



**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



AUGUST 30, 2026

**THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST & THIRTEENTH
SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**

**LEAVE-TAKING OF THE COMMEMORATION OF
THE BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST**

ALEXANDER, PAUL THE NEW, AND JOHN, PATRIARCHS OF CONSTANTINOPLE

**الأحد الثالث عشر بعد العنصرة وتذكّار القديس متى الانجيلي البشير
والأحد بعد عيد قطع رأس القديس يوحنا المعمدان**

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE FOUR

Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

أبوليتيكيون القيامة بالحن الرابع

إِنَّ تَلْمِيزَاتِ الرَّبِّ تَعَلَّمْنَ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ الْكَرَّرَ بِالْقِيَامَةِ الْبَهْجِ، وَطَرَحْنَ الْقَضَاءَ الْجَدِّيَّ، وَخَاطَبْنَ الرَّسُلَ مُفْتَخِرَاتٍ وَقَائِلَاتٍ: سُبِّحِ الْمَوْتُ وَقَامَ الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُهُ، وَمَنَحَ الْعَالَمَ الرَّحْمَةَ الْعُظْمَى.

APOLYTIKION OF THE BAPTIST'S BEHEADING IN TONE TWO

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with songs of praise, but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O Forerunner. Thou wast shown indeed to be the most honorable of the prophets, for in the waters thou didst baptize Him Whom they had proclaimed. After suffering with joy in behalf of the truth, thou didst proclaim even to those in Hades the God Who appeared in the flesh, Who taketh away the sin of the world, and granteth us Great Mercy.

أبوليتيكيون قَطْعِ هَامَةَ السَّابِقِ بِالْحَنِ الثَّانِي

تَذَكَّرُ الصِّدِّيقِ بِالْمَدِيحِ، أَمَّا أَنْتَ أَيُّهَا السَّابِقُ فَتَكْفِيكَ شَهَادَةُ الرَّبِّ، لِأَنَّكَ ظَهَرْتَ بِالْحَقِيقَةِ أَشْرَفَ مِنْ كُلِّ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ، إِذْ قَدْ اسْتَأْهَلْتَ أَنْ تُعَمِّدَ فِي الْمَجَارِيِّ مَنْ كَرَزُوا هُمْ بِهِ. وَمِنْ ثَمَّ إِذْ جَاهَدْتَ عَنِ الْحَقِّ مَسْرُورًا، بَشَّرْتَ الَّذِينَ فِي الْجَحِيمِ بِالْإِلَهِ الظَّاهِرِ بِالْجَسَدِ، الرَّافِعِ خَطِيئَةَ الْعَالَمِ، وَالْمَانِحِ إِيَّانَا الرَّحْمَةَ الْعُظْمَى.

APOLYTIKION OF THE TRANSFIGURATION IN TONE SEVEN

When, O Christ our God, Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, Thou didst reveal Thy glory to Thy Disciples in proportion as they could bear it. Let Thine everlasting light also enlighten us sinners, through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Thou Bestower of light, glory to Thee.

أبوليتيكيون تَجَلَّى رَبَّنَا يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحَ بِالْحَنِّ السَّابِعِ

لَمَّا تَجَلَّيْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ فِي الْجَبَلِ، أَظْهَرْتَ مَجْدَكَ لِلتَّلَامِيذِ حَسْبَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا، فَأَشْرِقْ لَنَا نَحْنُ
الْحَطَاةَ نوركَ الْأَزَلِيِّ، بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهُ، يَا مَانِحَ النُّورِ، الْمَجْدُ لَكَ.

KONTAKION OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS IN TONE FOUR

By thy holy nativity, O pure one, Joachim and Anna were delivered from the reproach of barrenness; and Adam and Eve were delivered from the corruption of death; thy people do celebrate it, having been saved from the stain of iniquity, crying unto thee: The barren doth give birth to the Theotokos, who nourisheth our life.

القنْدَاقُ لِمِيلَادِ الْإِلَهِ بِالْحَنِّ الرَّابِعِ

إِنَّ يُوَاكِيمَ وَحَنَّةَ مِنْ عَارِ الْغُفْرِ أُطْلِقَا، وَأَدَمَ وَحَوَّاءَ مِنْ فَسَادِ الْمَوْتِ، بِمَوْلِدِكَ الْمُقَدَّسِ يَا طَاهِرُهُ أَعِنَا.
فَلَهُ يُعَيِّدُ شَعْبُكَ، وَقَدْ تَخَلَّصَ مِنْ وَضْمَةِ الزَّلَّاتِ، صَارِحًا نَحْوِكَ: الْعَاقِرُ تِلْذُ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِ الْمُغْدِيَةِ حَيَاتِنَا.

THE EPISTLE

O Lord, how marvelous are Thy works.

In wisdom hast Thou made them all. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

The Reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (16:13-24)

Brethren, be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, and be strong.

