



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

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF
THE REDEEMER**

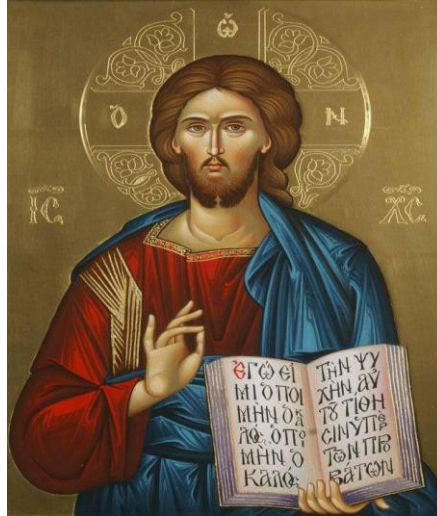
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V. REV. FR. SAMER YOUSSEF, D. MIN

REV. FR. THEODORE SAKELLAR, MTS



JUNE 14, 2026

**THE SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS OF ANTIOCH & NORTH AMERICA
& SECOND SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**

**PROPHET ELISHA; METHODIOS THE CONFESSOR, PATRIARCH OF
CONSTANTINOPLE**

جميع قديسي أنطاكية و الأحد الثاني من متى الأنجيلي البشير

RESURRECTION 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 بالحن الأول

إِنَّ الْحَجَرَ لَمَّا خُتِمَ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ، وَجَسَدَكَ الطَّاهَرَ حُفِظَ مِنَ الْجُنْدِ، قُمْتَ فِي الْيَوْمِ الثَّلَاثِ أَيُّهَا الْمُخَلَّصُ،
مَانِحاً الْعَالَمَ الْحَيَاةَ. لِذَلِكَ قَوَّاتُ السَّمَاوَاتِ، هَتَّفُوا إِلَيْكَ يَا وَاهِبَ الْحَيَاةِ: الْمَجْدُ لِقِيَامَتِكَ أَيُّهَا
الْمَسِيحُ، الْمَجْدُ لِمُلْكِكَ، الْمَجْدُ لِتُدْبِيرِكَ، يَا مُحِبَّ الْبَشَرِ وَحَدَّكَ.

APOLYTIKION OF ALL SAINTS OF ANTIOCH IN TONE FOUR

O fellow travelers in the way of the faithful, the saints of Antioch now let us all honor: the pure and blest Apostles with the hierarchs, martyrs with the righteous ones, their worn path wisely walking, wondering at their holy lives overflowing with wonders; thus let us walk in peace and fear of God so that we all win the dwelling in Paradise.

أبوليتيكيون جميع قديسي أنطاكية بالحن الرابع وزن: يا من ارتفعت

هَيَّا نُكْرِمُ يَا رِفَاقَ الْإِيمَانِ. الْقَدَيْسِينَ الْأَنْطَاكِيِّينَ جَمِيعًا. الرُّسُلَ الْأَطْهَارَ وَرُؤَسَاءَ الْكَهَنَةِ. وَالْأَبْرَارَ مَعَ
الشُّهَدَاءِ مُقْتَنِينَ آثَارَهُمْ. نَاطِرِينَ سِيرَتَهُمُ الْمَلَأَى بِالْعَجَائِبِ. وَلِنَسْلُكَ نَحْنُ أَيْضًا بِسَلَامٍ. لَكِي نَفُوزَ.
بِالسَّكَنِ فِي الْفِرْدُوسِ.

APOLYTIKION FOR ALL SAINTS OF NORTH AMERICA IN TONE EIGHT

As the bountiful harvest of Thy sowing of salvation, the lands of North America offer unto Thee, O Lord, all the saints who have shone in them. By their prayers, keep the Church and our land in abiding peace through the Theotokos, O most Merciful One.

