events and with events of daily life that the Church has baptized and clothed with a Christian character, so that they may

become spiritual windows contributing to the salvation of the faithful. Thus, the feasts of our Lord, of the Mother of God, and of the saints are distributed throughout the year. There is scarcely a day without one feast or more. Each feast has its own liturgical texts, scriptural readings, and beautiful devotional hymns, though they differ in length, importance, beauty, and popularity.

In addition, this rite has been enriched with many prayers that bless the believer in every aspect of life. There is a prayer for everything. We may mention, for example, the prayers of blessing that encompass one's circumstances, intentions, work, and possessions. There are also blessings for occasions recognized worldwide that may be given a Christian dimension, such as the Day of the Environment, Teacher's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and so forth.

Nor should we forget the daily prayers distributed throughout the yearly liturgical cycle: the compunctionate services of Great Lent, Holy and Great Week, the canons of supplication to the saints, and the prayers of entreaty.

Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware), in his book *The Orthodox Church*, writes: "The richness of Orthodox services requires the believer to possess a small library of some twenty important volumes. Though difficult to use at first, these volumes are among the greatest treasures of the Orthodox Church."

In the face of all this richness—which fills dozens of volumes—one cannot but be surprised by the lack of liturgical practice currently found in parish churches, and that the overwhelming majority of believers do not know what exists within their own Church. If we set aside the well-known services of Great Lent and Holy Week, we find that most believers do not know anything of the Church's abundant richness and beauty other than the Divine Liturgy.

Let us consider a few examples.

To my knowledge, most churches in cities and smaller parishes have one or two chanters celebrate Orthros every Sunday morning. How many faithful actually participate in it? Compare the numbers attending Orthros with those attending the Divine Liturgy.

As for Great Vespers on Saturday evening, which carries all the meanings of the Resurrection we commemorate every Sunday, how many pray it together with the priest in the churches where it is served every week? Once, I attended Saturday evening services in Kyiv and another in Moscow. The Slavs celebrated both Vespers and Orthros on Saturday evening, entirely chanted. I was astonished to see the churches full of faithful standing as there were no pews in their churches. Those who did not participate in these services would not approach Holy Communion on Sunday morning, even if they had made their confession that night.

Let us take another example: the daily prayers. How many offer them? Among those who practice confession and seek spiritual guidance, how many raise the obstacles they encounter in their prayer life? From my experience as a confessor, especially when I was serving as a

parish priest, I rarely heard complaints about prayer other than distraction of mind. The greater struggle for the overwhelming majority of penitents was perseverance in offering prayer morning and evening, no matter how small or brief the personal rule given to them by their spiritual father.

Observers note greater participation in services that are followed by some social gathering, especially food. For example, attendance at the Presanctified Liturgy celebrated on Wednesday evening is much higher in parishes that offer an agape meal afterward. Is this response rooted in a love for prayer, or does gathering around the table play the stronger role in motivating participation? The answer is up to each person, for our role is not to condemn or judge, but to observe and to awaken.

What would an outside observer understand when invited to witness the celebration of baptism or marriage? Are not social appearances often dominant over the spiritual dimension, sometimes to the point of obscuring it entirely? Are not the music, clothing, flowers, decorations, festivities, and invitations considered the most important things—the ones given time, attention, and even money? What does this mean except that, in our deepest part of our conscience, we often assign little weight to the spiritual reality the Church provides for us, while giving priority to social appearances?

The presence of a bottle of holy water and another of blessed oil on the icon shelf in the home remains common among Orthodox Christians. Anointing the sick with blessed oil is still a natural practice among the faithful, sought for blessing and healing.

Our grandparents were accustomed to setting aside a place for God in their homes: the icon corner and the lamp kept burning before it. This is an authentic and foundational Eastern Christian tradition. Where is it today? How many homes still light the lamp on Saturday evenings or in times of trial and distress? Where has the censuring of icons gone? Or the use of incense in family prayer? Do not such traditions cultivate a tangible sense of God's presence—or more than that, a spiritual presence permeated by the divine presence—which becomes planted in the hearts of children and is never erased from their memory?

What do we conclude from these examples? Where is the spiritual practice of the people? Why do so many fail to respond to spiritual activities? If we are honest, should we not say that many do not grant them the same importance they give to social demands? Does the responsibility here rest on the clergy alone? Where is the role of true Christian formation? Where are our spiritual homes that live in piety, fear of God, fidelity to the Gospel commandments, and prayer—and that hand these things on? Where is our role as fathers and mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers, priests and faithful?