Let all that you do be done in love. Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and laborer. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men. The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

الرسالة

مَا أَعْظَمَ أَعْمَالَكَ يَا رَبُّ كُلَّهَا بِحِكْمَةٍ صَنَعْتَ
بَارِكِي يَا نَفْسِي الرَّبَّ.

فصلٌ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولُسِ الرَّسُولِ الْأُولَى إِلَى أَهْلِ كورِنْثُوسَ.

يَا إِخْوَةُ، اسْهَرُوا، اُنْبُتُوا عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ، كُونُوا رَجَالًا، تَشَدَّدُوا. وَلْتَكُنْ أُمُورُكُمْ كُلُّهَا بِالْمَحَبَّةِ. وَأَطْلُبْ
إِلَيْكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْإِخْوَةُ: تَعْرِفُونَ أَنَّ إِسْتِفَانَسَ وَفُرْتِنَانَسَ وَأَكَنْكَسَ هُمْ بَاكُورَةُ أَخَائِيَّةَ وَقَدْ خَصَّصُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ
لِخِدْمَةِ الْقَدِيسِينَ. فَعَلَيْكُمْ، أَنْ تَخْضَعُوا أَنْتُمْ أَيْضًا لِمِثْلِ هَؤُلَاءِ وَلِكُلِّ مَنْ يُعَاوَنُ وَيَنْعَبُ. إِنِّي فَرِحُ
بِحُضُورِ إِسْتِفَانَسَ وَفُرْتَانُوسَ وَأَخَائِكُوسَ فَقَدْ قَامُوا مَقَامَكُمْ فِي غِيَابِكُمْ، فَأَرَاخُوا رُوحِي وَأَرْوَاحَكُمْ.
فَقَدِّرُوا أَمْثَالَهُمْ. تُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْكُمْ كَنَائِسُ أَسِيَّةَ. يُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الرَّبِّ كَثِيرًا أَكِيلا وَبَرِسِكَلَةُ وَالْكَنِيسَةُ الَّتِي فِي
بَبْتِهِمَا. يُسَلِّمُ عَلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعُ الْإِخْوَةِ. سَلِّمُوا بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ بِقُبْلَةٍ مُقَدَّسَةٍ السَّلَامِ بِيَدِي أَنَا بُولُسَ. إِنْ
كَانَ أَحَدٌ لَا يُحِبُّ رَبَّنَا يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحَ فَلْيَكُنْ مَفْرُوزًا. مَا رَأَى أَنَا. نِعْمَةُ رَبَّنَا يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحَ مَعَكُمْ.
مَحَبَّتِي لَكُمْ جَمِيعًا فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ. آمِينَ.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (21:33-42)

The Lord spoke this parable: “There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. Afterward he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.” Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The very stone which the

builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?"

الإنجيل المقدس

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ مَتَّى الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتِّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ.

قَالَ الرَّبُّ هَذَا الْمَثَلُ: إِنْسَانٌ رَبُّ بَيْتٍ غَرَسَ كَرْمًا وَحَوَّطَهُ بِسِيَاجٍ، وَحَفَرَ فِيهِ مَعَصْرَةً، وَبَنَى بُرْجًا، وَسَلَّمَهُ إِلَى عَمَلَةٍ وَسَافَرَ. فَلَمَّا قَرُبَ أَوَانُ الثَّمَرِ، أَرْسَلَ عَبِيدَهُ إِلَى الْعَمَلَةِ لِيَأْخُذُوا ثَمَرَهُ * فَأَخَذَ الْعَمَلَةُ عَبِيدَهُ، وَجَلَدُوا بَعْضًا، وَقَتَلُوا بَعْضًا، وَرَجَمُوا بَعْضًا. فَأَرْسَلَ عَبِيدًا آخَرِينَ أَكْثَرَ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ، فَصَنَعُوا بِهِمْ كَذَلِكَ. وَفِي الْآخِرِ، أَرْسَلَ إِلَيْهِمْ ابْنَهُ قَائِلًا "سَيَهَابُونَ ابْنِي." فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْعَمَلَةُ الْإِبْنَ قَالُوا فِيمَا بَيْنَهُمْ "هَذَا هُوَ الْوَارِثُ. هَلُمَّ نَقْتُلْهُ وَنَسْتَوِلِي عَلَى مِيرَاثِهِ." فَأَخَذُوهُ وَأَخْرَجُوهُ خَارِجَ الْكَرْمِ وَقَتَلُوهُ. فَمَتَى جَاءَ رَبُّ الْكَرْمِ مَاذَا يَفْعَلُ بِأَوْلِيكَ الْعَمَلَةِ؟ فَقَالُوا لَهُ: إِنَّهُ يُؤْلِكُ أَوْلِيكَ الْأَزْدِيَاءَ أَزْدًا هَلَاكٍ، وَيُسَلِّمُ الْكَرْمَ إِلَى عَمَلَةٍ آخَرِينَ يُؤْدُونَهُ لَهٗ الثَّمَرِ فِي أَوَانِهِ. فَقَالَ لَهُمْ يَسُوعُ: أَمَا قَرَأْتُمْ قَطُّ فِي الْكُتُبِ إِنَّ الْحَجَرَ الَّذِي رَدَّلَهُ الْبَنَاءُونَ هُوَ صَارَ رَأْسًا لِلزَّائِيَةِ. مِنْ قَبْلِ الرَّبِّ كَانَ ذَلِكَ وَهُوَ عَجِيبٌ فِي أَعْيُنِنَا؟