أبوليتيكيون جميع قديسي أميركا الشمالية بالحن الثامن

كَحْصَادٍ وَفِيرٍ لِرَزْعِ خَلَاصِكَ يَا رَبِّ، تُقَدِّمُ لَكَ أَرْضُ أَمِيرِكَ الشَّمَالِيَّةِ جَمِيعَ الْقَدِيسِينَ الَّذِينَ لَمَعُوا فِيهَا.
فَاخْفِظِ الْكَنِيسَةَ وَأَرْضَنَا فِي السَّلَامِ، بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِ يَا جَزِيلَ الرَّحْمَةِ.

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.

ORDINARY KONTAKION IN TONE TWO

O protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the Creator most constant, O despise not the suppliant voices of those who have sinned; but be thou quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession, and speed thou to make supplication, thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.

قنّداق بالحن الثاني

يَا شَفِيعَةَ الْمَسِيحِيِّينَ غَيْرِ الْخَازِنَةِ، الْوَسِيطَةَ أَدَى الْخَالِقِ غَيْرِ الْمَزْدُودَةِ، لَا تُعْرِضِي عَنِّ أَصْوَاتِ
طَلِبَاتِنَا نَحْنُ الْخَطَاةَ، بَلْ تَدَارِكِينَا بِالْمَعُونَةِ بِمَا أَتُكِّ صَالِحَةً، نَحْنُ الصَّارِخِينَ إِلَيْكَ بِإِيمَانٍ: بَادِرِي إِلَى
الشَّفَاعَةِ وَأُسْرِعِي فِي الطَّلْبَةِ، يَا وَالِدَةَ الْإِلَهِ، الْمُتَشَفِّعَةَ دَائِمًا بِمُكْرَمِيكَ.

THE EPISTLE

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us.

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

The Reading from the Acts of the Holy Apostles. (11:19-30)

In those days, when the apostles were scattered because of the tribulation that arose over Stephen, they traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one, except to Jews only. But there were

some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who upon coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord. The report concerning them reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas, to go as far out as Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they should cleave to the Lord; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great multitude was added unto the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year, they were gathered together in the church, and they taught a great multitude of people, and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabos stood up and signified by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over the whole world; and this took place in the days of Claudius Caesar. And the disciples, every one according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren who dwelt in Judaea; and they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

الرسالة

لِتَكُنْ يَا رَبُّ رَحْمَتُكَ عَلَيْنَا. ابْتَهِجُوا أَيُّهَا الصِّدِّيقُونَ بِالرَّبِّ.

فصلٌ من أعمال الرُّسُلِ القِدِّيسِينَ الأَطْهَارِ.

في تلك الأيام، لما تَبَدَّدَ الرُّسُلُ مِنْ أَجْلِ الضِّيْقِ الَّذِي حَصَلَ بِسَبَبِ اسْتِقْنَانُوسَ، اجْتَازُوا إِلَى فِينِيقِيَّةِ وَفُبْرُصَ وَأَنْطَاكِيَّةِ، وَهُمْ لَا يُكَلِّمُونَ أَحَدًا بِالْكَلِمَةِ إِلَّا الْيَهُودَ فَقَطْ. وَلَكِنَّ قَوْمًا مِنْهُمْ كَانُوا فُبْرُصِيِّينَ وَقَيْرَوَانِيِّينَ. فَهَوْلَاءِ لَمَّا دَخَلُوا أَنْطَاكِيَّةَ، أَخَذُوا يُكَلِّمُونَ الْيُونَانِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ بِالرَّبِّ يَسُوعَ. وَكَانَتْ يَدُ الرَّبِّ مَعَهُمْ، فَامَنَّ عَدَدٌ كَثِيرٌ وَرَجَعُوا إِلَى الرَّبِّ. فَبَلَغَ خَبْرُ ذَلِكَ إِلَى آذَانِ الْكَنِيسَةِ الَّتِي بِأَوْرُشَلِيمَ، فَأَرْسَلُوا بَرْنَابَا لِكَيْ يَجْتَازَ إِلَى أَنْطَاكِيَّةِ. فَلَمَّا أَقْبَلَ وَرَأَى نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ، فَرِحَ وَوَعَّظَهُمْ كُلَّهُمْ بِأَنْ يَتَّبِعُوا فِي الرَّبِّ بِعَزِيمَةِ الْقَلْبِ. لِأَنَّهُ كَانَ رَجُلًا صَالِحًا مُمْتَلِئًا مِنَ الرُّوحِ الْقُدْسِ وَالْإِيمَانِ. وَأَنْصَمَّ إِلَى الرَّبِّ جَمْعٌ كَثِيرٌ. ثُمَّ خَرَجَ بَرْنَابَا إِلَى طَرْسُوسَ فِي طَلَبِ شَاوُلَ. وَلَمَّا وَجَدَهُ أَتَى بِهِ إِلَى أَنْطَاكِيَّةِ. وَتَرَدَّدَا مَعًا سَنَةً كَامِلَةً فِي هَذِهِ الْكَنِيسَةِ، وَعَلَّمَ جَمْعًا كَثِيرًا، وَدُعِيَ التَّلَامِيذُ مَسِيحِيِّينَ فِي أَنْطَاكِيَّةِ أَوَّلًا. وَفِي تِلْكَ الْأَيَّامِ،

