

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

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF
THE REDEEMER**

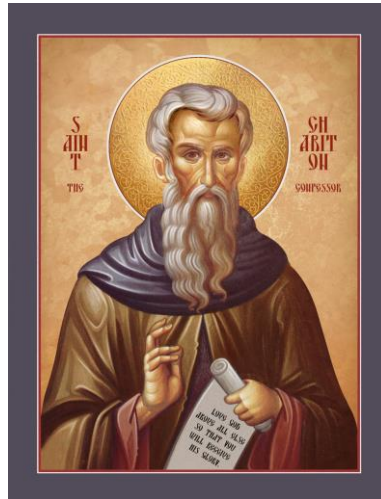
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V. REV. FR. SAMER YOUSSEF, D. MIN

REV. FR. THEODORE SAKELLAR, MTS



SEPTEMBER 27, 2026

**SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
& FIRST SUNDAY OF LUKE**

MARTYR KALLISTRATOS AND THE 49 MARTYRS WITH HIM

THE APOSTLES ARISTARCHOS, ZENON AND MARK OF THE SEVENTY

الاحد السابع عشر بعد العنصرة و الأحد الأول من القديس لوقا الأنجيلي

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE EIGHT

From on high didst Thou descend, O Compassionate One; to burial of three days hast Thou submitted that Thou mightest free us from our passions. O our Life and Resurrection, Lord, glory be to Thee.

أبوليتيكيون القيامة بالحن الثامن

أَنحَدَرْتَ مِنَ الْعُلُوِّ يَا مُتَحَنِّنٌ، وَقَبِلْتَ الدَّفْنَ ذَا الثَّلَاثَةِ الْأَيَّامِ، لِكَيْ تُعَفِّقَنَا مِنَ الْآلَامِ، فَيَا حَيَاتِنَا
وَقِيَامَتَنَا، يَا رَبُّ الْمَجْدُ لَكَ.

APOLYTIKION OF THE MARTYRS IN TONE FOUR

Thy Martyrs, O Lord, in their courageous contest for Thee * received as the prize the crowns of incorruption and life from Thee, our immortal God. * For, since they possessed Thy strength, they cast down the tyrants * and wholly destroyed the demons' strengthless presumption. * O Christ God, by their prayers, save our souls, since Thou art merciful.

أبوليتيكيون للشهداء بالحن الرابع

شُهِدَاؤُكَ يَا رَبُّ بِجِهَادِهِمْ نَالُوا مِنْكَ الْأَكَالِيلَ غَيْرَ الْبَالِيَةِ يَا إِلَهَنَا. لِأَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَزُوا قُوَّتَكَ، فَحَطَّمُوا
الْمُغْتَصِبِينَ وَسَخَقُوا بِأَسْ الشَّيَاطِينِ الَّتِي لَا قُوَّةَ لَهَا. فَبِتَوَسُّلَاتِهِمْ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُ خَلِّصْ نَفُوسَنَا.

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 تجلّى ربّنا يسوع المسيح بالحن السابع

لَمَّا تَجَلَّيْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُ فِي الْجَبَلِ، أَظْهَرْتَ مَجْدَكَ لِلتَّلَامِيذِ حَسَبَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا، فَأَشْرَقَ لَنَا نَحْنُ
الْخَطَاةَ نَوْرَكَ الْأَرْلِيِّ، بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ إِلَهُ، يَا مَانِحِ النُّورِ، الْمَجْدُ 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 غَيْرَ الْخَازِيَةِ، الْوَسِيطَةَ لَدَى الْخَالِقِ غَيْرَ الْمَرْذُودَةِ، لَا تُعْرِضِي عَنُ
أَصْوَاتِ طَلِبَاتِنَا نَحْنُ الْخَطَاةَ، بَلْ تَدَارِكِينَا بِالْمَعُونَةِ بِمَا أَنَّكَ صَالِحَةٌ، نَحْنُ الصَّارِخِينَ إِلَيْكَ بِإِيمَانٍ:
بَادِرِي إِلَى الشَّفَاعَةِ وَأُسْرِعِي فِي الطَّلِبَةِ، يَا وَالِدَةَ الْإِلَهِ، الْمُتَشَقِّعَةَ دَائِمًا بِمُكْرَمِيكَ.

THE EPISTLE

Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.

God is known in Judah; His Name is great in Israel.

