

**DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES FOR FEAST OF PALM SUNDAY:  
ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST INTO JERUSALEM**

\*\*DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM\*\*

قُدَّاسُ أَحَدِ الشَّعَائِينِ. دُخُولُ رَبِّنَا يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ إِلَى أُورَشَلِيمَ

THE FIRST ANTIPHON	الأنتيفونا الأولى
<p>I am filled with joy, for the Lord will hear the voice of my supplication. The anguish of death encompassed me; the perils of hell beset me.</p> <p><b>Refrain:</b> Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.</p> <p>I found tribulation and anguish, and I called upon the Name of the Lord. I will walk acceptably before the Lord in the land of the living. <b>(Refrain)</b></p> <p>Glory... Both now... <b>(Refrain)</b></p>	<p>لَقَدْ اِمْتَلَأْتُ فَرَحًا لِأَنَّ الرَّبَّ سَيَسْمَعُ صَوْتِ تَضَرُّعِي. غَمَرَاتُ الْمَوْتِ اِكْتَتَفَّتْنِي، وَأَهْوَالُ الْجَحِيمِ أَدْرَكْتْنِي.</p> <p><b>اللازمة:</b> بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِ، يَا مُخَلِّصُ خَلِّصْنَا.</p> <p>لَقَيْتُ الضِّيقَ وَالْأَسَى، وَدَعَوْتُ بِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ، فَيَا رَبَّ نَجِّ نَفْسِي. أَسْأَلُكَ أَمَامَ الرَّبِّ فِي أَرْضِ الْأَحْيَاءِ.</p> <p>الْمَجْدُ ... الْآنَ وَكُلَّ ... <b>(اللازمة)</b></p>
THE SECOND ANTIPHON	الأنتيفونا الثانية
<p>I believed, and therefore have I spoken: but I was deeply humiliated. What shall I render unto the Lord, for all His benefits unto me?</p> <p><b>Refrain:</b> Save us, O Son of God, <b>Who didst sit upon the foal of an ass</b>, who sing to Thee. Alleluia.</p> <p>I will take the cup of Salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord. <b>(Refrain)</b></p> <p>I will pay my vows unto the Lord in the presence of all His people. <b>(Refrain)</b></p> <p>Glory... Both now... O, only begotten Son and Word of God...</p>	<p>آمَنْتُ وَلِذَلِكَ تَكَلَّمْتُ، لَكِنِّي كُنْتُ مَكْرُوبًا جِدًّا. بِمَاذَا أَكْفِيُ الرَّبَّ عَنْ كُلِّ مَا أَعْطَانِي؟</p> <p><b>اللازمة:</b> خَلِّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ جَلَسَ عَلَى جَحْشِ ابْنِ آتَانَ، لِنُرْتِّلَ لَكَ، هَلِّلُوبِيَا.</p> <p>كَأْسَ الْخَلَاصِ أَقْبِلْ، وَبِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ أَدْعُو. <b>(اللازمة)</b></p> <p>أُوفِي نُدُورِي لِلرَّبِّ أَمَامَ كُلِّ شَعْبِهِ. <b>(اللازمة)</b></p> <p>الْمَجْدُ ... الْآنَ وَكُلَّ ... يَا كَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ الْإِبْنَ الْوَحِيدِ ...</p>
THE THIRD ANTIPHON	الأنتيفونا الثالثة
<p>O, give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever. Let the house of Israel now say that He is good: for His mercy endureth forever. Let the house of Aaron now say that He is good: for His mercy endureth forever. Let all that fear the Lord now say that He is good: for His mercy endureth forever.</p>	<p>إِعْتَرِفُوا لِلرَّبِّ فَإِنَّهُ صَالِحٌ، وَإِنَّ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ رَحْمَتُهُ.</p> <p>لِيَقُلْ بَيْتُ إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنَّهُ صَالِحٌ، وَإِنَّ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ رَحْمَتُهُ.</p> <p>لِيَقُلْ بَيْتُ هَارُونَ إِنَّهُ صَالِحٌ، وَإِنَّ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ رَحْمَتُهُ.</p> <p>لِيَقُلْ خَائِفُو الرَّبِّ إِنَّهُ صَالِحٌ، وَإِنَّ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ رَحْمَتُهُ.</p>
<p>• <i>During the Little Entrance, chant the verses of the Third Antiphon and the apolytikion of Lazarus Saturday. Then, the following:</i></p>	

