



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 28, 2026**

**THE HOLY, GLORIOUS APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL**

**عيد الرسولين المجيدين بطرس وبولس**

## **RESURRECTION 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 بالحن الثالث**

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

## **APOLYTIKION OF SS. PETER AND PAUL IN TONE FOUR**

O foremost in the ranks of Apostles, and teachers of the world, Peter and Paul, intercede with the Master of all to grant peace unto the world, and to our souls the Great Mercy.

### **أبوليتيكيون القديسين بطرس وبولس بالحن الرابع**

أَيُّهَا الْمُتَقَدِّمَانِ فِي كِرَاسِي الرَّسُلِ، وَالْمُعَلِّمَانِ لِلدُّنْيَا، تَشَفَّعَا إِلَيَّ سَيِّدِ الْكُلِّ، أَنْ يَهَبَ السَّلَامَ لِلْعَالَمِ، وَلِنَفُوسِنَا 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**

لَمَا تَجَلَّيْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهِ فِي الْجَبَلِ، أَظْهَرْتَ مَجْدَكَ لِلتَّلَامِيذِ بِحَسَبِ مَا اسْتَطَاعُوا. فَأَشْرَقَ لَنَا نَحْنُ الْخَطَاةُ نُورَكَ الْأَزَلِيَّ، بِشَفَاعَةِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِ، يَا مَانِحَ النُّورِ الْمَجْدِ لَكَ.

## **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.

### قنداق بالحن الثاني

يا شَفِيعَةَ الْمَسِيحِيِّينَ غَيْرِ الْخَازِيَةِ، الْوَسِيطَةَ لَدَى الْخَالِقِ غَيْرِ الْمَزْدُودَةِ، لَا تُعْرِضِي عَنِّ أَصْوَاتِ طَلِبَاتِنَا نَحْنُ الْخَطَاةَ، بَلْ تَدَارِكِينَا بِالْمَعُونَةِ بِمَا أَتَيْتِ صَالِحَةً، نَحْنُ الصَّارِخِينَ إِلَيْكَ بِإِيْمَانٍ: بَادِرِي إِلَى الشَّفَاعَةِ وَأَسْرِعِي فِي الطَّلِبَةِ، يَا وَالِدَةَ الْإِلَهِ، الْمُتَشَفِّعَةَ دَائِمًا بِمُكْرَمِيكَ.

### THE EPISTLE

*Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth.*

*The heavens show forth the glory of God.*

### **The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (11:21-12:9)**

Brethren, whatever anyone dares to boast of—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast of that. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? I am a better one—I am talking like a madman—with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless beatings, and often near death. Five times I have received at the hands of the Jews the forty lashes less one. Three times I have been beaten with rods; once I was stoned. Three times I have been shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from robbers, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brethren; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. And, apart from other things, there is the daily pressure upon me of my anxiety for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to fall, and I am not indignant? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He Who is blessed forever, knows that I do not lie. At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped his hands. I must boast; there is nothing to be gained by it, but I will

go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. On behalf of this man I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. Though if I wish to boast, I shall not be a fool, for I shall be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think more of me than he sees in me or hears from me. And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.” I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

### الرسالة

إلى كلِّ الأَرْضِ خَرَجَ صَوْتُهُمْ. السَّمَاوَاتُ تُنْبِئُ مَجْدَ اللَّهِ.

فصلٌ من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول الثانية إلى كورنثوس. (9:12-21:11)