انْحَدَرَ مِنْ أورشليمَ أنبياءَ إلى أنطاكية. فقام واحدٌ مِنْهُمْ اسمُهُ أغابوس، فأنبأ بالروح أن ستكونُ مجاعةٌ عظيمةٌ في جميعِ المسكونة، وقد وقعَ ذلكَ في أيامِ كلوديوس قيصر. فعزَمَ التلاميذُ، بحسبِ ما يتيسرُ لكلِّ واحدٍ مِنْهُمْ، أن يرسلوا خدَمَةً إلى الإخوةِ الساكنينَ في أورشليم. ففعلوا ذلكَ، وبعثوا إلى الشيوخِ على أيدي برنابا وشاول.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (4:18-23)

At that time, as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Immediately they left their nets and followed Him. And going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and He called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. And He went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the Kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

الإنجيل

فصلٌ شريفٌ من بشارة القديس متى الإنجيليِّ البشيرِ والتلميذِ الطاهر.

في ذلكَ الزَّمانِ، فيما كانَ يسوعُ ماشياً على شاطئِ بحرِ الجليلِ، رأى أخوينِ وهما سِمعانُ المدعوُّ بطرسُ وأندراؤسُ أخوه، يُلقيانِ شَبَكَةً في البحرِ (لأنَّهُما كانا صيَّادين)، فقالَ لَهُما هَلُمَّ ورائي فأَجْعَلَكُما صيَّادي النَّاسِ. فلَوَقَتِ تَرَكا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَتَبِعاه. وَجازَ مِنْ هُناكَ، فرَأى أخوينِ آخَرينِ وهما يَعقوبُ بنُ زَبَدَى ويوحنا أخوه، في سَفِينَةٍ مَعَ أبِيهما زَبَدَى يُصِلِحانِ شباكَهُما فدَعاهُما، ولَوَقَتِ تَرَكا السَّفِينَةَ وأبَاهُما وَتَبِعاه. وكانَ يسوعُ يَطوفُ الجليلِ كُلَّهُ يُعَلِّمُ في مَجامِعِهِم وَيَكْرِزُ بِبِشارَةِ المَلَكوتِ وَيَشْفِي كُلَّ مَرَضٍ وَكُلَّ ضَعْفٍ في الشَّعبِ.

TRISAGION PRAYER

40 Day Memorial service in memory of Sahar Tawfik, offered by her husband John Sonenberg and her daughters; Sasha and Nicole Demienne, her sisters; Mera Tawfik-Oshana (Johnny Oshana) and Sandra Tawfik. Memory Eternal!