The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (6:16-7:1)
Brethren, we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore, come out from them, and be separate from them," says the Lord, "and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

الرسالة

صَلُّوا وَأَوْفُوا الرَّبَّ إِلَهَنَا.

اللَّهُ مَعْرُوفٌ فِي أَرْضِ يَهُوذَا. اِسْمُهُ عَظِيمٌ فِي إِسْرَائِيلَ.

فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ بُولُسِ الرَّسُولِ الثَّانِيَةِ إِلَى أَهْلِ كُورِنْثُوسَ

يَا إِخْوَتِي، أَنْتُمْ هَيْكَلُ اللَّهِ الْحَيِّ، كَمَا قَالَ اللَّهُ، "إِنِّي سَأَسْكُنُ فِيهِمْ، وَأَسِيرُ فِيهِمْ، وَأَكُونُ لَهُمْ إِلَهًا وَهُمْ
يَكُونُونَ لِي شَعْبًا. فَلِذَلِكَ اخْرُجُوا مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ وَاعْتَزَلُوا"، يَقُولُ الرَّبُّ "وَلَا تَمَسُّوا نَجَسًا. فَأَقْبَلَكُمْ وَأَكُونُ لَكُمْ
أَبًا وَتَكُونُوا أَنْتُمْ لِي بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ، يَقُولُ الرَّبُّ الْقَدِيرُ. "وَإِذْ لَنَا هَذِهِ الْمَوَاعِدُ، أَيُّهَا الْأَحِبَّاءُ، فَلْنُطَهِّرْ أَنْفُسَنَا
مِنْ كُلِّ آدَنَاسِ الْجَسَدِ وَالرُّوحِ، وَنُكَمِّلِ الْقَدَاسَةَ بِمَخَافَةِ اللَّهِ.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (5:1-11)

At that time, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And He saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, Jesus asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when Jesus had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at Thy word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish, which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

الإنجيل

فصلٌ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ لَوْقَا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتِّلْمِذِ الطَّاهِرِ.

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ، فِيمَا يَسُوعُ وَقَفَ عِنْدَ بُحَيْرَةِ جَنَيْسَارَتَ، رَأَى سَفِينَتَيْنِ واقِفَتَيْنِ عِنْدَ شَاطِئِ الْبُحَيْرَةِ، وَقَدْ انْحَدَرَ مِنْهُمَا الصَّيَّادُونَ يَغْسِلُونَ الشَّبَاكَ. فَدَخَلَ إِحْدَى السَّفِينَتَيْنِ، وَكَانَتْ لِسِمْعَانَ، وَسَأَلَهُ أَنْ يَتَّبَعَهُ قَلِيلًا عَنِ الْبَرِّ، وَجَلَسَ يُعَلِّمُ الْجُمُوعَ مِنَ السَّفِينَةِ. وَلَمَّا فَرَّغَ مِنَ الْكَلَامِ، قَالَ لِسِمْعَانَ: "تَقَدَّمْ إِلَى الْعُمُقِ وَالْقُوا شَبَاكَكُمْ لِلصَّيْدِ." فَأَجَابَ سِمْعَانُ وَقَالَ لَهُ: "يَا مُعَلِّمُ، إِنَّا قَدْ تَعَبْنَا اللَّيْلَ كُلَّهُ وَلَمْ نُصِبْ شَيْئًا، وَلَكِنْ بِكَلِمَتِكَ أُلْقِي الشَّبَكَةَ." فَلَمَّا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ، اخْتَارُوا مِنَ السَّمَكِ شَيْئًا كَثِيرًا حَتَّى تَحَرَّقَتْ شَبَكَتُهُمْ. فَأَشَارُوا إِلَى شُرَكَائِهِمْ فِي السَّفِينَةِ الْأُخْرَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا وَيُعَاوَنُوهُمْ. فَأَتُوا وَمَلَأُوا السَّفِينَتَيْنِ حَتَّى كَادَتَا تَغْرَقَانِ. فَلَمَّا رَأَى ذَلِكَ سِمْعَانُ بَطْرُسُ، خَرَّ عِنْدَ رُكْبَتَيْ يَسُوعَ قَائِلًا: "أُخْرِجْ عَنِّي يَا رَبُّ، فَإِنِّي رَجُلٌ خَاطِيٌّ." لِأَنَّ الْإِنْذَهَالَ اعْتَرَاهُ هُوَ وَكُلُّ مَنْ مَعَهُ لِصَيْدِ السَّمَكِ الَّذِي أَصَابُوهُ. وَكَذَلِكَ يَعْقُوبُ وَيُوَحَنَّا ابْنَا زَبْدَى اللَّذَانِ

كانا رَفِيقَيْنِ لِسِمْعَانَ. فَقَالَ يَسُوعُ لِسِمْعَانَ: "لَا تَخَفْ، فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْآنَ تَكُونُ صَيَّاداً لِلنَّاسِ." فَلَمَّا بَلَغُوا
بِالسَّفِينَتَيْنِ إِلَى الْبَرِّ، تَرَكُوا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَتَبِعُوهُ.