يا إخوة، أقول هذا على سبيل الهوان كأننا قد ضعفنا. فالذين يجروؤن عليه -وكلامي كلام جاهلٍ- أجزؤ عليه أنا أيضاً. أعبرانيون هم؟ فأنا كذلك، الإسرائيليون هم؟ فأنا كذلك، أمن ذرية إبراهيم هم؟ فأنا كذلك. أخدام المسيح هم؟ أقول هذا كمختل العقل فأنا أقوقهم: أقوقهم في المتاعب وتحمل الجلد وفي السجون، وفي التعرض للموت مراراً. جلدني اليهود خمس مرات أربعين جلدة إلا واحدة. وضربت بالعصي ثلاث مرات، ورجمت مرة واحدة، وانكسرت بي السفينة ثلاث مرات، وقضيت يوماً بنهاره وليله في عرض البحر، وكنت في الأسفار مرات كثيرة، وفي أخطار السؤل، وفي أخطار اللصوص، وفي أخطار من جنسي، وأخطار من الأمم، وأخطار في المدينة، وأخطار في البرية، وأخطار في البحر، وأخطار من الإخوة الكذابين، وعانيت التعب والكد والأسهار الكثيرة، والجوع والعطش، والأصوام الكثيرة، والبرد والعري، وما عدا هذه التي هي من خارج، ما يتفاقم علي كل يوم من تدبير

الأمورِ وَمِنَ الْإِهْتِمَامِ بِجَمِيعِ الْكَنَائِسِ. فَمَنْ يَضْعُفُ وَلَا أَضْعُفُ أَنَا؟ أَوْ مَنْ يُشَكِّكُ وَلَا أَحْتَرِقُ أَنَا؟ إِنْ كَانَ لَا بُدَّ مِنَ الْإِفْتِخَارِ فَإِنِّي أَفْتَحِرُ بِضَعْفِي. وَيَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ أَبُو رَبَّنَا يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحَ الْمُبَارَكُ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ أَنِّي لَا أَكْذِبُ. كَانَ عَامِلُ الْمَلِكِ أَرْتَاسَ بَدِمَشْقَ، يَحْرُسُ الْمَدِينَةَ لِيَقْبِضَ عَلَيَّ. فَذَلَّلْتُ فِي زَنْبِيلٍ مِنْ كَوَّةٍ عَلَى السُّورِ وَنَجَوْتُ مِنْ يَدَيْهِ. وَإِنْ كَانَ لَا بُدَّ لِي مِنَ الْإِفْتِخَارِ مَعَ أَنَّهُ لَا خَيْرَ فِيهِ، فَأَنْتَقِلُ إِلَى الْكَلَامِ عَلَى رُؤْيَى الرَّبِّ وَإِعْلَانَاتِهِ. إِنِّي أَعْرِفُ إِنْسَانًا فِي الْمَسِيحِ مُنْذُ أَرْبَعِ عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً اخْتُطِفَ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الثَّلَاثَةَ، أِبَالْجَسَدِ؟ لَا أَعْلَمُ أَمْ بِغَيْرِ الْجَسَدِ؟ لَا أَعْلَمُ، اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ. وَإِنَّمَا أَعْرِفُ أَنَّ هَذَا الْإِنْسَانَ اخْتُطِفَ إِلَى الْفِرْدَوْسِ، أِبَالْجَسَدِ أَمْ بِغَيْرِ الْجَسَدِ لَسْتُ أَعْلَمُ، اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ، وَهُنَاكَ سَمِعَ كَلِمَاتٍ سَرِيَّةً لَا يَحِلُّ لِإِنْسَانٍ أَنْ يَنْطِقَ بِهَا. أَمَّا هَذَا الرَّجُلُ فَأَفْتَحِرُ بِهِ، وَأَمَّا مِنْ جِهَةِ نَفْسِي فَلَا أَفْتَحِرُ إِلَّا بِأَوْهَانِي. فَإِنِّي لَوْ أَرَدْتُ الْإِفْتِخَارَ لَمَا كُنْتُ جَاهِلًا، لِأَنِّي أَقُولُ الْحَقَّ، لَكِنِّي أَتَحَاشَى الْإِفْتِخَارَ لِنَلَّا يَطْنُ بِي أَحَدٌ فَوْقَ مَا يَرَانِي عَلَيْهِ أَوْ يَسْمَعُهُ مِنِّي. وَلِنَلَّا أَسْتَكْبِرَ بِفَرْطِ الْإِعْلَانَاتِ أُعْطِيتُ شَوْكَةً فِي الْجَسَدِ، مَلَكَ الشَّيْطَانِ لِيَلْطَمَنِي لِنَلَّا أَتَكَبَّرَ. وَلِهَذَا طَلَبْتُ إِلَى الرَّبِّ ثَلَاثَ مَرَّاتٍ أَنْ تُفَارِقَنِي، فَقَالَ لِي: تَكْفِيكَ نِعْمَتِي. لِأَنَّ قُوَّتِي فِي الضَّعْفِ تَكْمُلُ. فَبِكَلِّ سُرُورٍ أَفْتَحِرُ بِالْحَرِيِّ بِأَوْهَانِي، لِنَسْتَقِرَّ فِي قُوَّةِ الْمَسِيحِ.