HOLY BREAD OF OBLATION

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

OFFERED BY: Fr. Samer, the Clergy and the parishioners for the good health of the Sunday school teachers, students and their families. Isabelle Achkar, Jennifer Lutton, Caitlin Timothy, Randa Hanani, Samuel Hage, Heather Simonovich, Hussam Ibrahim and Alia Nystrom. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Spir Batmani for the good health of his wife, Jehan on the occasion of her birthday (Aug 24), and the good health of Yasmine Bari and Jaelynn Sunstrum on the occasion of their birthdays. For the good health of the Batmani, Bari, Sunstrum and Joseph families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Ibtisam Kreitem for the good health of her daughter Laila on the occasion of her birthday (August 30), and the good health of her children, Pierre, Samer and his wife Sara and their daughter Yasmin. For the good health of the Kreitem and Halteh families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Daad Amireh on the occasion of her birthday (August 30) and the good health of her granddaughter Arbella on the occasion of her birthday (August 31) and her daughter Nataly's birthday (Sep 8). For the good health of the Amireh and Hina families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Aweiss family In memory of Salem's Sister Helen Aweiss who fell asleep in the Lord on Sunday 23, 2026. Memory Eternal!



COFFEE HOUR

Offered By: The Church Ministry

*(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

Matins @ 9:00 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

Vespers: Every Saturday @ 5:00 PM

Ecclesiastical New Year Divine Liturgy: Tue, Sept 1st @ 10:30 AM

Nativity of the Theotokos Divine Liturgy: Tue, Sept 8th @ 10:30 AM

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

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.



SUNDAY SCHOOL CORNER

Sunday School Registration is now open. Please register your children ASAP. Registration forms are available at the church hall or on church Website: <http://www.orthodoxredeemer.org/schoolregistration>

School Schedule:

Sunday school starts 8/30/26 and ends 5/16/27. Sunday school graduation Ceremony will be on 5/16/27. Sunday school classes begin after communion and ends at 12:30pm.

Teachers: Isabelle Achkar, Jennifer Lutton, Caitlin Timothy, Randa Hanani, Samuel Hage, Heather Simonovich and Hussam Ibrahim.

Prayer for the Blessing of Teachers and Students

O Lord, our God and Creator, Thou hast honored us men with Thine own image, and didst teach Thy chosen disciples that the fear of Thee is the beginning of true wisdom; Thou hast revealed Thy wisdom to children and didst teach Thy law to Solomon and to all those who have sought Thee in purity of heart. Open the hearts, the minds, and the lips of these Sunday School students, that they may perceive the power of Thy law, and successfully comprehend the useful things which will be taught them, so that they will understand Thy perfect will and contribute to the building up of Thy Holy Church. Deliver them from every snare of the enemy, preserve them in the true faith and in righteousness and purity all the days of their lives, that they may grow in wisdom and in the observance of Thy commandments, and may be revealed as worshipers of Thy Name and heirs of Thy Kingdom. Bless also their Sunday School teachers, O Lord; grant that their words may be free from every worldly deceit and vanity, and may always clearly proclaim the word of Thy truth. For Thou art God, the Author of truth and the Fountain of wisdom, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Dabkeh Dance Group – Calling All Children!

In preparation for our Annual Food Festival, we are calling all children of **all ages** who love to dance Dabkeh!

Come join our amazing group of teachers, who are experts in our cultural dance. This is a wonderful opportunity to **learn, have fun, and share our beautiful culture with the whole community!**

Interested in joining? Please meet us in the Sunday School after Divine Liturgy. Everyone is welcome!

UPCOMING EVNTS AT THE CHURCH

Please save the date

September 9, 10, 11: *Food Festival Meat & Vegetable prep*

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

THANK YOU NOTE

Dear Fr. Samer, Father Theodore, and the wonderful parish of Church of the Redeemer,

What a wonderful blessing to serve the liturgy for the first time with you on July 12! Good to be with Fr. Samer at the ordination in San Diego on July 4 as well!