<p align="center"><b>THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF THE FEAST</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>إيصودكيون ( ترنيمة الدخول) أحد الشعانين</b></p>
<p>Blessed is He Who cometh in the Name of the Lord: God is the Lord and hath appeared unto us. Save us, O Son of God, <b>Who didst sit upon the foal of an ass</b>; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.</p>	<p>مُبَارَكُ الْآتِي بِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ، اللَّهُ الرَّبُّ ظَهَرَ لَنَا. خَلَّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ جَلَسَ عَلَى جَحْشِ ابْنِ آتَانَ، لِنُرْتِّلَ لَكَ، هَلْلُويَا.</p>
<p>• After the Little Entrance, sing these hymns in the following order:</p>	
<p align="center"><b>APOLYTIKION OF LAZARUS SATURDAY IN TONE ONE</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>أبوليتيكيون سبت لعازر باللحن الأول</b></p>
<p>In confirming the common Resurrection, O Christ God, Thou didst raise up Lazarus from the dead before Thy Passion. Wherefore, we also, like the children, bearing the symbols of victory, cry to Thee, the Vanquisher of death: Hosanna in the highest; blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.</p>	<p>أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ، لَمَّا أَقَمْتَ لِعَازَرَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ قَبْلَ آلامِكَ، حَقَّقْتَ الْقِيَامَةَ الْعَامَّةَ. لِذَلِكَ وَنَحْنُ كَمَا لِلْأَطْفَالِ، نَحْمِلُ عِلَامَاتِ الْغَلْبَةِ وَالظَّفَرِ، صَارِحِينَ نَحْوِكَ يَا غَالِبَ الْمَوْتِ: أَوْصَنَا فِي الْأَعَالِي، مُبَارَكُ الْآتِي بِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ.</p>
<p align="center"><b>APOLYTIKION OF PALM SUNDAY IN TONE FOUR</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>أبوليتيكيون أحد الشعانين باللحن الرابع</b></p>
<p>O Christ God, when we were buried with Thee in Baptism, we became deserving of Thy Resurrection to immortal life. Wherefore, we praise Thee, crying: Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.</p>	<p>أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ، لَمَّا دُفِنَّا مَعَكَ بِالْمَعْمُودِيَّةِ، اسْتَأْهَلْنَا بِقِيَامَتِكَ الْحَيَاةَ الْخَالِدَةَ. فَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُكَ هَاتِفِينَ: أَوْصَنَا فِي الْأَعَالِي، مُبَارَكُ الْآتِي بِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ.</p>
<p>• Do NOT sing the apolytikion of the patron saint or feast of the temple.</p>	
<p align="center"><b>KONTAKION OF PALM SUNDAY IN TONE SIX</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>القنطاق لأحد الشعانين باللحن السادس</b></p>
<p>Being borne upon a throne in Heaven, and upon a colt on the earth, O Christ God, Thou didst accept the praise of the angels and the laudation of the children as they cried to Thee: Blessed art Thou Who comest to recall Adam.</p>	<p>يَا مَنْ هُوَ جَالِسٌ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَرَاكِبٌ جَحْشاً عَلَى الْأَرْضِ، لَقَدْ تَقَبَّلْتَ تَسَابِيحَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَتَمَاجِيدَ الْأَطْفَالِ، أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ، هَاتِفِينَ إِلَيْكَ: مُبَارَكُ أَنْتَ الْآتِي لِتُعِيدَ آدَمَ ثَانِيًا.</p>
<p>• The Trisagion Hymn: "Holy God."</p>	
<p align="center"><b>THE EPISTLE FOR PALM SUNDAY</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>الرسالة لأحد الشعانين</b></p>
<p><i>Blessed is He Who cometh in the Name of the Lord.</i> <i>O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endures forever.</i> <b>The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to</b></p>	<p>مُبَارَكُ الْآتِي بِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ. إِعْتَرِفُوا لِلرَّبِّ فَإِنَّهُ صَالِحٌ وَإِنَّ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ رَحْمَتُهُ. فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولَسَ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى أَهْلِ</p>

### the Philippians. (4:4-9)

Brethren, rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice! Let your forbearance be known to all people. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think about these things. The things which you both learned and received, and heard and saw in me, these things do; and the God of peace will be with you.