## THE GOSPEL

### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (16:13-19)**

At that time, when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His Disciples, “Who do men say that the Son of man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father Who is in Heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.”

## الإنجيل

فصل من بشارة القديس متى الإنجيلي البشير والتلميذ الطاهر.

في ذلك الزمان لما جاء يسوع إلى نواحي قيصرية فيلبس سأل تلاميذه قائلاً: مَنْ يَقُولُ النَّاسُ إِنِّي أَنَا ابْنُ النَّبَشْرِ؟ فَقَالُوا: قَوْمٌ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّكَ يُوْحَنَّا الْمَعْمَدَانُ، وَآخَرُونَ إِنَّكَ إِيلِيَّا، وَآخَرُونَ إِنَّكَ أَرْمِيَاءُ، أَوْ وَاحِدٌ مِنَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ. قَالَ لَهُمْ يَسُوعُ: وَأَنْتُمْ مَنْ تَقُولُونَ إِنِّي هُوَ؟ أَجَابَ سَمْعَانُ بَطْرُسُ قَائِلاً: أَنْتَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ الْحَيِّ. فَأَجَابَ يَسُوعُ وَقَالَ لَهُ: طُوبَى لَكَ يَا سَمْعَانُ بَنَ يُونَا. فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَحْمٌ وَلَا دَمٌ كَشَفَ لَكَ هَذَا، لَكِنْ أَبِي الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ. وَأَنَا أَقُولُ لَكَ، أَنْتَ بَطْرُسُ، وَعَلَى هَذِهِ الصَّخْرَةِ سَأَبْنِي كَنِيْسَتِي وَأَبْوَابُ الْجَحِيمِ لَنْ تَقْوَى عَلَيْهَا. وَسَأَعْطِيكَ مَفَاتِيحَ مَلَكُوتِ السَّمَاوَاتِ. فَكُلُّ مَا رَبَطْتَهُ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ يَكُونُ مَرْبُوطاً فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ، وَكُلُّ مَا حَلَلْتَهُ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ يَكُونُ مَحْلُولاً فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ.

## KOINONIKON (COMMUNION HYMN) FOR SS. PETER & PAUL IN TONE EIGHT

Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. Alleluia.

### كينونيكون القديسين بطرس وبولس باللحن الثامن

في كلِّ الأرضِ حَرَجَ مَنْطِقَهُمْ، وَإِلَى أَقْصَايِ الْمَسْكُونَةِ كَلَامُهُمْ. هَلِّلُويَا.

## TRISAGION PRAYER

3-9 Day Memorial Service in memory of Afaf Tucktuck Awad, offered by her sons: Musa and his wife Suha, Marwan and his wife Mona, and her daughter Widad Saah (late husband Ibrahim Saah). Her grandchildren; Shadin (husband Marwan Freij), Daleen, Nabih, Nadeen, Michael, Ramah, Ramzi and Rania, Great grandchildren; Ziyad, Mazen and Nizar and the Tucktuck, Awad, Saah, Eid, Karam and Freij families. Memory Eternal!

## TRISAGION PRAYER

40 Day Memorial Service in memory of Zahie Nijmeh, offered by her children; Deanna, Jack, William, Joanne Nijmeh and their families. Memory Eternal!



## **HOLY BREAD OF OBLATION**

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

**OFFERED BY:** Jad and Elaine Bateh on the occasion of their 48<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (June 25), and the good health of their family; Michael, Jennifer, Shany, Zach, Sophia, Penelope and Emerson. Many Years!

