

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

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF
THE REDEEMER**

380 MAGDALENA AVE, LOS ALTOS HILLS, CA 94024

PHONE: (650) 941-1570

www.orthodoxredeemer.org

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

REV. FR. THEODORE SAKELLAR, MTS



SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

**SUNDAY BEFORE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS
CONSECRATION OF RESURRECTION CHURCH IN JERUSALEM
FOREFEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS**

الأحد قبل عيد رفع الصليب المقدس

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SIX

Angelic Powers were above Thy tomb, and they that guarded Thee became as dead. And Mary stood by the grave seeking Thine immaculate Body. Thou hast despoiled Hades and wast not tried thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst grant us life. O Thou Who didst arise from the dead, Lord, glory be to Thee.

أبوليتيكيون القيامة بالحن السادس

إِنَّ الْقَوَاتِ الْمَلَائِكِيَّةَ ظَهَرُوا عَلَى قَبْرِكَ الْمُؤَقَّرِ، وَالْحُرَّاسَ صَارُوا كَالْأَمْوَاتِ، وَمَرْيَمَ وَقَفَتْ عِنْدَ الْقَبْرِ طَالِبَةً جَسَدَكَ الطَّاهِرَ، فَسَبَّيْتَ الْجَحِيمَ وَلَمْ تُجَرَّبْ مِنْهَا، وَصَادَقْتَ الْبَتُولَ مَانِحاً الْحَيَاةَ. فَيَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، يَا رَبُّ الْمَجْدُ لَكَ.

APOLYTIKION OF FOREFEAST OF THE HOLY CROSS IN TONE TWO

We offer thee in mediation the life-giving Cross which, of Thy goodness, Thou hast given unto us, the unworthy, O Lord. Save Thy hierarchs and Thy flock, and grant Thou peace through the Theotokos, O only Lover of mankind.

أبوليتيكيون قبل عيد الصليب المقدس بالحن الثاني

أَيُّهَا الرَّبُّ، إِنَّا نُقَدِّمُ لَكَ لِالِاسْتِشْفَاعِ صَلِيبَ صَلاَحِكَ الْمُخَيِّ، الَّذِي وَهَبْتَهُ لَنَا نَحْنُ غَيْرِ الْمُسْتَحِقِّينَ. فَخِصِّصِ الْمُلُوكَ وَمَدِينَتَكَ، جَاعِلًا لَهُمْ سَلَامًا، مِنْ أَجْلِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِ، يَا مُحِبَّ الْبَشَرِ وَحَذَكَ.

APOLYTIKION OF THE CONSECRATION IN TONE FOUR

Thou hast revealed the earthly majesty of the dwelling place of the holy glory, O Lord, as the brilliance of the firmament on high. Make firm its foundation unto ages of ages and receive our fervent supplications which are offered to thee therein; through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Life and Resurrection of all.

أبوليتيكيون للتكريس بالحن الرابع

كَمَثَلِ بَهَاءِ الْجَلَدِ الْعُلُويِّ أَظْهَرْتَ الْجَمَالَ السُّفْلِيَّ لِمَسْكَنِ مَجْدِكَ الْأَقْدَسِ يَا رَبُّ. فَثَبَّتْهُ إِلَى دَهْرٍ الدَّاهِرِينَ، وَتَقَبَّلْ طِلْبَاتِنَا الْمُقَدَّمَةَ لَكَ فِيهِ بِغَيْرِ فُتُورٍ، بِشَفَاعَةِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِ، يَا حَيَاةَ الْكُلِّ وَقِيَامَتَهُمْ.

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 بِالْحَنِ السَّابِعِ

لَمَّا تَجَلَّيْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ فِي الْجَبَلِ، أَظْهَرْتَ مَجْدَكَ لِلتَّلَامِيذِ حَسَبَ مَا اسْتَطَاعُوا، فَأَشْرَقَ لَنَا نَحْنُ
الْخَطَاةُ نَوْرَكَ الْأَزَلِيِّ، بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهُ، يَا مَانِحَ النُّورِ، الْمَجْدُ لَكَ.

KONTAKION OF THE CONSECRATION IN TONE FOUR

The Church is shown to be a many-lighted heaven that doth shine a guiding light upon all them that do believe; wherein while standing, we cry aloud: Do Thou Thyself now establish this house, O Lord.