HOLY BREAD OF OBLATION

OFFERED BY: Fr. Samer, the Clergy and the parishioners for the good of the parish council members, the building committee and the Ladies Auxiliary and their families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Sonenberg, Demienne, Tawfik and Oshana families, for the good health of John, Sasha, Nicole, Mera, Johnny and Sandra. Masny Years!

OFFERED BY: Nicolas and Jihane Bechwati on the occasion of their 30th wedding anniversary (June 1), and the good health of their children Nicolas, Gabrielle and Isabella and the Bechwati family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Rima Gannage for the good health of her daughter Catherine on the occasion of her birthday (June 14), and Rima's birthday (June 20). For the good health of her husband Michel on the occasion of Father's Day. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Joe and Amal Habib for the good health of their son Ramsey on the occasion of his birthday (June 15) and the good health of his wife Jenn and their children Isabella and Yousif. For the good health of their son Fadi and his wife Kate and their son Sean and the Habib family. Many Years!



COFFEE HOUR

Offered By: Sonenberg, Demienne and Tawfik families

*(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)

Reserve the Date!

- **Sunday, August 9** – We will celebrate the **Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ**, the feast day of our church. A festive luncheon will be served following the Divine Liturgy.
- We will also joyfully welcome the newly ordained **Fr. John Dibs**, who will be ordained to the holy priesthood at The Parish Life Conference on July 4th.
- More information and details will be provided soon.

We invite everyone to participate in these joyous celebrations.

Honoring The Graduates of 2026 Special Prayers Honoring the Graduates will be held on Sunday June 21st.

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.
- **Dominic Youssef:** Graduating with three Associate Degrees from West Valley College with honors, and transferring to San Jose State University studying Aviation and minor in Business.

- **Taleen Ammari:** Graduating from Presentation High School and will be attending Santa Clara University.
- **Angelena Hanani:** Graduating from Archbishop Mitty High School and will be attending Santa Clara University.
- **Christina Labban:** Graduating from Saratoga High School and will be attending NYU.
- **Lukas Anthony Srouji:** Graduating from Mount Carmel High School in San Diego and will be attending San Jose State University.
- **Ashley Jean Srouji:** Graduating from Foothill High School in Pleasanton and will be attending CalPoly.
- **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.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE CHURCH

Please save the date

June 13: Book Club, Saturday June 13 @ 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/>

August 9: Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Food Festival Sept 12 & 13: Our Annual Food Festival

CAMP THREE HOLY YOUTHS

Thursday, July 23-Monday, July 27, 2026 at Daybreak Camp in Felton, CA. Registration is open and space is filling up quickly! Tuition is \$300 per camper, **click here** to visit the camp site for full details. Looking forward to seeing our returning and new campers this year!

[Click here to register today!](#)

Summer Spiritual Reading Program

A Sunday School - Bookstore Partnership

Calling all students! Our parish is hosting a spiritual reading challenge that will run June - July. Students are invited to select a story from the lives of the saints and complete a small reflection (artwork, essay, poster or other). Reflections will be displayed at our Summer Family Night (date to be announced) and all participants will receive a \$10 gift card to our bookstore; teens will receive \$15. A great opportunity to read as a family!

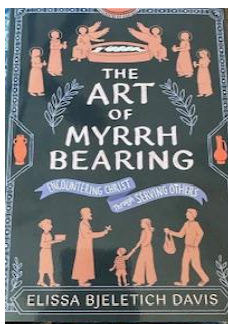
Bible Bowl Preparation Season is Open!

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.

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 everyone, but only the ones that read the book will discuss what’s read so far of the book. We have books available to purchase at the June 13th gathering for the next discussion meeting.

Workshop finished goods will be donated to nearby shelters.