**OFFERED BY:** Johnny and Juliana Khamis on the occasion of their 26<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (June 25) and the good health of the Khamis family. Many Years!

**OFFERED BY:** David and Hala Aboujudom on the occasion of their 46<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary (June 29), and the good health of their newly born grandson Alek (Born June 23), and the good health of Eddie, Marissa, David and Luke Aboujudom. Many Years!



## **COFFEE HOUR**

Offered By: The Awad Family

*(To host the Coffee Hour, please contact Wardeh Asfour @408-718-3339*

*[office@orthodoxredeemer.org](mailto: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**

**Transfiguration Liturgy Service, August 6, @ 10:30AM**

(Please check your email in case of any cancellations for Vespers)

## **Save 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 invite everyone to participate in this joyous celebration.

Fr. Samer will be out of town **July 1-6** attending **The Diocese of Los Angeles and the west Parish Life Conference** in San Diego. He can be reached by phone @ **408-375-5673**

We would like to express our sincere thanks to **Fr. Theodore Sakellar** for **servicing the Divine Liturgy** on **Sunday, July 5**. May God grant him many blessed years!

On July 12<sup>th</sup> we will joyfully welcome the newly ordained **Fr. John Dibs**, who will be ordained to the holy priesthood at The Parish Life Conference on July 4th.

Following the Divine Liturgy, We invite all our parishioners to attend the picnic sponsored by St. Nicholas Church, SF @ Blackberry Farm, Cupertino. Please see the flyer below for details.

## **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 Akkary, Secretary; Mila Haddad, Treasurer; Gabreilla Ajlouni, Social Media Coordinator; Adriana Ajlouni.

## **UPCOMING EVNTS AT THE CHURCH**

### **Please save the date**

**July 12:** *St. Nicholas Annual Picnic @ 12:00PM*

**August 6:** *Transfiguration Liturgy Service @ 10:30AM. Fish will be Provided. Please bring a side dish and dessert to share. Please RSVP to the office*

**August 9:** *Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ*

**Food Festival Sept 12 & 13:** *Our Annual Food Festival*

## **CAMP THREE HOLY YOUTHS**

**July 23rd – 27th**

On Thursday, July 23rd, campers will check in at St. Nicholas church before we head to the San Francisco Zoo. Admission to the zoo will be completely free for all children registered for Camp THY. After our zoo visit, we will

travel together to our camp location in Felton to begin an amazing week of camp activities.

As we wrap up camp on Monday, July 27th, we will make a special stop at our sister parish, Church of the Redeemer in Los Altos. They will be graciously hosting us for a celebration before we continue our journey back to San Francisco. [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!

**The Faithful and Secularism, Part Three**  
*By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

In view of the new and continually unfolding challenges that secularism poses to faith in general, and to the Christian in particular, within the society of modernity—which has now come to be called “postmodernity”—believers differ in their ways of confronting it. This is not surprising, because many of these challenges are entirely new, and the Church has not previously experienced them.

Until recently, people lived in a religious society. Even if everyone were not a believer, people were nevertheless born into a social atmosphere marked by religious customs, traditions, and values. In contemporary society, however, the religious character is absent and has been replaced by a secular, worldly character, shaped by human experiences, expertise, and both sweet and bitter trials.

This change has begun to accelerate greatly throughout the whole world over the past two decades. Although the speed of this acceleration differs from one society to another, it now affects all societies. Religious bodies, therefore, find themselves before a real challenge, one they have not previously faced with such intensity. It is thus

natural that opinions and experiences should multiply regarding the ways of dealing with it, the questions of preserving and transmitting the faith to contemporary humanity, the language of evangelization, and the embodiment of Christian principles in today's world. This has produced diverse currents, which we may place under two broad categories, while recognizing within each of them varying degrees of strictness and leniency.