الْقِنْدَاقُ لِلتَّكْرِيسِ بِالْحَنِ الرَّابِعِ

إِنَّ الْكَنِيسَةَ قَدْ ظَهَرَتْ سَمَاءَ كَثِيرَةِ الْأَنْوَارِ، مُنِيرَةً جَمِيعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. فَإِذْ نَحْنُ وَاقِفُونَ فِيهَا، نَصْرُخُ
هَاتِفِينَ: تَبَّتْ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ، يَا رَبَّ.

THE EPISTLE

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.

Unto Thee, O Lord, will I cry, O Lord my God.

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. (6:11-18)

Brethren, see how large a letter I have written to you with my own hand. As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not be persecuted for the Cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised do themselves keep the Law; but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast, except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. Henceforth, let no one trouble me; for I

bear in my body the brand-marks of the Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

الرسالة

خَلِّصْ يَا رَبُّ شَعْبَكَ وَبَارِكْ مِيراثَكَ. إِلَيْكَ يَا رَبُّ أَصْرُخُ الْهَي.
فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ بُولْسِ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى أَهْلِ غَلَاطِيَّةِ

يَا إِخْوَةُ، أَنْظُرُوا مَا أعْظَمَ الْكِتَابَاتِ الَّتِي كَتَبْتُهَا إِلَيْكُمْ بِيَدِي. إِنَّ كُلَّ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُرْضُوا بِحَسَبِ
الْجَسَدِ يُلْزِمُونَكُمْ أَنْ تَخْتَبِتُوا، وَإِنَّمَا ذَلِكَ لِئَلَّا يُضْطَهَدُوا مِنْ أَجْلِ صَلِيبِ الْمَسِيحِ. لِأَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَبِتُونَ هُمْ
أَنْفُسُهُمْ لَا يَحْفَظُونَ النَامُوسَ بَلْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَخْتَبِتُوا لِيَفْتَحِرُوا بِأَجْسَادِكُمْ. أَمَّا أَنَا، فَحَاشَى لِي أَنْ
أَفْتَحِرَ إِلَّا بِصَلِيبِ رَبَّنَا يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ، الَّذِي بِهِ صُلِبَ الْعَالَمُ لِي وَأَنَا صُلِبْتُ لِلْعَالَمِ. لِأَنَّهُ فِي الْمَسِيحِ
يَسُوعَ لَيْسَ خِتَانُ بَشْيَةٍ وَلَا الْقَلْفُ بَلِ الْخَلِيقَةُ الْجَدِيدَةُ. وَكُلُّ الَّذِينَ يَسْلُكُونَ بِحَسَبِ هَذَا الْقَانُونِ،
فَعَلَيْهِمْ سَلَامٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَعَلَى إِسْرَائِيلِ اللَّهِ. فَلَا يَجْلِبْ عَلَيَّ أَحَدٌ أَتْعَاباً فِيمَا بَعْدُ، فَإِنِّي حَامِلٌ فِي جَسَدِي
سِمَاتِ الرَّبِّ يَسُوعَ. نِعْمَةٌ رَبَّنَا يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ مَعَ رُوحِكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْإِخْوَةُ. آمِينَ.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (3:13-17)

The Lord said, “No one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

الإنجيل المقدس

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ يوحنا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتَّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ.

قَالَ الرَّبُّ: لَمْ يَصْعَدْ أَحَدٌ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ إِلَّا الَّذِي نَزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ، ابْنُ الْبَشَرِ الَّذِي هُوَ فِي السَّمَاءِ. وَكَمَا
رَفَعَ مُوسَى الْحَيَّةَ فِي الْبَرِّيَّةِ، هَكَذَا يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يُرْفَعَ ابْنُ الْبَشَرِ، لِكَيْ لَا يَهْلِكَ كُلُّ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ، بَلْ
تَكُونُ لَهُ الْحَيَاةُ الْأَبَدِيَّةُ. لِأَنَّهُ هَكَذَا أَحَبَّ اللَّهُ الْعَالَمَ حَتَّى بَذَلَ ابْنَهُ الْوَحِيدَ لِكَيْ لَا يَهْلِكَ كُلُّ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ
بِهِ بَلْ تَكُونُ لَهُ الْحَيَاةُ الْأَبَدِيَّةُ. فَإِنَّهُ لَمْ يُرْسِلِ اللَّهُ ابْنَهُ الْوَحِيدَ إِلَى الْعَالَمِ لِيَدِينِ الْعَالَمَ، بَلْ لِيُخَلِّصَ بِهِ
الْعَالَمَ.