TRISAGION PRAYER

One Year Memorial service in memory of Asal Ayad, offered by her children: Yvonne, Nader, Nabil, Larry, Neveen, Lamia and their families, and the Ayad, Saba and Tarazi families.



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: Norma Mogannam and her children for the good health of her husband John, wishing him a speedy recovery. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Nabil Elserougi for the good health of his children; Kristen, Shereen, Leanna, and Gabriella, and their families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Tatiana and Eli Hanani for the good health of their parents Maher and Randa on the occasion of their wedding anniversary (Sept 24). Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Basma Batmani for the good health of her husband Nabil on the occasion of his birthday (Sep 21) and the good health of their children; Mona and Alfred. For the good health of Violette Dimes and the Batmani and Dimes families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Richard Godfrey for the good health of his wife Nancy and her sister Norma on the occasion of their birthdays (Sep 26) and the good health of their children and the Godfrey, Sharkery and Bitar families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Nickitas Panayoto for the good health of his wife Narimane on the occasion of her birthday (Sep 26) and the good health of their children Troy, Nino and the Panayoto family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Nabil Elserougi and family in memory of his beloved mother and grandmother, Georgette (One year memorial). Memory Eternal!



COFFEE HOUR

Offered By: Lamia Ayad Tarazi

*(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

Youth Vespers: Saturday, October 24 @ 4:00 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 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.

UPCOMING EVNTS AT THE CHURCH

Please save the date

September 26, 27: St. John Church, Orinda Food Festival

October 3, 4: St. Nicholas Church, SF Food Festival

October 9: Food Festival Appreciation Dinner @ 6:00PM

October 24: Fall Festival @ 4:00PM

The Cross in Our Life, Part Three

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

The Cross of Pleasure

Most believers associate the cross with pain, trials, and hardships of every kind. Yet few realize that the cross produced by seeking pleasure apart from God is heavier and harsher than other crosses.

When received in the name of Christ, the cross of trials produces steadfastness, strength, patience, tenderness of heart, and a refined human sensitivity. It also brings abundant grace. It is truly and genuinely a cross that leads to resurrection—a cross whose consolation makes it sweet.

Pleasure sought apart from God, however, creates a deadly emptiness. A person tries to fill this emptiness by returning to the same pleasure and immersing himself in it more intensely. He imagines that, by returning to it with greater force and abandoning himself to it more completely, he will escape his boredom and weariness. He believes that he is satisfying a longing for fullness, without realizing that he is seeking it in the wrong place. In reality, he gradually discovers that he has become enslaved to pleasure. He grows weak before it, surrenders to it, and despairs of ever being delivered from it. This cross leads to death and not to resurrection.

Why does a person experience pleasure as a cross? Is pleasure not a sensation of delight and exhilaration, both of which are joyful? Because reality shows us that every indulgence in pleasure is followed by pain and sorrow. Pleasure is temporary; its glow fades as soon as it ends. A person then discovers that he was deceived and has returned to the same condition in which he began.

Before the act, the evil one portrays pleasure as promising every delight for which the person longs, satisfying everything he seeks, and bringing him the peace of which he dreams. Yet in practice, he discovers that he has not merely returned to his former state: he now feels an even greater emptiness, a harsher weariness, and a darker despair.

Nevertheless, in order to avoid confronting this new reality, he rushes into yet another attempt to immerse himself in a still greater pleasure. Thus, the words of Saint John Climacus are fulfilled in him: “The dog has returned to its vomit.”

Let us calmly examine the power that one or more pleasures exercise over us. If we find it difficult to scrutinize ourselves, let us consider those who are addicted

to sex, drugs, and the like. Did not the sexual revolution begin by demanding the right to engage in sexual activity and declaring it permissible whenever a person desired it? What was the result? Human beings were not satisfied with what they had attained. They went beyond it, devising new forms of sexual activity, then turning to same-sex relations, until we began hearing, from time to time, even of ceremonies supposedly uniting a human being in marriage to a pet!