The first current boycotts what this world produces whenever it differs from what people were accustomed to in the past. For this current, every new thing becomes suspect, every innovation stirs fear, and every unfamiliar form of communication is viewed as demonic and as a path toward abandoning the uprightness of the faith. It is worth noting that the followers of this current do not boycott the use of technological tools themselves. Rather, they reject the new possibilities these tools produce in terms of rapprochement, communication, and encounter among human groups.

They reject dialogue because they sense, behind its various forms, aims that are dangerous to the Church and to the Orthodox faith. Thus, they reject rapprochement altogether instead of rejecting only the specific form in which they perceive danger. They see every engagement with the other as the beginning of a new heresy and as an abandonment of the Orthodox faith.

They confine faith to the forms produced by the action of the Holy Spirit among the ancients, and they are eager to imprison it within those forms, forbidding it to produce new expressions. They do not appreciate the extent of the change that has come upon contemporary humanity because of secularism and modernity. They do not see the increasing challenges to faith as a field of witness for them through their engagement with those challenges. They are content with the truth they possess. Whoever wishes may come and see.

They speak in a language that they themselves understand, but which may mean nothing to others—or, if it does mean anything, may communicate distorted concepts of the faith. They do not wish to enter the contest or confront the challenge. Nor do they accept the use of modern culture and the language of today in evangelization. They are moved by a constant anxiety over the preservation of the purity of the faith more than they are impelled to face the accumulating and rapidly increasing challenges to faith.

Thus, in the best of cases, they become like someone carrying cold water while waiting for the thirsty person to come to him. They do not require of themselves that they go out to him. They are like someone sheltering securely inside a strong,

stormproof building, while showing little concern for those facing hurricanes in their collapsing homes. In the best of cases, they are prepared to receive them if they knock on their door.

The adherents of the second current are enchanted by modernity and by what it produces. They adopt everything it offers without caution or discernment. They engage positively and energetically in dialogue, whatever it may be and wherever it may be found. They approach new ideas, patterns, and philosophies with admiration, even when these are opposed to their Gospel. They wish to reconcile the world with the Gospel easily, and often superficially.

They do not distinguish between the spirit of the world and the spirit of the Gospel. They hasten toward compromise in every discussion or dialogue. They find it easy to interpret the Gospel texts in ways that agree with their own ideas. They are influenced by prevailing patterns of life and wish, with good but naïve intentions, to clothe these patterns with a Christian garment.

Their motives may be pure, and many of them may be sincere in their efforts with intentions free of deceit. But they are captivated more than they should be by the glitter of modernity, by what it produces and establishes in minds and souls. They wish to modernize the faith through it, imagining that by doing so they are “evangelizing” it. It is no surprise, then, if many of them are found to be more influenced by the prevailing culture than by the culture of their faith.

In both currents, one finds those who go too far and harden themselves in one direction or the other, reacting violently toward the followers of the opposing current. The clash between the two sides may reach a dangerous point, threatening the unity of the Church and sowing a spirit of hatred and bitterness among her children. Perhaps the most dangerous thing in both groups is that each, in its own way, leans toward extremism in positions built more upon convictions than upon prayerful and tearful love, burning with longing for the salvation of the other side.

They are also driven by a zeal that may perhaps be sincere but motivated by emotionalism rather than by the quiet Spirit of the Lord, who enlightens, traces the straight path, and inspires one to walk in it. Their rigidity prevents them from meeting and engaging in dialogue within an atmosphere of prayer, peace, and love, drawn from their shared supplication for the presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst. Humility is lost—the humility that springs from the joy of encountering the brother “for whom Christ died,” whatever his position may be.

Moreover, the accusations exchanged between the two sides often take on a sharp and harsh tone, using absolute labels such as heretic, fundamentalist, liberal, un-Orthodox, rigid, destructive, and so forth. This creates an atmosphere in which people become unable to clarify their perspectives to one another. Ordinary believers see, within the ecclesial atmosphere, nothing but conflict, attack, criticism, accusation, noise and confusion, to the point that many of them can hardly understand what is happening.