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: The parishioners of the Church of the Redeemer; for the good health of the festival Co-Chairs Suleiman Araj and Janna Dughman and all supporters, donors, benefactors, workers, and participants at the Food Festival this year. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Fadi and Rana Hanani for the good health of their daughter Angelena on the occasion of her birthday (Sep 10), for the good health of Rana on the occasion of her birthday (Sep 8) and the good health of Randa and the Hanani family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Samer Dabit for the good health of his wife Rouba on the occasion of her birthday (Sept 5), and the good health of their children; Farid and Celine, and the Dabit family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Widad Saah and her daughters; Shadin and Daleen and their families in the memory of beloved husband, father and grandfather Dr. Ibrahim Saah (3year memorial). Memory Eternal!

OFFERED BY: Widad Saah, Musa and Marwan Awad and their families in loving memory of their beloved mother and father, Afaf and Nabih Awad. Memory Eternal!



COFFEE HOUR

Offered By: Church 43rd Annual Food Festival

*(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

(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 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.

The Cross in Our Life, Part One

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

The Cross of the World and Its Gifts

Blessed Augustine says: “I know three categories: One saves through the cross, another is saved through the cross, and the third is condemned by the cross.” Christ alone belongs to the first category. The rest of us belong to one of the other two.

The cross stands before every human being. There is no one who does not have one cross or more. As long as death is present, crosses will remain part of our personal lives. Because this present world is passing away, and because our own existence is passing away with it, we experience pain, anguish, and sorrow. This is because we bind our feelings—which form part of our very being—to the image of this transitory world.

We therefore face one of two choices: either to flee from the cross and avoid it, or to confront it with courage, faith, and acceptance. Fleeing only increases the cross’s weight; it does nothing more than change its name. In reality, it means exchanging one cross for another—one that may appear lighter to the person fleeing, but that is, in truth, heavier than the cross from which he fled. Confronting the cross, on the other hand, means accepting it willingly at the beginning of the journey—even if not yet joyfully—and seeking to discover its meaning and its role in forming and shaping the person who bears it.

Before Christ, the cross was an instrument of death; through Christ, it became a source of life. Pain and suffering once led to despair, and despair is spiritual death. In Christ, however, they have become a path toward liberation and the discovery of true life—a life that transcends the familiar conditions of this temporal existence. Every Sunday morning we proclaim: “Through the Cross, joy has come into all the world.” Did not the Cross precede the Resurrection and the life that burst forth from the tomb?

Our contemporary way of life may hinder our encounter with true life. A person often stands before the beautiful gifts of this world, becomes immersed in them, and confines himself to the desire to possess them, without noticing what lies beyond them—or even the One who gave them. Their brilliance entices him to acquire more and more, until, with time, he becomes their captive. His life thus passes within a narrow framework devoted solely to satisfying the desires of this earthly life.

This beautiful world in which we live is a gift from God—or, at least, this is how we ought to regard it. Just as we care for a gift, receive it with joy and delight, strive to preserve it, and feel gratitude toward the one who gave it to us, so too must we care for this world, preserve it, and remain constantly grateful to God for it.

In reality, our “beautiful planet has been transformed into a slaughterhouse,” as Saint Justin Popović expressed it, because of humanity’s greed and selfish appetite for exploiting its resources in a deadly pursuit of profit and consumption.

When we receive a gift from someone, we ought first to look toward the person who gave it, rather than allowing our eyes to remain fixed on the gift itself. Consumer society has weakened the spirit of gratitude in modern man while cultivating his desire to possess. His gaze has thus become fixed solely upon the product. Little by little, and without noticing it—often even unintentionally—he becomes enslaved to the gift.

Health is a gift. The beauty of nature is a gift. Clean air is a gift. Family is a gift. Work and productivity are gifts. Income is a gift. Wholesome recreation is a gift. Friends are gifts—and the list goes on. How numerous are God’s gifts to

us! But are we aware of them? Do we receive them with joy and thanksgiving, drawing ever closer to their Giver? Do they lead us to Him?