I owe a debt of gratitude to serve at the parish for several years and form bonds of faith with so many in the parish. As a priest, I find myself using the patterns of interaction that I observed from Fr. Samer, his warmth and loyalty to those around him, and his care for his family and parish. May God grant him and Kh. Julianna many years, and the parish community every success in the exciting months to come. We are settling in at St. Mary in Monterey, lots of potential for growth here, as God inspires us.

Thank you in advance for ordering a red vestment set from Greece. I will be using it as the Advent season arrives.

**In Christ,
Fr. John & Kh. Irena**

The Laborers are Few!

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

The Lord says in the Gospel: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest” (Matt. 9:37–38). These words come after the Gospel describes Jesus going throughout all the cities and villages, teaching, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing the sick. “And when he saw the multitudes, his heart was filled with compassion for them, because they were poor and scattered among themselves, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36).

Did He mean that the laborers needed for His harvest would always remain few? Or that the faithful among them would be few?

The Gospel gives no answer to this question. It simply continues by recounting the calling of the twelve disciples and, in the tenth chapter of Matthew, presenting the Lord Jesus' instructions to them—instructions that are far from easy, for they demand a great deal of asceticism and self-denial.

Many who began their priestly ministry with enthusiasm and sincerity were unable to sustain that same fervor. “The cares of life,” the abundance of hardships, and the scarcity of human consolation around them caused their zeal to grow cold. They consequently entered the cycle of routine and the mere performance of services—nothing more.

A priest is an apostle; otherwise, he becomes an employee who attends to religious affairs. An apostle bears a message: he has a purpose, a consuming concern, and a determination to convey his message in the best ways possible. The priest-apostle is consumed by the word of God and the salvation of souls. He can find no rest and never ceases laboring for their sake. His love for his flock springs from his love for his Lord: “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these? ... Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Tend My sheep” (John 21:16).

Where does a priest's apostolic spirit come from? How does he keep it burning within him? How does he confront its hardships and temptations without allowing the coldness of his flock—or of the ecclesiastical institution in its human aspect—to seep into him? What does he need most, given that he is, in the end, a human being who bears his own sins and weaknesses, even as he aspires to overcome them through his faithful love for his Lord and his devotion to Him? How can the flock help him remain faithful? And what is required of the ecclesiastical institution in this regard?

There is yet another pressing question: Why are “the laborers” few? Where do they come from? How do they know that God is calling them to dedicate themselves to His service in His living Body, the Church?

These are but a few of the questions that must be placed before both the personal and the ecclesial conscience. If we desire a Church that is “glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing” (Eph. 5:27), then we must ask the question—and search for the answer!

In the past, families took pride in offering their finest sons to the Lord. In the Old Testament, the firstborn was set apart and consecrated to the Lord. In the New Testament, however, all believing men and women have become consecrated to the Lord. Consequently, all are responsible for carrying forward the Church’s spiritual ministry—each, of course, according to his or her gift and calling. “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own special people, that you may declare His wonderful deeds” (1 Pet. 2:9).

The history of the Church shows that priestly vocations increase in direct proportion to the abundance of devout families and to the practice of daily prayer and fasting in the home, together with participation in the Church’s liturgical worship alongside the rest of the faithful.

Therefore, when the number of priests declines and the need for them becomes urgent, our families will face a question on the Last Day—and it may be a difficult one: “What about you? Where was your part? What did you do with your children? How did you raise them? Did you nurture them in the love of God and His Church, and in the desire for Him and His Kingdom? Or were you content to educate them only in academics, sports, music, languages, and everything else you thought would benefit them in this world—and this world alone?”

It is indeed true that the priesthood is a calling. The Lord said to His disciples: “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you” (John 15:16). Yet another question arises here: How does the Lord call new apostles to Himself today? How does He call me? How do I know that He wants me to be His priest? How does He call my son? What are the signs that point to such a calling? And so forth.

For this reason, the Archdiocese, in cooperation with Ancient Faith Ministries, organized a spiritual retreat titled “[Do You Want to Be a Priest?](#)” It invited those young men of the Archdiocese who sense a desire for the priesthood but need to discern and deepen their calling.

I say to the young men: Remember the Lord’s words, “The laborers are few,” and do not wait for a stronger calling than this. What more do you need than His request: “Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest”? Perhaps He has called you many times, my son, but you have not heard His voice. Listen to Him in the stillness of your prayer. Place yourself in His hands and ask Him to do with you as He wills. What other calling are you awaiting, in the face of the Church’s need and the growing number of converts, before casting yourself into this adventure of love—until He raises you into His Kingdom?

Take care, however, not to enter this ministry unless you are filled with love for God and His people.

May God have mercy on my father, who resisted my decision until the very last moment. Yet once he became convinced of my determination, he said in the commanding tone of a master: “Finish your university studies first, my son. The priesthood is a ministry that will either raise you to heaven or cast you down into hell. I want your path to be secure. If you discover that you are unable to continue along this path, or that you have made the wrong choice, your university degree will keep you from being forced to continue in it against your will and, consequently, from doing harm to it. I do not want my son to make a profession of priestly ministry.”