Saint Maximus the Confessor speaks of “blind pleasure” — pleasure from which spiritual vision is absent. Such pleasure does not consider our responsibility before God and our neighbor. It is concerned only with satisfying the desires and inclinations of the individual solely on the individual level. It is selfish pleasure in the fullest sense. It uses the body to satisfy what the soul demands. As bodily passions spread unchecked within a person, they enslave him and draw him into excess, until he reaches the point of deadly addiction.

All pleasures that a person seeks apart from God tend to become blind pleasures. They do not look beyond themselves but are content with the immediate moment. They are bodily in the fullest sense. Through them, a person falls into sensuality without any limit. He falls into the darkness of the ego, which descends to a level of sensuality that can find expression only in the material world. The material world thereby becomes increasingly heavy and can no longer serve as a path leading the human person toward the greater Truth.

With your strong body, for example, you can serve others and accomplish great things. Or you can subject it to your selfish pleasures without caring in the least about anyone else. If you put your mind to work, you may use it to spread joy around you and develop better ways of living for yourself and others. Or you may exploit it merely to secure what is best for yourself, even at the expense of others.

The problem lies neither in the body nor in matter. The problem lies within you—in your being and in your soul. What does your soul seek, and how does it attempt to satisfy its needs? Where is God in your life? How is the Gospel of Christ embodied in you? And how far are you prepared to continue walking with Christ?

Although a person can freely reject pleasure, he can never escape the pain and sorrow that come from it. He is left with two choices, both bitter. Either he flees from them by throwing himself into the pursuit of still more pleasures and devising new ways of seeking and experiencing them, until his body withers and can no longer respond to the demands of his soul. At that point, he discovers that his soul has become immeasurably more lustful than his body. He then loses the

consolation he has spent his entire life seeking and begins to look for it from others, only to experience ever greater anguish.

Or he surrenders to despair and depression, which cause him to lose the meaning of life. They deprive him of the ability to recognize the love others have for him and prevent him from loving them in return. He thus spends his life in suffocating psychological isolation and deadly loneliness.

A person can overcome his sorrow only when he is touched by the grace of God and experiences the joy of living with Him. He then begins to seek true and lasting pleasure—the pleasure that springs from within him, specifically from the presence of God dwelling in him. When he replaces his love for earthly things with love for divine things, he discovers that he has gained both. But this occurs only after he has entered into the experience of repentance, which means a “change of mind.”

As long as we remain attached to earthly things, our cross remains too heavy for us to carry—unless we encounter God, who awaits us at every crossroads, seeking to set us free and opening His arms to embrace us.

Our longing for divine things—for the presence of God within us—transforms our inner vision of everything, and everything acquires a different meaning. This cannot happen without struggle or without a cross. Until a person is freed from enslavement to earthly things, he cannot experience temptations and hardships as crosses that liberate and enliven. In this way, he rises from one spiritual state to a higher one, until he reaches the state described by the Apostle Paul in these beautiful words: “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed” (2 Cor. 4:8–9).

The Cross prevents the fundamental inclinations of the world and the flesh from swelling beyond measure. Yet it also grants them the possibility of being transfigured—to pass through the Cross into true vision and complete freedom. Then the Apostle’s description is fulfilled in us: “As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” (2 Cor. 6:9–10).

The Fathers of the Church teach us that whoever is nourished by the Cross is nourished by the Tree of Life.

الصليب في حياتنا، الجزء الثالث بقلم المترولين سابا (اسبر)

صليب المتعة

يربط معظم المؤمنين الصليب بالألم والمحن والشدائد، على أنواعها. بينما، قلائل هم الذين يعرفون أنَّ الصليب، الناجم عن طلب المتعة خارج الله، أثقل وأقسى من الصلبان الأخرى.

يُنتج صليب المحن شدةً وقوةً وصبراً، ورهافةً مشاعر وحساً إنسانياً رفيعاً، إن استقبلناه باسم المسيح. كذلك يستجلب نِعماً غزيرة. إنه صليب يقود إلى القيامة، حقاً وفعلاً. صليب معزٍّ، وتعزيتته تجعله عذباً.