### فليبي. (٤: ٤-٩)

يا إخوة، افرحوا في الرب كل حين وأقول أيضاً افرحوا. وليظهر حلمكم لجميع الناس. فإن الرب قريب. لا تهتموا البتة، بل في كل شيء فلتكن طلباتكم معلومة لدى الله بالصلاة والتضرع مع الشكر. وليحفظ سلام الله، الذي يفوق كل عقل، قلوبكم وبصائرکم في يسوع المسيح. وبعد أيها الإخوة، مهما يكن من حق، ومهما يكن من عفاف، ومهما يكن من عدل، ومهما يكن من طهارة، ومهما يكن من صفة محببة، ومهما يكن من حسن صيت، إن تكن فضيلة، وإن يكن مدح، ففي هذه افتكروا. وما تعلمتموه، وتسلمتموه، وسمعتموه، ورأيتموه في، فبهذا اعملوا، وإله السلام يكون معكم.

### THE GOSPEL FOR PALM SUNDAY

#### The Reading of the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (12:1-18)

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus who had died was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at table with Him. Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. But Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, one of His Disciples (he who was to betray Jesus), said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" This he said, not because he cared for the poor but because he was a thief, and as he had the moneybox he used to take what was put into it. Jesus said, "Let her alone, let her keep it for the day of My burial. The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me." When

### الإنجيل لأحد الشعانين

#### فصل شريف من بشارة القديس يوحنا الإنجيلي البشير، والتلميذ الطاهر. (١٢: ١-١٨)

قبل الفصح بستة أيام، أتى يسوع إلى بيت عنيا حيث كان لعازر الذي مات فأقامه يسوع من بين الأموات. فصنعوا له هناك عشاء، وكانت مرثا تخدم، وكان لعازر أحد المتكئين معه. أما مريم فأخذت رطل طيب ناردين خالص، كثير الثمن، ودهنت قدمي يسوع ومسحت قدميه بشعرها. فامتلاً البيت من رائحة الطيب. فقال أحد تلاميذه، يهوذا ابن سمعان الاسخريوطي، الذي كان مزمعاً أن يسلمه، "لم لم يبع هذا الطيب بثلاث مئة دينار ويعطى للمساكين؟" وإنما قال هذا لا اهتماماً بالمساكين، بل لأنه كان سارقاً وكان الصندوق عنده، وكان يحمل ما يلقي فيه. فقال يسوع: "دعها، إنما حفظته ليوم دفني، فإن المساكين هم عندكم في كل حين، وأما أنا فلست عندكم في كل

the great crowd of the Jews learned that He was there, they came, not only on account of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus also to death, because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus. The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, "Hosanna! Blessed is He Who cometh in the Name of the Lord, the King of Israel!" And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written, "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass's colt!" His Disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of Him and had been done to Him. The crowd that had been with Jesus when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet Jesus was that they heard He had done this sign.