He wanted me to be an apostle, not a functionary performing religious services. His words greatly troubled me at the time, but I later came to understand their truth and importance during my theological studies. I thanked God—and my father—for them many times, and I still do.

الفَعْلَةُ قَلِيلُونَ!

بقلم المتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

جاء في الإنجيل على لسان الربّ: "الحصادُ كثيرٌ والفعلَةُ قليلون. فاطلبوا إلى ربّ الحصاد أن يرسل فعلَةً لحصاده" (متى ٣٧/٩). جاء هذا الكلام بعد كلام الإنجيل عن تنقّل يسوع، في جميع المدن والقرى، يعلم، ويعلن بشارة الملكوت، ويشفي المرضى، "ولمّا رأى الجموع تحنّ عليهم، إذ كانوا منزعين ومنطرحين كغنمٍ لا راعي لها" (متى ٣٦/٩).

أتراه قَصْدَ أَنَّ العمال المطلوبين لحصاده سيقبضون قلائل؟ أم أنّ الأمناء منهم هم القلائل؟ لا يعطي الإنجيل جواباً على هذا السؤال. فقط يتابع الكلام، ليتحدّث عن دعوة التلاميذ الاثني عشر، ويورد، في الإصحاح العاشر من متى، توصيات الربّ يسوع لهم؛ توصيات ليست بالسهلة، لأنّها تتطلّب من الزهد ونكران الذات الشيء الكثير.

كثيرون ممّن انطلقوا، في بدء خدمتهم الكهنوتيّة، بحماسة وصدق، ما استطاعوا الاستمرار في الوهج إيّاه. "هموم الحياة"، وكثرة المتاعب، وقلة التعزيزات البشريّة من حولهم، جعلت حميتهم تبرد، فدخلوا في دوامة الروتين وتتميم الخدمات، لأكثر.

الكاهن رسولٌ، وإلّا فإنّه يصير موظفاً يُعنى بالشؤون الدينيّة. الرسول حاملٌ رسالةٍ، أي عنده هدفٌ وهَمٌّ وسعيٌ لإيصال رسالته بالطرق الفضلى الممكنة. الكاهن الرسول تتأكّله كلمة الله وخلاص النفوس. لا يهدأ له بالٌ ولا يتوقّف عن العمل في سبيلهما. حبّه لرعيّته من حبّه لربّه: "يا سمعان بن يونا، أتحبّي أكثر من هؤلاء؟ نعم ياربّ، أنت تعرف أنّي أحبّك. فقال له: ارعَ خرافي" (يو ٢١: ١٦).

من أين تأتي رسوليّة الكاهن؟ وكيف يحفظها متّقدة في داخله؟ وكيف يواجه متاعبها وتجاربها، فلا يسمح لبرودة الرعيّة والمؤسّسة الكنسيّة، بوجهها البشري، بالتسرّب إليه؟ ما الذي يحتاجه على الأكثر، وهو في النهاية، إنسانٌ حاملٌ خطاياہ وضعفاته، وإن كان يرنو إلى أن يتجاوزها، بحبّه الأمين لربّه، وإخلاصه له؟ كيف تساعد الرعيّة كي يبقى على الأمانة؟ وما المطلوب من المؤسّسة الكنسيّة في هذا الصدد؟

ثمّة سؤالٌ مُلِحٌّ آخر: لماذا "الفعلَةُ" قليلون؟ ومن أين يأتون؟ وكيف يعرفون أنّ الله يدعوهم إلى تكريس ذواتهم، لخدمته في جسده الحيّ، الكنيسة؟

هذه عينة من أسئلة لا بدّ من طرحها على الضمير الشخصي والكنسي. إن أردنا كنيسةً "مجيدةً لا عيب فيها ولا تجعد، ولا ما أشبه ذلك" (أف ٥ : ٢٧)، فعلياً أن نطرح السؤال، ونبحث عن الجواب!

كانت العائلات قديماً تفتخر بتقديم أفضل أبنائها للرب. كان البكر مخصّصاً للرب، ومُكرّساً له في العهد القديم. أمّا في العهد الجديد فصار جميع المؤمنين والمؤمنات مكرّسين للرب، وتالياً فكلّهم مسؤولون عن تسير الخدمة الروحية في الكنيسة. طبعاً، كلّ بحسب موهبته ودعوته. "وأما أنتم فنسلّ مختار وكهنوت ملوكي وأمة مقدّسة وشعب اقتناه الله لإعلان فضائله" (١ بط ٢ : ٩).

يُظهر تاريخ الكنيسة أنّ توافر الدعوات الكهنوتية يتنامى طردياً مع وفرة العائلات التقية، وممارسة الصلاة اليومية والأصوام في البيوت، بالتزامن مع الاشتراك في الصلوات الطقسية في الكنيسة مع سائر المؤمنين.