Naturally, a healthy person loves the giver personally for who he is and not merely because of his gift. Likewise, a Christian loves God for who He is, not merely for His gifts. The wise person does not stop at the gift as though it were the ultimate reality. He knows that it will eventually pass away and that the joy it gives is temporary, having its season before its radiance fades. He therefore turns toward the Giver—the everlasting and ever-present source of every gift—namely, God.

In truth, every gift entails a certain cross. This cross reveals to us that none of these gifts constitutes the final and ultimate reality. Herein lies the true cross of the gifts of our world: the cross that arises from the alternation between receiving a gift and losing it. Not all our dreams are fulfilled, nor are they fulfilled whenever we desire. Thus, our lives move between success and failure, eagerness and weariness, joy and sorrow. What we desire may be fulfilled entirely or only partially; conversely, we may lose it in part or altogether. This cross is especially painful for those who have not learned gratitude, who have not yet understood the meaning of true life, and who continue to confine it within the limits of this earthly existence.

The absence or loss of a gift leads us to ask why. Its loss also makes us more aware of its place and role in our lives. The more important and essential the lost gift is, the greater and higher the possibility of spiritual growth for the person who has lost it.

In my youth, I was deeply moved by a virtuous woman who fell asleep in the Lord many years ago. She spent a year and a half in the hospital and underwent several successive operations. Her husband divorced her while she was hospitalized, and she had no children. She suffered greatly and her heavy cross moved her to question the meaning of all that had happened to her. With the help of her spiritual father and faithful friends, she discovered that she was being called to a noble mission. She dedicated her life to nursing education at a time when no nursing schools existed, and also to teaching a pure spiritual theology, which was rare in those days.

The Christian bears this cross of the world—and the cross of his own existence—not only with acceptance but also with a certain joy, because he knows that beyond this cross there is a life that does not perish. Through this faith, the Christian sees the world as crucified and dead to him. He also sees himself, together with all his inclinations, as crucified and dead to this present world. The believer works to improve this present world, even as it moves toward decay and death. He cultivates within it the seeds of the coming resurrection by striving toward his own personal resurrection and toward the resurrection of this world, which is the gift.

Throughout this journey of life, a person may discover, through tragedy and suffering, the meaning behind losing certain things that had seemed essential to him. Many times, however, he may also discover grace within their loss. He then gives thanks to God, because he would never have noticed the things that are truly more essential had he continued to enjoy those things that were taken from him.

Such was the experience of some who spent years in solitary confinement because of their faith. Amid the tragedy of what they endured, they experienced and tasted a divine grace that filled them with a profound peace — a peace they found themselves missing after they were released from prison. Their crosses refined their characters and made them more illumined, preparing them to fulfill an essential role later in life.

Read some of biographies of the Orthodox Romanian prisoners during the communist era. In this sense, the Romanian priest and theologian, Saint Dumitru Stăniloae, who was himself imprisoned because of his Christian faith, says that the world, together with our existence within it, is the cross that we must bear until the end of our earthly lives. We experience the transitory nature of this world as an unceasing cross. Yet through our Christian faith and the grace of God, we can live this cross in the hope of the Resurrection. For this reason, we bear it with joy.

الصليب في حياتنا، الجزء الأول بقلم المترولينيت سابا (اسبر)

صليب العالم وعطاياه

يقول المغبوط أغسطين: "أعرف ثلاثة فئات. الأولى واحدٌ يُخلَص بالصليب، وآخر يَخْلُص بالصليب، والثالث يُدان بالصليب." المسيح هو الوحيد الذي ينتمي إلى الفئة الأولى. وكلنا، البشر الآخرون، ننتمي إلى واحدة من الفئتين الآخرين.

الصليب منتصبٌ أمام جميع البشر. ما من أحد إلا وله صليبٌ أو أكثر. طالما أنَّ الموت حاضر، فالصلبان موجودة في حياتنا الشخصية. يشعر الإنسان، بسبب زوال العالم الحاضر، وزوال وجوده هو، بالألم ووجعٍ وحزن، لأنه يربط المشاعر، التي تشكل جزءاً من كيانه، بصورة هذا العالم الزائل.