The Faithful and Secularism, Part One

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

Secularism refers to a purely earthly way of thinking, that is, a philosophy of life based only on the givens of earthly existence. In Arabic, according to *Al-Munjid* dictionary, a *dawqhrī* is an atheist who says that the world has existed from eternity and will remain forever, having no Creator. In this sense, the word is similar to the word “world” as it appears in the Gospel of John. The Christian is in this world, but he is not of it. In other words, he lives in the world, but he draws his way of life from the Gospel, not from the world.

In its contemporary practical sense, secularism means managing the affairs of life by human ability alone, without God. Man alone becomes the reference point, starting point, and source of the secular world. This concept began to grow stronger and to prevail, becoming a philosophy and policy adopted by people, societies, and states, roughly three hundred years ago. And the more technological abilities have developed, granting man the power to overcome the difficulties of life, and means to confront and eliminate them, the more the secular manner of life has become established and deeply rooted in human consciousness.

The danger of secularism does not lie only in the fact that it replaces God with man as the reference point of humanity. Its danger also allows one to deny God’s

action in the world not only theoretically but practically. Secularism turns God into something into nothing more than an image, a form, or a theoretical belief. It may preserve religious practice, but it empties that practice of its essence and replaces it with something purely worldly. It separates life from faith and confines the life of faith to a few religious practices. Thus, the secular man does not live according to the demands of his faith so much as he lives according to the demands of secular culture.

According to secularism, the affairs of life are handled in a worldly manner, while the affairs of God are handled in the temple on Sunday. That behavior becomes separated from faith, as do morals, values, and ways of living. Man becomes confined to the earthly dimension of his life, and he turns the spiritual dimension into a kind of perfume that gives him the feeling that his conscience has been satisfied, while preventing him from examining himself in the light of the Gospel and, consequently, from demanding of himself more than what he already is.

There is nothing sacred in secularism. Man no longer lives in the anticipation and realization of eternity—or, more precisely, in the experience of it, even as a murmur, here and now. His earthly life is no longer an imitation of the things above and an embodiment of the things to come. Rather, the present world charts the path, direction, and aim of life. Indeed, quite the opposite happens: earthly life itself becomes the goal and the end, and all available possibilities, including religious and spiritual ones, are placed at its service. The happiness of earthly life becomes the framework within which this philosophy imprisons man, neglecting his non-material dimensions.

Secularism is a completely materialistic way of life. It is another face of Marxist materialism. It forms man within a world whose material demands never end, drawing for him a consumer society that makes him constantly pant as he chases his worldly affairs that have no end. Marxism openly opposes religion, while secularism outwardly accepts it, but at the same time absorbs it and strips it of its essence.

I remember the son of an American priest, of Middle Eastern origin, who wrote in his memoirs, with astonishment, after spending three months with me learning Arabic: “God is present in people’s daily life here in the East! They bring Him into every matter of their lives, and they do not restrict Him to Sunday only!”

Secularism, which dominates man in general, has created a schism between faith and life. It is not always easy for the believer to distinguish between what befits him as a believer and what does not. This confusion has entered deeply into human consciousness, and human communities have absorbed it to different degrees, according to each community and the extent of secularism's influence within its society.

The more technological progress develops, the more man's ability to control his reality increases. Consequently, he comes to depend on his own energy and capabilities, replacing God with them.

Here are a few simple examples:

- Man used to turn to God, asking for healing from any pain or bodily illness, no matter how simple. Our ancestors were accustomed to calling the priest to pray over their sick and anoint them with holy oil. The sacrament of Holy Unction was a lived sacrament. Today, however, the believer turns immediately to the appropriate medicine, and few even make the sign of the Cross, asking God's blessing before taking the medicine. Prayer, meanwhile, has become the last refuge, when hope in medicine has come to an end.
- A quick survey of how weddings are conducted, both inside and outside the Church, shows the liturgical sacrament has become folklore! The reverent prayer of the Crowning has become a party! Attention is focused on everything except preparation to receive the blessing of God. This raises crucial questions: How many people practice the sacrament of repentance and confession before their marriage? What percentage approach the sacrament of the Eucharist before the celebration of their Crowning?
- How do the bride and groom today, while immersed in preparations for their wedding celebration, distinguish between what befits them as Christians and what does not? And if they do distinguish this, how can they face the influence of parents and friends? Do they have the ability to go against the customs that accompany the wedding celebration? What are the essential traditions that cannot be dispensed with, and what are the external formalities that can be abandoned? How do they understand the sacrament of marriage and, consequently, the Christian understanding of marriage?