البعد التقديسي، الجزء الثاني بقلم المتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

عزا بعضهم تراجع البعد التقديسي في حياة المؤمنين إلى إهمال الكهنة لذلك. حصر المسؤولية بالكهنة وحدهم وتغييب مسؤولية المؤمنين كلام غير دقيق. ليس جميع الكهنة قديسين، وليس جميع المؤمنين كذلك. ثمة كهنة صالحون كثير، لكنهم مُحِبَطون من الضغط الممارس عليهم ليكونوا كل شيء، إلا مقدسين. إذ، على عظم مسؤولية الإكليروس، ثمة مسؤولية كبرى على المؤمنين أيضاً. أشرت، في [المقالة السابقة](#)، إلى دورنا جميعاً، وإلى أهمية البيت في التربية الروحية.

لذلك سأستفيض في هذا الموضوع قليلاً، وأتكلم عن الصلاة ودورها، وبعض من معوقاتنا الحالية، بخاصة، تلك التي يتسبب المؤمنون بها، علني أضيء على مسؤوليتنا جميعاً، إكليروس وعلمانيين، عن هذا الغياب، على أمل أن نهض جميعاً، إلى حياة تقديسية أكثر فاعلية.

لنبدأ الكلام عن غنى الطقس الأرثوذكسي، المعروف بالبيزنطي. يتميز هذا الطقس بغناه الليتورجي، وتغطيته، ليتورجياً، مجمل قضايا الإنسان الحياتية. فالكنيسة ترافق المؤمن بصلواتها منذ الحبل به إلى ولادته، ودخوله الأول إلى الكنيسة، ثم معموديته وتناوله الأسرار ونموه. تبارك حياته بالأسرار الإلهية، وبيته بتقديس الماء، وكذلك حقله وأملاكه. ترافقه بصلواتها في مرضه وسفره ودراسته، في خطبته وزواجه وصولاً إلى انتقاله. وحتى بعده أيضاً، إذ تتابع صلاتها من أجل راحة نفسه.

همّ الكنيسة احتضان الإنسان وتغذيته روحياً، ليصير مواطن الملكوت السماوي، ويتقبل نعم الله الخلاصية والمخلصة، ويحصل على الحياة الفضلى (يو ١٠/١٠)، التي جاء المسيح من أجل أن يعطيها إيّاها.

لذلك اغتنى الطقس الأرثوذكسي بأحداث خلاصية، وأحداث حياتية عمّدتها الكنيسة، وصبغتها بالصبغة المسيحية، لتكون مطلقاً روحياً يساهم في خلاص المؤمنين. فقد توزعت أعياد السيد والسيدة والقديسين، على مدار السنة. ولا يخلو يوم في السنة من عيد أو أكثر. ولكل عيد نصوصه الصلاتية وقراءاته الكتابية، وتراتيله الخشوعية الجميلة، وإن تفاوتت في حجمها وأهميتها وجمالها وشعبيتها.

إلى ذلك، اغتنى هذا الطقس بصلوات متنوّعة تبارك المؤمن، في كلّ أعماله. فهناك صلاة لكلّ شيء. نذكر على سبيل المثال لا الحصر، صلوات التبريك التي تشمل مباركة أوضاع المؤمن ونيّاته وعمله ومقتنيّاته. بالإضافة إلى تبريك مناسبات عالميّة لها بعد مسيحيّ، كيوم البيّنة والمعلّم والأّم والأب... إلخ.

ولا ننسى الصلوات اليوميّة، الموزّعة في الدورة الليتورجيّة السنويّة، كطقوس الصوم الكبير الخشوعيّة، والأسبوع العظيم المقدّس، وقوانين الابتهالات للقديسين، والابتهالات التضريّة.

يقول المطران كاليستوس (وير) في كتابه "الكنيسة الأرثوذكسيّة" ما يلي: "يفرض غنى الخدم الأرثوذكسيّة، على المؤمن، اقتناء مكتبة صغيرة تضمّ عشرين مجلّداً مهمّاً. وتكون هذه المجلّدات، على صعوبة استعمالها في البدء، واحداً من الكنوز الكبرى في الكنيسة الأرثوذكسيّة."

أمام كلّ هذا الغنى، الذي يغطي عشرات المجلّدات، يستغرب المرء قلّة الممارسة القائمة حالياً في كنائس الرعايا، وعدم معرفة الغالبية العظمى من المؤمنين، بما هو قائم وموجود في كنيستهم!! فإذا استثنينا طقوس الصوم الكبير والأسبوع العظيم المعروفة شعبيّاً، نجد أنّ غالبية المؤمنين لا تعرف، من طقوسها الوافرة الغنى والجمال، سوى القدّاس الإلهي. لنستعرض، قليلاً، بعض الوقائع.