أما المتعة، خارج الله، فتسبب فراغاً قاتلاً، يسعى الإنسان إلى ملئه باسترجاع المتعة إيّاها، والاستغراق فيها، ظناً منه أنه، بالعودة إليها والانغماس فيها، بطاقةٍ أقوى، يتخلص من الشعور بالضجر والملل، واعتقاداً منه بأنه يُشبع التوق إلى ملءٍ، يجهل أنه يطلبه في المكان الخاطئ. لكنّه، في الواقع، يستكشف، شيئاً فشيئاً، استعباد ذاته للمتعة، ويخور أمامها مستسلماً لها، ويأساً من إمكانية النجاة منها. هذا صليب قاتل، لا قياسي.

لماذا يشعر الإنسان بالصليب في المتعة؟ فالمتعة شعور باللذة والنشوة، وكلاهما بهيج؟ لأنّ الواقع يقول إنّ كلَّ انغماس في المتعة، يجلب ألماً وحزناً في أعقابها. فالمتعة وقتية، ينتهي وهجها بانتهائها، ليكتشف المرء أنه كان واهماً، وها قد عاد إلى ما كان عليه وفيه. والشّرير يصوّرها، قبل تنفيذها، واعدةً، محقّقةً لكلّ المباهج، التي يبحث الإنسان عنها، وملبّيةً ما يطلبه، وجالبةً له السلام الذي يحلم به. لكنّه، في الحقيقة والواقع، يختبر أنه، ما عاد إلى ما كان عليه فقط، بل عاد ليشعر بفراغ أكبر، وضجر أقسى، ويأس أشدّ سواداً.

ومع ذلك، ولكي يهرب من مواجهة واقعه الجديد هذا، يندفع، في محاولة أخرى، إلى الاستغراق في متعة أبعد. وهكذا يصحّ فيه ما يقوله القدّيس يوحنا السلمي: "عاد الكلب إلى قيئه."

لننظر بهدوء إلى تسلّط متعة أو أكثر علينا. وإذا ما صعب علينا التدقيق في الأمر، فلننظر إلى المدمنين على الجنس أو المخدرات... إلخ. ألم تبدأ الثورة الجنسية بالمطالبة بحقّ

الإنسان بممارسته، وتحليله له حينما يرغب في ذلك؟ ماذا كانت النتيجة؟ لم يشبع الإنسان ممّا حصّله، فتعدّاه إلى ابتكار فنونٍ في ممارسته، ومن ثمّ اتجه إلى الجنس الأحادي، حتّى بتنا نسمع، بين الحين والآخر، بأنّ حفل زواج قد تمّ بين إنسان وحيوان أليف!!!

يتحدّث القدّيس مكسيموس المعترف عن المتعة العمياء، وهي متعة تغيّب عنها رؤية الروح، متعة لا تتطلّع إلى مسؤوليتنا أمام الله والقريب. متعة لا تهتمّ إلا بإشباع رغبات صاحبها وميوله، باعتباره فرداً، وعلى صعيده الفردي فقط. إنّها متعة أنانيّة بامتياز. تستخدم الجسد لتأمين متطلبات الروح وتحقيقها. فتستعبد الشهوات الجسديّة صاحبها، من جراء انفلاشها فيه، وتجّره إلى الإفراط فيها، حتّى يصل إلى درجة الإدمان القاتل.

كلّ المتع التي يطلبها الإنسان خارج الله، ننحو لتكون متعاً عمياء. لا تنظر إلى ما بعدها، بل تكتفي باللحظة الآنيّة. إنّها جسدانيّة بامتياز. فيها يسقط الإنسان في الشهوانيّة من دون أيّ أفق. يسقط في ظلام الأنا التي تنخفض إلى مستوى شهوانيّة لا تجد تعبيراً لها، إلّا في العالم المادّي، الذي يزداد، بواسطتها، ثقلاً، ولا يعود يصلح سبيلاً موصلاً الإنسان إلى الحقيقة الأعظم.

يمكنك، على سبيل المثال، بجسدك القويّ، أن تخدم، وأن تأتي بأفعال عظيمة، ويمكنك أن تسخره لمتعك الأنانيّة، غير آبهٍ بغيرك البتّة! عقلك إنّ شغلته، قد تستخدمه في نشر البهجة في ما حولك، وتطوير سبل عيش أفضل، لك ولغيرك، وقد تستغلّه لتأمين ما هو أفضل لك فقط، ولو على حساب غيرك!