والإنسان أمام خيارٍ من اثنين: إما أن يهرب من الصليب ويتجنّبه، أو أن يواجهه بجرأة وإيمان ورضى. الهروب يزيد من ثقل الصليب، ولا يفعل أكثر من تغيير اسمه. إنّه، في الواقع، استبدال صليبٍ بآخر، يزين للهارب أنّه أخفّ وزناً، لكنّه، في الحقيقة، أثقل من الصليب الذي يهرب منه. أمّا المواجهة، فتقضي بقبول الصليب، برضى، في بداية الطريق، إن لم يكن بفرح، سعياً إلى استخراج معنى له، ودور في تشكيل شخصٍ حمله ونحته.

كان الصليب، قبل المسيح، سبباً للموت؛ فصار، بالمسيح، سبباً للحياة. كان الألم والوجع يقودان إلى اليأس، واليأس موتٌ روحي؛ فصارا، في المسيح، طريقاً إلى التحرّر واكتشاف الحياة الحقّة، التي تتجاوز معطيات الحياة الوقتيّة المتعارف عليها. نقول في صباح كلّ أحد: "بالصليب أتى الفرح لكلّ العالم". ألم يسبق الصليب القيامة، والحياة المتفجرة البارزة من القبر؟!

قد يعيق نمط الحياة الحالي التلاقي مع الحياة الحقّة. فكثيراً ما يقف المرء أمام عطايا هذا العالم الجميلة، فيغرق فيها، وينحصر في شهوة امتلاكها، غير منتبه إلى ما وراءها، ولا، حتّى، إلى معطيها. وهي ببريقها تشدّه لكي يستزيد منها، ويصبح مع الوقت أسيراً لها. وهكذا تنقضي حياته في إطار ضيقٍ قائم على تأمين شهوات الحياة الدنيويّة لا غير.

هذا العالم الجميل، الذي نحن فيه، هدية من الله، أو هكذا ينبغي علينا التعامل معه. فكما نعتني بالهدية، ونستقبلها بفرح وابتهاج، ونهتمّ كثيراً في الحفاظ عليها، ويغمرنا الامتنان

تجاه من قَتمها لنا، هكذا علينا العناية بهذا العالم، والمحافظة عليه، والامتنان الدائم لله، من أجله.

في الواقع، لقد تحوّل "كوكبنا الجميل إلى مسلخ"، على حدّ تعبير القديس يوستينوس بوبوفيتش، وذلك بفعل جشع البشر ونهمهم الأناني في استغلال موارده، استغلالاً ربحياً استهلاكياً قاتلاً.

عندما نتلقّى عطيةً من أحدهم، ينبغي أن نتطّلع، أولاً، إلى الشخص الذي قَتمها، وأن لا تتسرّع عيوننا على العطية بحدّ ذاتها. لقد أضعف المجتمع الاستهلاكيّ روحَ الشكر في الإنسان المعاصر، على حساب تنميته لحبّ الاقتناء. فبات نظر الإنسان مُسرّاً على المُنتج فقط. وهكذا بدأ يُستعبد للهدية، شيئاً فشيئاً، ودونما انتباه، وفي أحوال كثيرة عن غير قصد.

الصحة هدية. جمال الطبيعة هدية. الهواء النقي هدية. العائلة هدية. العمل والإنتاج هدية. المدخول هدية. الترفيه الهادف هدية. الأصدقاء هدية... إلخ. ما أكثر هدايا الله لنا. فهل نحن واعون لها؟ وهل نعيشها بفرح وشكران والتصاق أكثر بمعطيها؟ وهل نصل منها إليه؟

الإنسان الطبيعي يحبّ المعطي لشخصه، لذاته، لا لهديته فقط. والمسيحي يحبّ الله، لشخصه، لا لعطايه فقط. الحكيم هو الذي لا يقف عند الهدية، وكأنّها الحقيقة الأخيرة، بل يعرف أنّها زائلة في النهاية، وأنّ الفرح الذي تعطيه، إنّما وقتي وله زمن يخفت وهجه فيه. فيتطلّع إلى المُعطي، مصدر الهدية الدائم والحاضر أبداً، أعني الله.