Fear for the faith moves the followers of the first current to such a degree that they may forget that God is present in the midst of His Church. They assume the role of the policeman defending God's rights—even if, in doing so, they remove God Himself and replace Him with themselves. The followers of the second current are moved by the influence of the ideas of this age, to the point that they almost seem to believe that the Gospel is incomplete and needs to be completed by what human civilization has achieved.

The hesychastic life of prayer, which gives birth to love, remains absent on both sides. Without it, there can be no clear and pure vision. Let us remember that God did not speak to the prophet Elijah in the fire, nor in the storm, but in the gentle breeze. Let us make room for the Lord of the Church to express Himself, and let us not obscure Him by a false zeal that often springs from our passions rather than from our purity.

The immense efforts that were undertaken for the convening of the Great Council in 2016 ended in failure, and so many began calling it the Council of Crete. Yet what happened revealed the great chasm within the Church between the two currents mentioned above. It is the secular mentality that makes some close themselves off to the point of death, while others open themselves up to the point of losing their identity.

Olivier Clément, speaking as an Orthodox Christian, called for “the necessity that our action correspond to our word, that we free it from everything marked by hostility toward others, and that we unleash the Holy Spirit to act in history and restore to it the possibility of openness and creativity.”

He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

## المؤمن والدهريّة، الجزء الثالث

بقلم المتربوليت سابا (اسبر)

نظراً للتحديات، المستجدة والمتلاحقة باستمرار، التي تطرحها الدهريّة على الإيمان بعامة، والمسيحيّ بخاصّة، في مجتمع الحداثة، الذي بات يُسمّى "ما بعد الحداثة"، فإنّ المؤمنين يختلفون في طرق مواجهتها. ولا عجب في ذلك فالكثير من هذه التحديات جديد بالكلية، ولم تختبره الكنيسة سابقاً.

فقد كان الناس، حتّى زمن قريب، يعيشون في مجتمع ديني، ولو لم يكن جميع الناس مؤمنين، إلا أنّهم كانوا يولدون في مناخ اجتماعي مطبوع بالعادة والتقاليد والقيم الدينيّة. بينما يغيب الطابع الديني عن المجتمع المعاصر، ويُستبدل بآخر، دهري، دنيوي، مطبوع باختبارات الإنسان، وخبراته، وتجاربه الحلوة والمرّة.

وقد بدأ هذا التغيّر يتسارع جدّاً، في كلّ العالم، في العقدين الماضيين، وإنّ تفاوتت درجات تسارعه بين مجتمع وآخر، إلا أنّه صار يطال جميع المجتمعات. فباتت الهيئات الدينيّة أمام تحدّ حقيقيّ، لم تواجهه سابقاً بمثل هذه الحدة. لذا فمن الطبيعيّ أن تتعدّد الآراء والخبرات في طرق التعاطي معه، وفي قضايا حفظ الإيمان ونقله إلى الإنسان المعاصر، كما وفي لغة البشارة، وتجسيد المبادئ المسيحيّة في عالم اليوم. ما أنتج تيارات متنوّعة، يمكننا جعلها في اثنين، إذا ما لاحظنا في كليهما درجات مختلفة من التشدّد واللين.

التيار الأول يقاطع ما ينتجه هذا العالم من أمور مغايرة لِمَا اعتاد الناس عليه في الماضي. فيصير، عنده، كلّ جديد موضع شكّ، وكلّ ابتكارٍ مثيراً للخوف، وكلّ نمطٍ تواصلٍ غير مألوف شيطانيّاً، ودرباً إلى التخلّي عن استقامة الإيمان. الجدير بالذكر، أنّ أتباع هذا التيار لا يقاطعون استعمال الأدوات التكنولوجيّة، بل يرفضون الجديد الذي تنتجه هذه الأدوات، من سبل تقارب، على صعيد التواصل والتلاقي بين المجموعات البشريّة.

فهم يرفضون الحوار لأنّهم يتلمّسون وراء هيئاته أهدافاً خطيرة على الكنيسة والإيمان المستقيم. فيرمون بالتقارب، جملة وتفصيلاً، بدلاً من أن يقاطعوا الهيئة التي يتلمّسون

الخطر منها! ويرون في كلِّ تعاطٍ مع الآخر مشروع هرطقة ناشئة، وتخلياً عن الإيمان المستقيم.