ليست العلة في الجسد أو المادّة. العلة فيك، في روحك، في نفسك. ماذا تطلب روحك، وكيف تسعى إلى تأمين متطلّباتها؟ أين الله في حياتك، وكيف يتجسّد إنجيل المسيح فيك؟ وإلى أيّ حدّ أنت مستعد للمضي قدماً مع المسيح؟

بينما يستطيع الإنسان أن يرفض المتعة بمشيئته، لا يستطيع، أبداً، أن يتفادى الألم والحزن الناجمين عنها. هو يبقى أمام واحد من خيارين، أحلاهما مرّ. فإمّا أن يهرب منهما، بإلقاء ذاته في طلب المزيد من المتع، وابتكار طرق جديدة في طلبها وتأديتها، إلى أن يذبل الجسد، ولا يعود قادراً على التجاوب مع ما تطلبه نفسه، التي يكتشف، آنذاك، أنّها باتت

شهوانية، أكثر من جسده بما لا يقاس. آنذاك يفقد التعزية التي قضى عمره في طلبها، فيبدأ بطلبها عند غيره، ليزداد قهراً على قهر. أو أن يستسلم لليأس والكآبة، اللذين يقودانه إلى فَقْدِ معنى الحياة، فيحرمانه من رؤية محبة الآخرين له، كما يمنعانه من أن يحبّ غيره، فيقضي حياته في عزلة نفسية خانقة، ووحدة قاتلة.

يستطيع الإنسان أن يتغلب على حزنه، فقط، إذا لمستَه نعمة الله، واختبر فرح العيش معه. آنذاك يبدأ بالبحث عن المتعة الحقّة، التي تدوم، وتنبع من داخله، وبالتحديد من حضور الله فيه. حين يستبدل عشقه للأرضيات بعشقه للإلهيات، يرى أنّه ربح الاثنين معاً، ولكن بعدما يكون قد دخل في خبرة التوبة، التي تعني "تغيير ذهنه". طالما أنّنا ملتصقون بالأرضيات، يبقى صليبنا أثقل من أن نحمله، إلا إذا قابلنا الله، الذي ينتظرنا عند كل مفترق طرق، محاولاً تحريرنا، وفتحاً يديه لمعانقتنا.

يغيّر توقنا إلى الإلهيات، إلى حضور الله فينا، نظرتنا الداخلية إلى كلّ شيء، فيصير لكلّ شيء معنى مختلفاً. هذا لا يتحقّق من دون تعب، أو صليب. فإلى أن يتحرّر الإنسان من استعباده للأرضيات، يختبر التجارب والأتعاب صلباناً محرّرة ومانحة للحياة. وهكذا يترقّى من حالة إلى أخرى أسمى، حتّى يبلغ الحالة التي يصفها الرسول بولس بهذا الكلام الجميل: "يشتدّ علينا الضيق من كلّ جانب ولا ننسحق، نحار في أمرنا ولا نياس، يضطهدنا الناس ولا يتخلّى عنّا الله، نسقط في الصراع ولا نهلك" (٢ كو٤/٨-٩).

يمنع الصليب ميول العالم والجسد الأساسية من التضخّم، لكنّه يمنحها، أيضاً، إمكانية التجلّي، والعبور بالصليب إلى الرؤى الحقيقية، والحرية الكاملة، فيصحّ فينا وصف الرسول: "مجهولين ونحن معروفون، مائتين وها نحن أحياء، معاقبين ولا نُقتل، محزونين ونحن دائماً فرحون، فقراء ونغني كثيراً من الناس، لا شيء لنا ونحن نملك كلّ شيء" (٢ كو٦/٩-١٠).

يعلّمنا آباء الكنيسة أنّ من يتغذى بالصليب يتغذى من شجرة الحياة.

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.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has already supported their run. Thanks to your generosity, **\$5,510** has been raised so far!

Fr. Samer and Dominic are continuing their fundraising efforts, and we ask you to please consider supporting their run and helping our church take full advantage of the \$500,000 matching opportunity.

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

To Donate: GoFundMe:

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

You may also donate online or send a check payable to:

Church of the Redeemer

380 Magdalena Avenue

Los Altos Hills, CA 94024

Thank you to all our supporters for your generosity, encouragement, and prayers. Please continue to support Fr. Samer and Dominic as they run for our church!

“Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus...”