لذلك، عندما يتناقص عدد الكهنة وتصبح الحاجة ماسة إليهم، ستواجه عائلاتنا سؤالاً في اليوم الأخير، وقد يكون سؤالاً صعباً: "ماذا عنكم؟ أين دوركم؟ ماذا فعلتم بأولادكم؟ وكيف ربّيتموهم؟ هل نشأتموهم على حبّ الله وكنيسته، والسعي إليه وإلى ملكوته؟ أم اكتفيتم بتنشئتهم على العلم والرياضة والموسيقى واللغات... وكلّ ما تظنّونه ينفعهم في هذه الدنيا فقط لا غير؟

إنّه لصحيح أنّ الكهنوت دعوة، وقد قال الربّ لتلاميذه: "ليس أنتم اخترتموني بل أنا اخترتكم، وأقمّتكم لتذهبوا وتأتوا بثمر، ويدوم ثمركم، لكي يعطيكم الآب كلّ ما طلبتم باسمي" (يو ١٥ : ١٦). لكن ثمة سؤال يُطرح هنا أيضاً. كيف يدعو الربّ رسلاً جديداً له الآن؟ كيف يدعوني أنا؟ كيف أعرف أنّه يريدني كاهناً له؟ كيف يدعو ولدي؟ ما هي العلامات التي تشير إلى هذه الدعوة؟ إلخ.

من أجل ذلك أقامت الأبرشية بالتعاون مع منظمة "الإيمان القديم" خلوةً روحيةً بعنوان "هل تريد أن تصبح كاهناً،" دعت إليها شبيبة الأبرشية من الذين يشعرون بالرغبة في الكهنوت، لكنهم يحتاجون إلى التثبّت من دعوتهم والتعمّق فيها.

أقول للشباب: تذكروا قول الربّ: "الفعلة قليلون"، ولا تنتظروا دعوة أقوى منها. ماذا تريدون أكثر من طلبه: "اطلبوا إلى ربّ الحصاد أن يرسل فعلةً لحصاده." لعلّه دعاك

كثيراً، يا بنيّ، ولم تسمع صوته. أصغِ إليه في هدأة صلاتك. ضغ ذاتك بين يديه، وادعه ليفعل بك ما يشاء. أيّ دعوة أخرى تنتظر، إزاء حاجة الكنيسة ونمو عدد المهتمين، لترمي ذاتك في مغامرة الحبّ هذه، إلى أن يرفعك إلى ملكوته؟! انتبه فقط ألا تدخل هذه الخدمة، إلّا وأنت مُشبع بحبّ الله وشعبه.

رحم الله أبي، الذي مانعني، حتّى اللحظة الأخيرة. لكنّه، وحين تأكّد من إصراري، قال بلهجة السيّد الأمر: "أنّه دراستك الجامعيّة أولاً، يا بُنيّ. فالكهنوت خدمةٌ ترفعك إلى السماء، أو تُحدرك إلى الجحيم. أريد أن تكون طريقك آمنة. فإذا اكتشفت أنّك غير قادر على متابعة هذه الطريق، أو أنّك قد أخطأت الاختيار، فشهادتك الجامعيّة تحفظك من أن تجبر نفسك على الاستمرار قسراً فيه، وتالياً تسيء إليه. لا أريد لابني أن يمتهن الخدمة الكهنوتيّة". لقد أرادني رسولاً لا رجل خدمات دينيّة. ضايقني جدّاً بكلامه آنذاك، لكنّي استوعبت صحّته وأهميّته في ما بعد؛ أثناء دراستي اللاهوتيّة. وشكرت الله وأبي عليه كثيراً، ولا أزال.

Join Us for our Annual Food Festival! **September 12 & 13, 2026**

Donations toward the food festival are now accepted. To donate or volunteer, please contact: Church Office at office@orthodoxredeemer.org, Festival Co- Chairs: Sam Araj @ (415)860-0040, Janna Dughman @ (510)825-0563, or Donation Coordinator Wardeh Asfour @ (408)718-3339 Any Cash Donations Accepted, or Please Choose Items from List.

Food Festival Wish List 2026		
Qty	COUNT	ITEMS
KITCHEN		
5	Slve of 300	Paper Plates Regular 8.5"
4	Slve of 300	Paper Plates Small 300 ct.
1	Slve of 125	Paper Plates (Bowl for Tabouleh)
6	Slve of 186	Paper Plates Large 10.5
2	Slve of 250	Large Boat Plates for French Fries
6	Box of 200	Plastic Gloves Med.