يحصرون الإيمان في الأشكال التي أنتجها فعل الروح القدس في الأقدمين، ويحرصون على سجنه ضمنها، ويحظرون عليه إنتاج تعابير جديدة. لا يقدرّون مدى التغيّر الذي طرأ، بسبب الدهريّة والحداثة، على الإنسان المعاصر. لا يرون في تحدّيات الإيمان المتكاثرة ميداناً شهادة لهم، عبر انخراطهم فيها. هم هانئون بما عندهم من حقيقة. ومن أراد فليأت وينظر.

يتخاطبون بلغة يفهمونها هم، وقد لا تعني شيئاً للآخرين، إن لم تعن مفاهيم مشوهة للإيمان. لا يريدون منازلة التحدي ومواجهته. ولا يقبلون استعمال الثقافة الحديثة، ولغة اليوم في البشارة. يحركهم الجزع الدائم على دوام صفاء الإيمان، أكثر ممّا يدفعهم إلى مواجهة التحديّات الإيمانيّة، المتراكمة والمتسارعة.

فيصيرون، في أحسن الأحوال، كمن يحمل الماء البارد، وينتظر العطشان ليأتي إليه. فهم لا يطالبون أنفسهم بالذهاب إليه. إنهم أشبه بمن يحتمي، مطمئناً، ببناء متين مضادّ للعواصف، ولا يكثرث لمن يواجهون الأعاصير في بيوتهم المتداعية. في أحسن الأحوال، هو على استعداد لاستقبالهم، إن طرّقوا بابه.

أمّا أنصار التيار الثاني، فمصحورون بالحداثة وبما تنتجه. يتبنّون كلّ ما تقدّمه، دونما حرص أو تمييز. ينخرطون، بإيجابيّة وزخم، في الحوار، أيّاً يكن، وأنى وُجد، ويُقبلون، بإعجاب، على الأفكار والأنماط والفلسفات الجديدة، ولو كانت مضادّة لإنجيلهم. يريدون مصالحة العالم مع الإنجيل بسهولة، وغالباً بسطحيّة.

لا يميّزون بين روح العالم وروح الإنجيل. يسارعون إلى التوافقية، في أيّ نقاش أو حوار. يستسهلون تفسير النصوص الإنجيليّة بما يتوافق وأفكارهم. هم متأثرون بأنماط الحياة السائدة، ويريدون، بنية طيبة، إنّما ساذجة، إسباغ لبوس مسيحيّ عليها.

قد تكون دوافعهم نقيّة، وقد يكون كثيرون منهم صادقين في مساعيهم، ونيّاتهم لا زغل فيها. لكنّهم مأخوذون، أكثر من اللازم، ببريق الحداثة، وبما تنتجه، وترسّخه في الأذهان والنفوس، ويرغبون في تحديث الإيمان بها، ظانّين أنّهم "يؤنجلونها" بذلك. ولا عجب، إذا ما وُجد كثيرون منهم متأثرون بالثقافة السائدة أكثر من ثقافة إيمانهم. تجد في كلا التيارين، من يتمادى ويتصلّب، في هذا الخطّ أو ذاك، برّدّة فعل عنيفة تجاه أتباع التيار الآخر. وقد يصل الصدام، بين الفريقين، إلى حدّ خطِر يهدّد وحدة الكنيسة، ويبثّ روح الكراهية والبغضاء في ما بين أبنائها. ولعلّ أخطر ما في الفريقين أنّهما، كلّاً بدوره، يجنح إلى التطرّف في مواقفه، المبنية على قناعات، أكثر ممّا هي مبنية على المحبّة، المصلية والدامعة، لهفّة على خلاص الطرف الآخر.