— Hebrews 12:1–2



THE CHURCH OF
THE REDEEMER

Thank You

**FOR MAKING OUR FOOD FESTIVAL
A SUCCESS!**



FOOD FESTIVAL APPRECIATION DINNER

The Church of the Redeemer

warmly invites all our wonderful volunteers and everyone
who helped make our *43rd Annual Mediterranean Food Festival*
such a great success!

Please join us for an evening of appreciation,
fellowship, and dinner.



**FRIDAY,
OCTOBER 9, 2026**



6:00 PM



**CHURCH OF
THE REDEEMER**

*This evening is our way of saying
THANK YOU for your time, hard work, dedication,
and love for our church.*

From the workshops and food preparation to setup, cooking, serving,
cleanup, and everything in between — we could not have done it without you!



We look forward to celebrating YOU!



With gratitude,
Church of the Redeemer



FALL FUN FESTIVAL

**Come join us for a fun-filled evening
for the whole family!**

**At the Antiochian Orthodox Church Redeemer Hall
380 Magdalena Ave, Los Altos**

**Saturday, October 24th, 2026
From 4 PM - 8 PM**

**Children's Vesper will be held at 4 PM
Following the Fall Fun Fest right after**

**Dress up in your church friendly costumes
and get ready for a fun filled evening with**

**Pumpkin Carving, Jumper House, Face Painting,
Craft and More....**

Call to rsvp for headcount...

Call the Church Office: 1-650-941-1570

**Any donation
accepted**



ST. JOHN ORTHODOX CHURCH

MIDDLE EASTERN FOOD FESTIVAL



MUSIC



FOOD



CULTURE

CELEBRATING
32
YEARS

SEPTEMBER 26 - 27

501 MORAGA WAY, ORINDA, CA

SAT 11AM - 8PM | SUN NOON - 7PM

FREE ADMISSION

St. Nicholas 30th Middle Eastern *Food Festival!*



**We invite you to come celebrate
our cuisine, culture and community!**

Get ready to indulge in authentic Middle Eastern dishes from savory kebabs, falafels and shawarmas to our famous hummus, tabbouleh, kibbeh, stuffed grape leaves and more.



Authentic Food



Sweet Delights



**Live Music and
Performances**



Hookah lounge



Car raffle



Kids corner



Local vendors



Craft drinks



Church tours



**Event for
All Ages!**

**Saturday,
October 3rd
12pm-9pm**

**Sunday,
October 4th
12pm-7pm**



at St. Nicholas Church:
5200 Diamond Heights Blvd.
San Francisco, CA, 94131



Parking available on
350 Amber Dr.
San Francisco, CA 94131

**Car raffle, \$50 per ticket.
First prize is a
2026 Mercedes Benz CLA250!**



Drawing will take place on*
Sunday, October 4th.
You do not need to be present to win.

**To purchase your tickets,
please reach out to:**

- Office: (415) 648-5200
- Elias Batshon (650) 580-7185
- Jiries Wahba (415) 994-1808



For more info, please call
office (415) 648-5200 or
email info@stnicholas-sf.com



2026 PLEDGE MEMBERS

Thank you to all the members who submitted their pledges. 2026 pledges will roll into 2027. Please if you are able to increase your pledges to inform the office/ treasurer. These names are not the final list, if you do not see your name please submit your pledge online. For questions contact the treasure, Henry Veizades at treasurer@orthodoxredeemer.org. We are encouraging all parishioners to pledge online at www.orthodoxredeemer.org. Thank you for your love to Christ and His Church.

(If you want your name to be Anonymous, Please notify the office).