4	Box of 200	Plastic Gloves Large
4	Box of 200	Plastic Gloves Small
8	Pk of 500	Napkins Large for Dinner
2	Roll	Aluminum Foil Large
4	Pk of 500	Aluminum Foil small
4	Roll	Parchment paper
1	Roll	Saran Wrap
30	Tray	Large Foil Trays
30	Tray	Small Foil Trays
1	Box of 200	Containers to go Large for Hot Food
1	Box of 200	Containers to go Large for Cold Food
2	Box of 250	Containers to go Small
8	Box of 500	Forks
1	Box of 500	Knife
1	Box of 500	Spoons
24	Roll	Paper Towels
500	Cups	Coffee cups 8 oz.
300	Cups	Clear cups for wine & Arak
2	Sleeves	2 Oz Cups for Tahini
3	Box	Garbage Bags Large
3	Box	1 Gallon Ziploc Bags
1	Box	2 Gallon Ziploc Bags
8	Pk of 100	Skewers for BBQ
3	Bundles	White Cloth Towels
1	Case	Bathroom Seat Cover
48	Count	Bathroom Tissue
3	Box	C-Folding Towel Papers
2	Box	Hair Net
1	Box	Plastic bags

DRINKS		
4	Case	Coke 24ct

4	Case	Diet / Zero Coke
4	Case	7-Up or Sprite
4	Case	Diet 7-Up or Diet Sprite
40	Case	16 oz. Water
10	Box	Arabic Coffee
2 ea	Can	American Coffee
2 ea	Can	Coffee Creamer
3	Box	Stirrer for Coffee
1	Box	Tea bags
BEER & WINE		
3	Case	Heineken
3	Case	Estella
3	Case	Corona
2	Case	White wine and red wine
1	Case	Arak

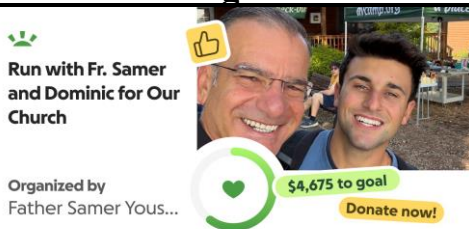
VEGETABLES		
8	Box	Tomatoes
4	Box	Head Lettuce
2	Bag	Yellow Onions 50 #
2	Bag	Red Onions
4	Box	Cucumbers
2	Box	Bell Pepper
15	Ct	Green Onion
10	Box	Mint
5	Box	Parsley
WORKSHOP		
800	Count	Kubbeh
600	Count	16 bags Spinach-Restaurant Depot
48	Jar	Orlando Grape Leaves

MEAT		
40	Lb	Ground Beef for Kabob & grape leaves
120	Lb	Ground Beef for Kifta
120	Lb	Chicken Breast for Kabobs
120	Lb	Chicken Thighs for Shawerma
160	Lb	Sirloin Prime Beef for Shawerma
20	Lamb Leg	Leg of Lamb for Kabobs
80	Count	Hemberger Meat

COOKING SUPPLIES		
4	Gallon	Lemon Juice
2	Bags	Basmati Rice
10	LB	Cracked wheat for Tabouleh
4	Bag	Calrose rice 60#
5	Bag	Vermicelli Noodles
1	Jar	Maggie for Rice
1	Jar	Garlic
1	Lg. Bucket	Tahini
6	Olive Oil	Extra Virgin for Tabbouleh
8	Gallon	Lite Olive Oil (3Q) for Rice
4	Container	Frying Oil – 3 Vegetable, 2 Canola
2	Cans	Pam Spray
4	Box	30 # Frozen French Fries
5	Box	Pita Bread 24Ct.
300	Count	Lavash Bread for Sharwerma
80	Count	Hamburger Buns
4	Can	Bread Plain Crumbs
12	Can	Hummus (Large)
500	Packets	Ketchup
500	Packets	Mustard
2	Jar	Hot Sauce-Large
2	Bucket	Falafel Mix

2	Count	Yoghurt for Kiftah
SWEETS		
4	Tray	Walnut Baklawa
5	Tray	Pistachio Baklawa
30	Tray	Kinafeh
200	Count	Katayef
SPICES		
1	Bag	Sugar #25
1 ea	5 Lb	Black Pepper, All Spice
1 ea	12 – 16 OZ	7 Spices, Paprika, White Pepper, Cardamon, Ginger, Cumin, Baking Powder
2 ea	12 – 16 OZ	Granulated Garlic Powder, Granulated Onion Powder, Coriander
2	10 Lb	Sumac
2	25 Lb Bag	Salt

Father and Son Running for the Building Project



On November 8, 2026, Fr. Samer and his son Dominic will run the Monterey Bay Half Marathon to raise funds for the Church of the Redeemer Building Project.

Fr. Samer and Dominic’s goal is to raise funds through this half-marathon. Please consider sponsoring their run and helping us take full advantage of this extraordinary \$500,000 matching opportunity.

Every gift brings us one step closer to the finish line!