Has not entering the church for the celebration of the Crowning become, for many, completely empty of spiritual awareness? Does it not seem, in their consciousness, that they are participating in a sacred and reverent prayer, even though its rites are exceedingly beautiful? Do not the shameful clothes with which some enter the church point to a real divorce between real Christianity and their own form of Christianity? Does this behavior not indicate the domination of the worldly festive spirit over the sanctifying spirit?

- The secular spirit turns everything sacred into folklore or into a religious color that, in its outward form, contradicts the essence of the reality itself. We organize a church charity event during a fast, and we invite people to a luxurious fasting dinner! Does not the word “luxurious,” that is, extravagant, contradict the very essence of fasting? And the agape meals, which are authentic in our tradition and which fundamentally express the familial sense of the faithful in the Church, become banquets in which only the well-to-do can participate.
- The secular spirit presents death as the natural end of life, and so reconciles man with it. It gives great importance to funeral rituals. In some countries, they cover the face of the deceased in makeup so that he may appear beautiful in his sleep and so that his appearance may not disturb others. Christianity, however, confronts death and exposes it as the final enemy of life, and transforms it into a passage toward fullness in the true life, as Father Alexander Schmemmann says in his book “For the Life of the World.”

This spirit of secularism has entered into the heart of the Church. This is no surprise, for the people of the Church, whether pastors or flocks, are children of this age. If the influence of this age upon them is stronger than the influence of the Gospel, they will behave secularly, even in the Church, perhaps unknowingly in many cases.

المؤمن والدهرية، الجزء الأول

بقلم المترولوجيت سابا (اسبر)

الدهرية، صفة العالم الحالي، لفظة مشتقة من لفظة "دهر"، وتعني الفكر الأرضي المحض، أي فلسفة العيش وفق معطيات الحياة الأرضية فقط. جاء في معجم "المنجد" أن الدهري هو الملحد القائل إن العالم موجود أولاً أبداً لا صانع له. بهذا المعنى تكون اللفظة مشابهة للفظه "العالم" كما وردت في إنجيل يوحنا. المسيحي في هذا العالم، ولكنه ليس منه. أي يعيش فيه لكنه يستمد فكره المعيشي من الإنجيل لا من العالم.

تعني الدهرية، بمعناها المعيشي المعاصر، تدبير أمور الحياة بقدره الإنسان وحده، لا الله. الإنسان، وحده، مرجع العالم الدهري ومنطقه ومصدره. بدأ هذا المفهوم يتقوى ويسود، ليصير فلسفة وسياسةً يعتمدها البشر، وكذلك المجتمعات والدول، منذ ثلاثمائة سنة تقريباً. وكلما تطورت القدرات التكنولوجية، التي تمنح الإنسان قوة للتغلب على صعاب الحياة، وإمكانيات لمواجهةها والقضاء عليها، ترسخ وتجدد نمط العيش دهرياً، في الوجدان الإنساني، أكثر فأكثر.

لا يكمن خطر الدهرية، فقط، في أنها تستغني عن الله مرجعاً للبشرية، وتضع الإنسان محلّه، بل في أنها تسمح بعدم نكران الله نظرياً، لكنها، في الواقع، تنكر، عملياً، فعله في العالم. تجعل الدهرية الله نوعاً من مجرد صورة، شكل، إيمان نظري لا غير. قد تحافظ على الممارسة الدينية، لكنها تفرغها من جوهرها، الذي يُستبدل بأخر دنيوي محض. فهي تفصل بين الحياة والإيمان، وتحصر حياة الإيمان ببضع ممارسات دينية. فلا يعيش الإنسان، دهرياً، وفق متطلبات إيمانه، بقدر ما يعيش وفق متطلبات الثقافة الدهرية.