حِينَ . وَعَلِمَ جَمْعٌ كَثِيرٌ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ أَنَّ يَسُوعَ هُنَاكَ، فَجَاؤُوا، لَا مِنْ أَجْلِ يَسُوعَ فَقَطْ، بَلْ لِيَنْظُرُوا أَيْضاً لِعَازَرَ الَّذِي أَقَامَهُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ. فَأَتَمَرَ رُؤَسَاءُ الْكَهَنَةِ أَنْ يَقْتُلُوا لِعَازَرَ أَيْضاً، لِأَنَّ كَثِيرِينَ مِنَ الْيَهُودِ كَانُوا بِسَبَبِهِ يَذْهَبُونَ فَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِيَسُوعَ. وَفِي الْعَدِ، لَمَّا سَمِعَ الْجَمْعُ الْكَثِيرَ الَّذِينَ جَاؤُوا إِلَى الْعِيدِ بِأَنَّ يَسُوعَ آتٍ إِلَى أُورُشَلِيمَ، أَخَذُوا سَعَفَ النَّخْلِ وَخَرَجُوا لِلِقَائِهِ وَهُمْ يَصْرُخُونَ قَائِلِينَ: "هُوشَعْنَا، مُبَارَكُ الْآتِي بِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ مَلِكِ إِسْرَائِيلِ". وَإِنَّ يَسُوعَ وَجَدَ جَحْشاً فَرَكِبَهُ كَمَا هُوَ مَكْتُوبٌ: "لَا تَخَافِي يَا ابْنَةُ صِهْيُونَ. هَا إِنَّ مَلِكَكَ يَأْتِيكَ رَاكِباً عَلَى جَحْشِ ابْنِ أَتَانَ". وَهَذِهِ الْأَشْيَاءُ لَمْ يَفْهَمَهَا تَلَامِيذُهُ أَوَّلًا، وَلَكِنْ لَمَّا مُجِدَّ يَسُوعَ حِينَئِذٍ تَذَكَّرُوا أَنَّ هَذِهِ إِنَّمَا كُتِبَتْ عَنْهُ وَأَنَّهُمْ عَمَلُوهَا لَهُ. وَكَانَ الْجَمْعُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مَعَهُ حِينَ نَادَى لِعَازَرَ مِنَ الْقَبْرِ وَأَقَامَهُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ يَشْهَدُونَ لَهُ. وَمِنْ أَجْلِ هَذَا اسْتَقْبَلَهُ الْجَمْعُ، لِأَنَّهُمْ سَمِعُوا بِأَنَّهُ قَدْ صَنَعَ هَذِهِ الْآيَةَ.

**MEGALYNARION FOR PALM SUNDAY  
IN TONE FOUR**

**تعظيمة أحد الشعانين باللحن الرابع**

God the Lord hath appeared unto us; let us celebrate the Feast, and let us rejoice and magnify Christ; and with palms and branches let us raise our voices unto him with praise, saying, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord our Savior.

اللَّهُ الرَّبُّ ظَهَرَ لَنَا، فَأَقِيمُوا الْعِيدَ وَابْتَهِجُوا، وَهَلِّمُوا بِنَا نِعْظَمِ الْمَسِيحِ، وَبِسَعْفِ وَأَغْصَانِ نَهْتِفُ بِالنَّسَابِيحِ قَائِلِينَ: مُبَارَكُ الْآتِي بِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ مُخْلِصِنَا.

**KOINONIKON (COMMUNION HYMN)  
FOR PSALM SUNDAY IN TONE EIGHT**

**كينونيكون (ترنيمَة المناولة)  
لأحد الشعانين باللحن الثامن**

Blessed is He Who cometh in the Name of the Lord. Alleluia.

مُبَارَكُ الْآتِي بِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ. هَلِّلُويَا.

- During the Communion of the laity, the choir can sing “[Rejoice, O Bethany.](#)”
- Post-Communion Hymn: Instead of “We have seen the true light”, sing the Apolytikion of **Lazarus Saturday**.
- During the customary procession around the exterior of the church which follows “Blessed be the Name of the Lord”, the choir can sing the Apolytikia of Lazarus Saturday and Palm Sunday, “Rejoice, O Bethany” and the Trisagion Hymn.