في الحقيقة، تستلزم كلّ عطية صليباً معيّناً. بمعنى أنّ هذا الصليب يُرينا أنّ كلّ هذه العطايا ليست هي الحقيقة النهائية والأخيرة. هنا يكمن صليب هدايا عالمنا الحقيقي. إنّهُ صليبٌ ناجمٌ عن التناوب بين الحصول على الهدية وفقدّها. لا تتحقّق أحلامنا كلّها، وفي كلّ مرّة نريدها فيها. لذلك ترى حياتنا بين نجاح وإخفاق، همة وفنور، فرح وحزن. ما نرغب فيه، قد يتحقّق بالكلية، وقد يتحقّق جزء منه، وبالمقابل قد نفقده جزئياً أو كلياً. هذا صليبٌ أكثر إيلاماً لمن لم يعتد على الشكر، ولمن لم يفقه، بعد، معنى الحياة الحقّة، وبقي حاصراً إيّاها في إطار الحياة الدنيا.

غيابُ العطية، أو فقدها، يجعلنا نطرح السؤال حول السبب. كذلك يجعلنا فقدها أكثر وعياً لمكانتها ودورها في حياتنا. وبمقدار ما تكون العطية المفقودة مهمة وأساسية، تكون إمكانية ترقّي الذي فقدها أسمى وأرفع.

تأثرت، في شبابي، بسيّدة فاضلة، رقدت بالربّ منذ زمن. هذه قضت سنة ونصف في المستشفى، وأجرت عدّة عمليات متتابة، وطلقها زوجها في أثناء استشفائها، ولم ترزق بأولاد. تألمت كثيراً، وكان صليبيها الثقيل دافعاً لها للتساؤل عن معنى ما حدث لها، واكتشفت، بمساعدة أبيها الروحي، وأصدقائها الخلص، أنها مدعوة إلى رسالة سامية. فكرست حياتها لتعليم التمرّض، في وقت لم تكن ثمة مدارس له، وللتعليم اللاهوتي الروحي الصافي، وكان نادراً آنذاك!

يحمل المسيحيّ صليب العالم هذا، وصليب وجوده هو، لا برضى فقط، بل بنوع من الفرح، لأنّه يعرف أنّ ثمة حياة لا تفتنى، بعد هذا الصليب. بهذا الإيمان، يرى المسيحيّ العالم مصلوباً وميتاً بالنسبة له. كما يرى أنّه هو، وكلّ ميوله، مصلوبٌ وميتٌ عن العالم الحالي. يعمل المؤمن على تطوير وضع العالم الحالي، السائر إلى الزوال والموت. فيطوّر بذور القيامة المستقبلية الكامنة فيه، عبر سعيه إلى قيامته الشخصية وقيامة هذا العالم - الهدية.

في مسيرته الحياتيّة هذه، يكتشف الإنسان، عبر المآسي والمعاناة، معنى فقدانه بعض الأمور، التي هي أساسيّة في نظره. لكنه قد يكتشف، مرّات عديدة، نعمةً في خسارتها. فيوجّه شكره لله، لأنّه ما كان ليلاحظ الأمور الأكثر أساسيّة، لو بقي متنعمّاً بتلك التي فقدها. هذه حال بعض الذين قضوا سنين في سجون انفراديّة بسبب إيمانهم. لقد اختبروا وذاقوا، في مأساة ما عاشوه، نعمةً إلهيّةً أمّدتهم بسلام عميق، افتقدوه حينما خرجوا من السجن. فصقل هذا الصليب شخصياتهم وجعلها أكثر شفافية، ما هيأهم للعب دورٍ جوهريّ في ما بعد.

راجع بعض سير السجّاء الرومانيين الأرثوذكس خلال الفترة الشيوعية. بهذا المعنى، يقول الأب، اللاهوتي الروماني، القديس ديمتري ستانيلوى، وهو سجين سابق بسبب إيمانه المسيحي، إنّ العالم ووجودنا فيه هما الصليب، الذي يجب أن نحمله، حتّى نهاية حياتنا الأرضيّة. نشعر بطبيعة هذا العالم الوقتيّة صليباً مستمراً. لكن بإمكاننا، انطلاقاً من إيماننا المسيحي، ونعمة الله، أن نعيش هذا الصليب برّجاء القيامة. لهذا نعيشه بفرح!

Father and Son Running for the Building Project



**Run with Fr. Samer
and Dominic for Our
Church**

Organized by
Father Samer Youss...