على حدّ علمي، أنّ معظم الكنائس، في المدن والرعايا الصغرى التي يتوقّف فيها مرّتل أو أكثر، تقيم صلاة السّحر صباح كلّ أحد. كم هو عدد المؤمنين الذين يشتركون فيها؟ قارنوا أعدادهم بين صلاة السّحر والقدّاس الإلهي!!

صلاة الغروب لعشيّة السبت، التي تحمل كلّ معاني القيامة، التي نقيم تذكّرها كلّ أحد، ما هو عدد الذين يصلّونها مع الكاهن، في الكنائس التي تقام فيها أسبوعياً؟! حضرت، مرّة، صلوات مساء السبت في كيبف وأخرى في موسكو، والسلافيون يقيمون خدمتي الغروب والسّحر مساء السبت، وكلّها مرّتلة. ذهلت لامتلاء الكنائس بالمؤمنين، وقوفاً، إذ لا مقاعد في كنائسهم! ومن لا يشترك فيهما، لا يتقدّم صباح الأحد إلى المناولة المقدّسة، ولو كان قد قدّم اعترافه في تلك الليلة.

لنضرب مثلاً آخر: الصلوات اليوميّة، كم هو عدد ممارستها؟ وبين الذين يمارسون سرّ الاعتراف والذين يطلبون الإرشاد الروحي، كم هو عدد الذين يطرحون العوائق التي يصادفونها في أداء صلواتهم؟ من خبرتي كأب اعتراف، خاصّة عندما كنت كاهناً، ما من عرض لمشاكل الصلاة سوى قضية تشتت الذهن. وتكمن الصعوبة الكبرى، عند الغالبية العظمى من المعترفين، في المواظبة على تقديم الصلاة صباحاً ومساءً، مهما كان القانون الشخصي المُعطى لهم، من أب الاعتراف، صغيراً وقصيراً!!

يلاحظ المراقب مشاركة أكبر في الصلوات التي تليها مناسبة اجتماعية ما، كالطعام بخاصّة. على سبيل المثال، يكثر عدد المشاركين في قدّاس السابق تقديسه، المقام مساء الأربعاء، في الرعايا التي تقيم مائدة محبّة بعده!! هل التجاوب نابع من دافع حياة الصلاة عندهم، أم يلعب الاجتماع حول مائدة المحبّة الدور الأقوى في تغذية هذا الدافع؟ الجواب متروك لكلّ شخص، إذ ليس دورنا أن ندين ونحكم، بل أن نراقب وننبّه.

ماذا يفهم مراقب، من خارج الكنيسة، عندما يُدعى إلى المشاركة في تتميم سرّي المعمودية والزواج؟ أليست المظاهر الاجتماعيّة هي الطاغية على الروحيّة إلى حدّ حجبها تماماً، أحياناً؟ أليست الموسيقى والثياب والزهور والزينة والحفلة والدعوات هي الأهمّ، والتي تُعطى الوقت والاهتمام وحتّى المال؟ ماذا يعني هذا سوى أنّ وجداننا الأعماق لا يقيم وزناً لما تتمّه الكنيسة لنا من بُعد روحي، وأنّ الوزن معطى للمظاهر الاجتماعيّة!!

وجود قارورة للماء المقدّس وأخرى للزيت المقدس على رف الأيقونات في البيوت أمر شائع عند الأرثوذكسيين. مسح المريض بالزيت المقدس ممارسة طبيعية عند المؤمنين طلباً للبركة والشفاء.

اعتاد أجدادنا على تخصيص مكان لله في بيوتهم: زاوية الأيقونات والقنديل المضاء أمامها. هذا تقليد مسيحي شرقي أصيل وأساسي. أين هو اليوم؟ ما عدد البيوت التي يُضاء القنديل فيها عشية السبت وأيام المحن والشدائد؟ أين صار تبخير الأيقونات؟ أو استخدام البخور في العبادة البيتيّة؟ ألا تحمل هذه التقاليد شعوراً حسياً بحضور الله، إن لم نقل، أكثر من ذلك: حضوراً روحياً يتخلّله حضور إلهي، ينغرس في قلب الأولاد، ولا يُمحي من ذاكرتهم؟

ماذا نستنتج من هذه الأمثلة؟ أين ممارسة الشعب الروحيّة؟ لماذا لا يتجاوب الأكثرون مع الأنشطة الروحيّة؟ إن لم نقل إنهم لا يعطونها الأهمية اللازمة التي تحظى بها

مطالبتهم بالاجتماعيات؟ هل تقع المسؤولية هنا على الكهنة فقط؟ أين دور التربية المسيحية الحقة؟ أين بيوتنا الروحانية التي تحيا بالتقوى وخوف الله والالتزام بالوصايا الإنجيلية والصلاة، وتربي عليها؟ أين دورنا آباء وأمهات وأجداداً وجدّات وكهنة ومؤمنين؟



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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.

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