وأيضاً بناء على زخم، صادق ربّما، إنّما تحرّكه الانفعالية، لا روح الرب الهادئ، الذي ينير ويرسم الطريق المستقيم ويُلهم إليه. يمنعهم تشدّدهم من التلاقي والحوار، في جوّ الصلاة والسلام والمحبّة، المستمد من التماسهم، سوياً، لحضور الروح القدس في وسطهم. ويُفتقّد التواضع، النابع من الفرح بلقيا الأخ، "الذي مات المسيح لأجله"، أيّاً كان موقفه.

كما إنّ الاتهامات المتبادلة بين الفريقين، كثيراً ما تتخذ نبرة حادّة وقاسية، وصفات مطلقة على شاكلة: هرطوقي، أصوليّ، ليبرالي، غير مستقيم، متزمت، مخزّب... ممّا يخلق جوّاً من انعدام القدرة على الوصول إلى توضيح وجهات نظر بعضهم تجاه بعضهم الآخر. فلا يرى المؤمنون العاديّون، في الأجواء الكنسيّة، سوى عراقك، وهجوم، وانتقاد، وأتهام، وصخب، وتشويش، حتى ليكاد الكثيرون منهم يعجزون عن فهم ما يحصل.

يحرك الخوف على الإيمان أتباع التيّار الأول، إلى درجةٍ، قد ينسون، فيها، أنّ الله حاضر، في وسط كنيسته، فيتبنّون دور الشرطي المدافع عن حقّ الله، ولو غيّبوا الله نفسه مستبدلين إياه بأنفسهم! أمّا أتباع التيّار الثاني، فيحرّكهم التأثير بأفكار هذا الدهر، حتّى ليكادوا يعتقدون بأنّ الإنجيل ناقص، ويحتاج إلى أن يكتمل، بما توصلت إليه الحضارة البشريّة.

تبقى حياة الصلاة الهدوئية المولدة للمحبة، مفقودةً، في كلا الجهتين، ومن دونها ما من رؤية صافية ونقية. نتذكر بأن الله ما كلم النبي إيليا، لا من النار، ولا من العاصفة، وإنما من النسيم الرقيق. لنفسح المجال لرب الكنيسة، لكي يعبر عن ذاته، ولا نحجبّه بغيره مزيفة، غالباً ما تكون نابعة من أهوائنا، لا من نقاوتنا.

إنّ الجهود الهائلة، التي بُذلت في سبيل انعقاد المجمع الكبير انتهت إلى لا نجاح، فبدأ الكثيرون يسمّونه مجمع كريت. لكن ما حدث، كشف مدى جدية الهوة، القائمة في قلب الكنائس، ما بين التيارين الأنفي الذكر. إنها العقلية الدهرية، التي تجعل بعضهم ينغلق حتى درجة الموت، وبعضهم يفتح حتى درجة خسارة الهوية!!

كان أوليفيه كليمان يدعو، أرثوذكسياً، إلى "ضرورة أن يطابق فعلنا قولنا، وأن نحزّره من كلّ ما يتّسم بعبادة الآخرين، وأن نطلق العنان للروح القدس، ليفعل في التاريخ، ويعيد إليه إمكان الانفتاح والإبداع."

من له أذنان للسمع فليسمع!

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH

# ANNUAL FAMILY Picnic

SUNDAY, JULY 12 AT 12PM

 BLACKBERRY FARM  
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 Divine Liturgy will be held at 10AM instead of 11 AM at St. Nicholas Church

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### SEABRIGHT BEACH

*Santa Cruz, CA*



### DATE

*6/28/2026*



### AFTER CHURCH

*Come right after service!*



### ALL ARE WELCOME

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### YOUNG ADULTS & YOUTH GROUP

*Please contact:*

Dimitry Youssef @ (408) 365-5670

Or Riad Akkarry @ (408) 333-8143

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"

- Psalm 133:1

# Antiochian Orthodox Church Of The Redeemer Presents

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## BUILDING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER End-of-Year Campaign Update

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

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

GIVE TO ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF  
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<https://www.orthodoxredeemer.org/funds>



*Thanks to the generosity of our parish family, **the \$50,000 Matching Fund has been fully matched** for our building project. We are deeply grateful to the anonymous donor who offered this challenge gift and to everyone who contributed to make it possible.*

*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.*