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

WELCOMING NOTE FROM OUR PRIEST

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the entire Church of the Redeemer family, it is my great joy to welcome you to our 2026 Mediterranean Food Festival, September 12–13!

This festival is one of the highlights of our parish life each year, and we are delighted to open our doors and share with our neighbors throughout the Bay Area the warmth, hospitality, traditions, and faith of our Orthodox Christian community.

Of course, you will find plenty of delicious Mediterranean food, lively music, dancing, raffle prizes, and activities for the whole family. But our festival is about more than food and entertainment. It is an opportunity to welcome you into our home and share with you a little of who we are.

Throughout the weekend, we invite you to take a guided tour of our beautiful church and experience the richness of Orthodox Christian worship, sacred art, and newly installed iconography in the narthex. Whether you are visiting us for the first time or have been coming for many years, we hope you will feel truly welcome.

A Special Opportunity to Help Build Our Future

We are also excited to share an important update about our long-awaited Building Project.

By God's grace and through the generosity of a faithful parishioner, we have received a \$500,000 Matching Challenge! Every dollar donated toward our Building Project will be matched dollar-for-dollar, up to \$500,000, through December 31, 2026.

With county approvals in hand and our architectural plans advancing, we are closer than ever to beginning construction of our new Fellowship Hall, Sunday School, and community space.

This new building will serve our children, families, parish ministries, and the wider community for generations to come.

Every meal you enjoy, every raffle ticket you purchase, and every donation you make during the festival helps bring us one step closer to groundbreaking. If you would like to learn more about the Building Project or the matching challenge, please visit our designated Building Project booth during the festival. We would be delighted to share our vision with you.

Whether you are Mediterranean or not, Orthodox or not, **you are welcome here.** Our doors are open to everyone, and it would be my personal joy to meet you and share this special weekend with you.

Thank you for being part of our community and for supporting the Church of the Redeemer. May God bless you and your loved ones with peace, health, and every good gift. I warmly welcome you to our 2026 Mediterranean Food Festival. We look forward to celebrating with you!

Faithfully yours in Christ,

V. Rev. Fr. Samer Youssef, D.Min.
Pastor

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>



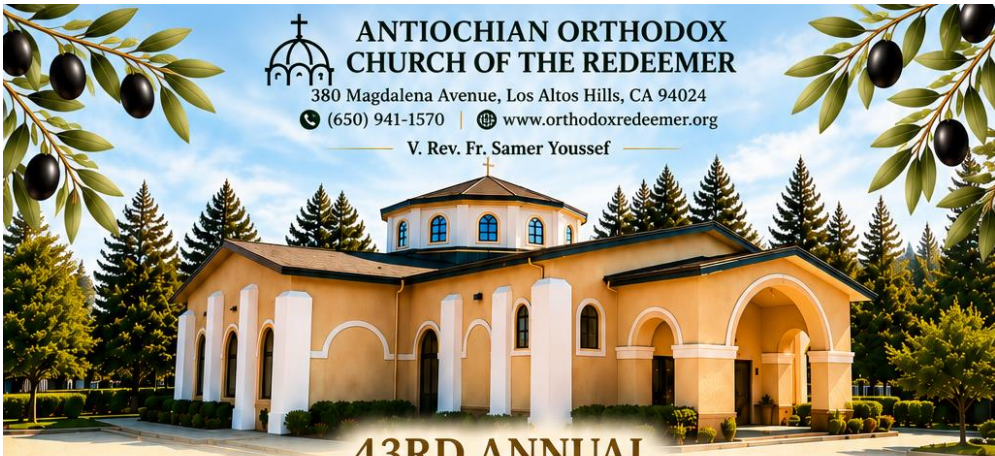


ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

380 Magdalena Avenue, Los Altos Hills, CA 94024

(650) 941-1570 | www.orthodoxredeemer.org

V. Rev. Fr. Samer Youssef



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 & SUNDAY



Sami Ihsane

PERFORMING
SATURDAY & SUNDAY



DJ Shad

LIVE DJ ALL WEEKEND



AUTHENTIC SHAWARMA
AND MIDDLE EASTERN FOOD
SERVED ALL WEEKEND



BEEF SHAWARMA WRAP



CHICKEN SHAWARMA WRAP



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