فأمور الحياة، بحسب الدهرية، تُقضى دنيوياً، أما أمور الله فتُقضى في المعبد، يوم الأحد. والنتيجة، أنّ السلوك ينفصل عن الإيمان، وكذلك الأخلاق، والقيم، وطرق العيش. فينحصر الإنسان في البعد الأرضي لحياته، ويجعل البعد الروحي بمثابة عطر يمنحه شعوراً بإرضاء الضمير، وعدم مساءلة الذات على ضوء الإنجيل، وتالياً عدم مطالبته بأكثر ممّا هو في الواقع.

ما من مقدّس في الدهريّة. لأنّ الإنسان لا يحيا في توقّع الأبدية وتحقيقها، أو بالأدقّ اختبارها، ولو تمتمةً، منذ الآن. لا تعود حياته الأرضيّة اقتداءً بالعلويّات، وتجسيداً للآيات، بقدر ما ترسم الدنيا الحاضرة، مسار الحياة وتوجهها ومسعاها. لا بل على العكس من ذلك، تصير الحياة الأرضيّة هي الهدف والغاية، ولها تُسخر كل الإمكانيات المتوفرة، بما فيها الدنيّة والروحيّة. هناء الحياة الأرضيّة هو الإطار الذي تسجن فيها هذه الفلسفة الإنسان، مهملةً أبعاده غير الماديّة. الدهرية طريقة حياة ماديّة كلياً. هي وجه آخر للماديّة الماركسية. فهي تنشئ الإنسان في عالم لا تنتهي متطلباته الماديّة، فترسم له مجتمعاً استهلاكياً، تجعله يلهث، باستمرار، ركضاً وراء أموره المعاشيّة، التي لا تنتهي. استعدت الماركسيّة الدين علناً، أمّا الدهريّة فتقبله ظاهرياً، غير أنّها تستوعبه وتفقده جوهره في آن.

أذكر ابن كاهن أميركي، من أصل شرق أوسطي، كتب في مذكراته، مستغرباً، بعد أن قضى معي فترة ثلاثة أشهر، يتعلّم العربية، ما يلي: "الله حاضر في حياة الناس يومياً هنا، (في الشرق)! إنهم يُدخلونه في كلّ أمر من أمور حياتهم، ولا يقصرونه على يوم الأحد فقط!!"

هذا الشكل من العيش، الذي طغى على الإنسان، بعامّة، ساهم في خلق ازدواجيّة، بين الإيمان والحياة. فليس من السهل، على المؤمن أن يميّز، دوماً، بين ما يوافق، كمؤمن، وما

لا يوافقهم. ودخل هذا الالتباس إلى عمق الوجدان البشري، وتشرّبه الجماعات البشرية، وإن بدرجات، حسب كلّ جماعة، ومدى تأثير الدهريّة في مجتمعها.

كلّما ازداد التقدّم التكنولوجي تطوّراً، ازدادت إمكانيّة الإنسان في التحكّم بواقعه أكثر فأكثر، وتالياً، صار معتمداً على طاقته وإمكانيّته، مستبدلاً الله بهما.