To donate, please visit our GoFundMe campaign,

<https://gofund.me/52a963ee7>

Or online or send a check to the Church of the Redeemer 380 Magdalena Ave Los Altos Hills CA, 94024.

“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus...” — Hebrews 12:1–2



SUNDAY SCHOOL



First Day of
SUNDAY SCHOOL



AUGUST 30TH



**PARENT MEETING
TODAY**

during coffee hour



**ALL STUDENTS
MUST BE REGISTERED!**

Please complete registration
if you haven't already.





Ministry FAIR

Parish Life ✨ Together



Ladies
Auxiliary



Choir



Liturgical
Flowers



Holy
Bread



Ushers



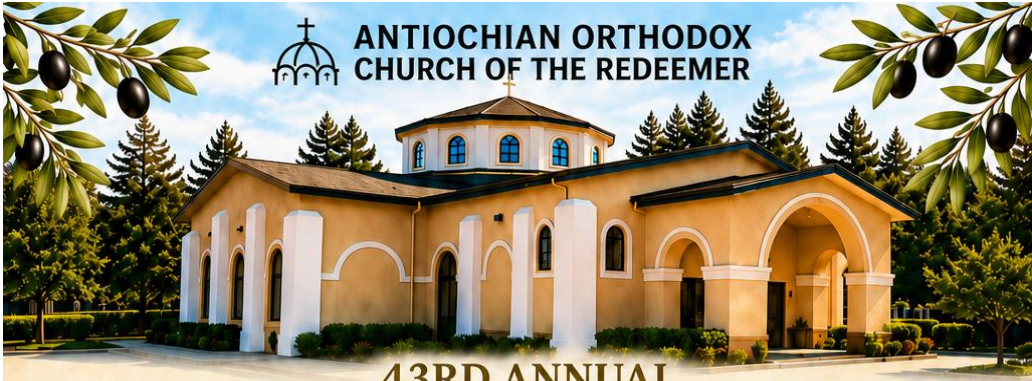
and
more!



DATE
August 30th after liturgy
All ages welcome! ♥



ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX
CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER



43RD ANNUAL Mediterranean Food Festival

FAITH • FAMILY • FOOD • COMMUNITY



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2026
1:00 PM – 9:00 PM



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2026
1:00 PM – 8:00 PM

ADMISSION: \$5 | CHILDREN 12 & UNDER FREE

FEATURED ENTERTAINMENT



Joe Zain

SATURDAY ONLY



Sami Ihsan

PERFORMING
SATURDAY & SUNDAY



DJ Shad

LIVE DJ ALL WEEKEND



AUTHENTIC SHAWARMA
AND MIDDLE EASTERN FOOD
SERVED ALL WEEKEND



BEEF SHAWARMA WRAP



CHICKEN SHAWARMA WRAP



KNAFEH & DESSERTS



DABKE
PERFORMANCES



LOCAL
VENDORS



KIDS
ZONE



FAMILY
FUN



HOOCAH
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GRAND PRIZE
WIN A
TESLA
MODEL 3



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625 MAGDALENA AVE, LOS ALTOS HILLS, CA

9 290 MAGDALENA AVE, LOS ALTOS HILLS, CA 94024

Building Project Update

As we celebrate the glorious Feast of the Holy Transfiguration of our Lord and the Patronal Feast of our parish on August 6th, we are grateful to share wonderful news with our church family.

Through the generosity of a faithful benefactor who has learned that our parish is nearing the beginning of construction, we have been blessed with a **new matching gift challenge of up to \$500,000** for our Building Project. Every donation made toward the project between now and **December 31** will be matched, dollar for dollar, up to this amount.

By God's grace, we are now in the final stages of preparation for construction. The Building Committee and the Parish Council are working diligently to complete the selection of the general contractor and to finalize the remaining details of the project. Together, they will continue to meet over the coming weeks to prepare a comprehensive presentation for the parish.

A **General Parish Meeting** will be held in **October**, during which the Building Committee and Parish Council will present the proposed construction timeline, project updates, and important information regarding the Fellowship Hall, Sunday School, and Preschool/Daycare building. The exact date of the meeting will be announced in the coming weeks.

We prayerfully encourage every member of our parish family to take advantage of this extraordinary matching opportunity. Your generous support will help us maximize this blessing and bring us one step closer to beginning construction of this long-awaited project, which will serve our parish and future generations.

As we celebrate Christ's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, we are reminded that the Lord revealed His divine glory to strengthen and encourage His disciples. We believe that the same Lord is present with us today, guiding and blessing our parish in Los Altos Hills. May He continue to inspire each of us to offer our gifts with joyful and generous hearts, so that together we may build for His glory and for the growth of His holy Church.

May God bless you abundantly, and may the Feast of the Holy Transfiguration fill you and your family with His light, peace, and joy.



GIVE TO ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE
REDEEMER

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