Members pledging	Members pledging	Members pledging
Abboud, Fayez & Rima	Gussous, Yazeed & Rawia	Lutton, Richard
Abboud Aida	Habib, Yousif & Amal	Mapar, Kevin & Victoria
Aboujudom, David & Hala	Haddad, Sami & Ramza	Mawla, Shawn & Carol
Aboujudom, Edmond	Haddad, Bachour & Jane	Michael, Rizik & Sylvia
Ajlouni, Amal	Haddad, Francois & Maya	Mitri, George & Mona
Ajlouni, Basem & Maha	Haddad, Hanna & Rania	Mogannam, John & Norma
Ajlouni, Yacoub & Inaya	Haddad, Roula	Mogannam, Anthony
Akkary, Marwan & Yara	Hadaya, William & Aiya	Naser, Nuha
Amireh, Daad	Hage, Samuel & Maya	Nassif, Faris & Mabell
Anagnos, Gus & Christina	Halteh, Anwar & Diana	Nijmeh, Anton
Appelton, Lovette	Hanani, Elias & Wardia	Nystrom, Alia
Araj, David & May	Hanani, Maher & Randa	Odeh, Rajai & Suhaila
Asfour, Jeannette	Hanhan, Sal & Laila	Omran, George & Jeanette
Asfour, Salim & Wardeh	Hanhan, Yvonne	Oshana, Johnny & Mera
Assefa, Helen	Hanna, Margaret	Otell, Daniel & Jocelyne
Awad, Marwan & Mona	Horn, Bobby & Mihaela	Rubenstein, Sara
Aweiss, Salem & Samia	Jaber, Najla	Saah, Widad
Azar, Bashar & Alexandra	Jaber, Nawal	Saah, Abdallah & Hala
Azar, Nicholas & Sonia	Jammal, Mary	Saah, David, Najwa & Rami
Baker, Jonathan & Dania	Jammal, Michel & Therese	Saba, Tony & Marianne
Barghash, Hadi & Suzan	Jammal, Peter & Maria	Sakellar, Virginia
Bargouth, George & Rowida	Jarrouche, Yaacoub & Terry	Sakkab, Hilda
Bateh, Jad & Elaine	Kacker, Viraj	Salah, John & Linda
Bateh, Nawal	Kakunda, Bishara & Marlene	Salah, Mary
Batmani, Nabil & Basma	Kakunda, Michael & Leila	Salah, Paul
Batmani, Spir & Jehan	Kassis, Samer & Rana	Salameh, Majida
Baransy, Anan & Lubna	Kattuah, Suad	Salameh, Nader & Summer
Daya, Anis & May	Kawwas, Charlie & Carol Sara	Swanson, Giselle Salloum
Dimes, Violette	Kerba, Emile & Jacqueline	Sayigh, Basim & Sonia
Doughert, Annemarie	Kerba, Nabil & Josette	Segal, Mitchell & Maria
Dughman, Sami & Amal	Khamis, Johnny & Joulyana	Skaff, George & May
DeVore, Noah	Khinno, Edmund & Maria	Sleiman, Nayla
Eid, Richard & Annette	Khoury, Bassam & Dima	Srouji, Almaza
Eideh, Hanna & Suad	Khoury, Richard	Tarazi, Ibtisam & Dalia
Eideh, Sana	Khoury, Sami & Kamilia	Tarazi, Raja & Fadwa
Elmasu, Osama & Hala	Kreitem, George & Adele	Tepper, Maxx
Fasheh, Diana	Kreitem, Ibtisam	Theologides, Athanasios & Maria
Fasheh, Hiyam	Labban, George & Ghazal	Tomthy, Jake & Caitlin
Fasheh, Maher & Dimah	Lara, Yessica Nayelee	Vaisberg, Victor & Inessa
Gannage, Michel & Rima	Liwi, Adrena	Veizades, Henry & Sheila
Ghattas, Hanna & Madlen	Lomeli, Scott & Vivian	Xu, Esther
Godfrey, Richard & Nancy	Louis, Joseph & Najah	Youssef, Dimitry
Green, David & Lauren	Lutton, Chip & Jennifer	Youssef, Fr. Samer and Julianna

BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE

\$500,000 MATCHING CHALLENGE!

By God's grace, we are closer than ever to beginning construction of our new Fellowship Hall, Sunday School classrooms, administrative space, and Preschool.

We have been blessed with an extraordinary \$500,000 Matching Challenge. Every donation made toward the Building Project through December 31, 2026, will be matched dollar for dollar, up to \$500,000.

Your gift will have **DOUBLE** the impact!

\$100 becomes \$200 • \$500 becomes \$1,000 • \$5,000 becomes \$10,000

The Building Committee and Parish Council continue working diligently to finalize the general contractor selection and remaining project details.

A General Parish Meeting will be held in October to present the latest project updates, financial information, and proposed construction timeline.

The meeting date will be announced soon.

This is an important moment in the life of our parish. We prayerfully encourage every parishioner and friend of the Church of the Redeemer to participate and help us take advantage of the full \$500,000 match.

Together, we are building for our children, our families, our ministries, and future generations.

DOUBLE the Impact. DOUBLE the Blessing.

Give by December 31, 2026.

GIVE TO ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE
REDEEMER

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