هاكم بعض الأمثلة البسيطة:

- اعتاد الإنسان على اللجوء إلى الله طلباً لشفائه، من أيّ وجع أو مرض جسديّ، مهما كان بسيطاً. فقد اعتاد أجدادنا على استدعاء الكاهن لكي يصلّي على مرضاهم، ويمسحهم بالزيت المقدّس. كان سرّ مسحة المرضى سرّاً معاشاً. بينما يلجأ المؤمن، اليوم، مباشرة، إلى الدواء المناسب، وقلّ من يرسم إشارة الصليب، طالباً بركة الله، قبل تناول الدواء. أمّا الصلاة فصارت الملجأ الأخير، حينما ينقطع الأمل من الطب.
- سخّ سريع لكيفيّة إتمام مناسبات الزواج، ضمن الكنيسة وخارجها، فالسرّ الليتورجي صار فولكلوراً!! وصلاة الإكليل الخشوعيّة حفلاً! والاهتمام منصّب على كلّ شيء ما عدا التحضير لتقبّل بركة الله. هذا يطرح تساؤلات حاسمة: كم هو عدد الذين يمارسون سرّ التوبة والاعتراف قبل زواجهم؟ ما هي نسبة الذين يتقدمون من سرّ الإفخارستيا قبل إتمام إكليهما؟

- كيف يميّز العروسان اليوم، وهما في غمرة تحضيرهما لحفل زواجهما، بين ما يليق بهما كمسيحيين وما لا يليق؟ وإذا ميّزا، كيف يمكنهما أن يواجها تأثيرات الوالدين والأصدقاء؟ هل يملكان القدرة على مخالفة العادات المرافقة لحفل الزواج؟ وما هي التقاليد الجوهريّة التي لا بدّ منها، وما هي الشكليّات التي يُمكن الاستغناء عنها؟ كيف يفهمان سرّ الزواج، وتالياً المفهوم المسيحي للزواج؟

- أما بات الدخول إلى الكنيسة لإتمام الإكليل، عند الكثيرين، خالياً تماماً من الحسّ الروحي، ولا يبدو في وجدانهم أنهم يشاركون في صلاة خاشعة مقدّسة، ولو كانت طقوسها في غاية الجمال؟ ألا تشير الثياب المخجلة، التي يدخل بها بعضهم إلى الكنيسة، إلى طلاق حقيقي بين المسيحيّة وبين مسيحيّتهم؟ ألا يدلّ هذا المسلك على طغيان الروح الاحتفاليّة العالميّة على الروح التقديسيّة؟
- تحوّل الروح الدهريّة كلّ مقدّس إلى فولكلور أو لون ديني، يصادّ، في شكله، جوهر الأمر الحقيقي. نقيم حفلاً خيرياً كنسياً، في الصوم، فندعو إلى عشاء صيامي فاخر!! ألا تتناقض، جوهرياً، كلمة فاخر، أي باذخ، مع جوهر الصوم؟ وتصير موائد المحبّة، الأصيلية في تقليدنا، والمعبرة، أساساً، عن الحسّ العائليّ للمؤمنين في الكنيسة، ولائم، لا يستطيع المشاركة فيها إلا الميسور؟
- تقدّم الروح الدهريّة الموت نهايةً طبيعيّةً للحياة، فتصالح الإنسان معه. فتولي طقوس الدفن أهميّة كبرى. في بعض البلدان يُخضعون وجه الميت لعملية مكياج حقيقيّة، لكي يبدو جميلاً في نومه، ولا يزعج منظره الآخرين. بينما تواجه المسيحيّة الموت وتكشفه باعتباره العدو الأخير للحياة، وتصيّرّه معبراً إلى الاكتمال في الحياة الحقّة (الأب ألكسندر شميمين).

روح الدهريّة هذا دخل إلى قلب الكنيسة، ولا عجب، فأهل الكنيسة، رعاة كانوا أم رعيّة، هم أبناء هذا الدهر، فإنّ كان تأثيره عليهم أقوى من تأثير الإنجيل، فسيصلكون دهريّاً، حتّى، في الكنيسة، عن غير دراية، ربّما، في حالات كثيرة.

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If anyone would still like to participate in supporting our building project through this matching initiative, please contact Fr. Samer for more information about additional giving opportunities. Thank you for your continued prayers, generosity, and support as we work together for the future of our parish.