THE DISMISSAL	الختم
<p><b>Priest:</b> May He Who accepted to make the foal of a donkey His throne for our salvation, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; by the might of the Precious and Life-giving Cross; by the protection of the honorable Bodiless Powers of Heaven; at the supplication of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John; of the holy, glorious and all-laudable apostles; of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople, whose Divine Liturgy we have now celebrated; of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna, and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.</p>	<p>الكاهن: أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُنَا الْحَقِيقِي، يَا مَنْ قَبِلْتَ أَنْ تَرْكَبَ عَلَى جَحْشِ ابْنِ آتَانَ مِنْ أَجْلِ خَلَاصِنَا، بِشَفَاعَةِ وَالِدَةِ إِلَهِ الدَّائِمَةِ الْبَتُولِيَّةِ مَرْيَمَ؛ وَبِقُوَّةِ الصَّلِيبِ الْكَرِيمِ الْمُخْيِي؛ وَبِطَلَبَاتِ الْقَدِيسِينَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ الْعَادِمِي الْأَجْسَادِ؛ وَتَضَرُّعَاتِ النَّبِيِّ الْمَجِيدِ السَّابِقِ يُوْحَنَّا الْمَعْمَدَانَ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الْمَجِيدِينَ الرُّسُلِ الْجَدِيرِينَ بِكُلِّ مَدِيحٍ؛ وَأَبِينَا الْجَلِيلِ فِي الْقَدِيسِينَ يُوحَنَّا الْأَذْهَبِيِّ الْقَمِّ رَئِيسِ أَسَاقِفَةِ الْقُسْطَنْطِينِيَّةِ كَاتِبِ هَذِهِ الْخِدْمَةِ الشَّرِيفَةِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الْمَجِيدِينَ الشُّهَدَاءِ الْحَسَنِي الطَّفَرِ؛ وَأَبَائِنَا الْأَبْرَارِ الْمُتَوَشَّحِينَ بِاللَّهِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِ (ة).... شَفِيعِ (ة) هَذِهِ الْكَنِيسَةِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الصِّدِّيقِينَ يُوَاكِمَ وَحَنَّةَ جَدِّي الْمَسِيحِ إِلَهِ، وَجَمِيعِ قَدِيسِيكَ، إِرْحَمْنَا وَخَلِّصْنَا بِمَا أَنَّكَ صَالِحٌ وَمُحِبٌّ لِلْبَشَرِ.</p>
<p><b>Priest:</b> Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us.</p>	<p>الكاهن: بِصَلَوَاتِ آبَائِنَا الْقَدِيسِينَ، أَيُّهَا الرَّبُّ يَسُوعُ الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُنَا اِرْحَمْنَا وَخَلِّصْنَا.</p>
<p><b>Choir:</b> Amen.</p>	<p>الجوقة: آمين.</p>

*These texts have been prepared by the Department of Liturgics of the Antiochian Archdiocese. Portions of the Archdiocesan Service Texts include texts from The Menaion, The Great Horologion, The Pentecostarion, The Octoechos, The Triodion-Holy Week, and The Psalter of the Seventy, which are Copyright © Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, Massachusetts, and are used with permission. All rights reserved. These works may not be further reproduced, beyond printing out a single copy for personal non-commercial use, without the prior written authorization of Holy Transfiguration Monastery.*

ANNIVERSARY OR OUR DEPARTED FOR THIS SUNDAY

<u>DAY</u>	<u>NAME OF THE DEPARTED</u>	<u>ANNIVERSARY</u>
4	Charles Edward Saba	6
4	Moussa Dallan	34
6	Sadie Halal	59
6	Ketty Shaila	49
6	William Fabel	18
7	Joseph Kawar	35
8	Wafaa El Haddad	3
8	Mitri Halagah	24
8	Sulaiman Kakish	25
8	Adele Khoury	24
9	Antoun A. Haddad	32

- **Please**, pray for the health of the following parishioners: Ellen, Robert, Alex, Sam, Elias, Nassar, George, Nina, Sonia, George, Beshara, Irene, Nadia, Christine, Toni, George, Helena and Rami.

ETERNAL LIGHTS

- **Apr 9:** for the good health of Mona, Romemel Alshammas and family.
- **Apr 16:** for the good health of Issa Bisharat and family.
- **Apr 16:** in loving memory of Munir Muasher, Khalil, Sarah and Safwan Muasher from Shadia Muasher and family.
- **Apr 23:** in loving memory of Jiries and Nahil Irbib from Nadim Irbib and family.
- **Apr 23:** in loving memory of Hanna Qaqish from his daughter Wafa Alchekh and family.
- **May 14:** in loving memory of Adel Younes from his family.

**FLOWERS FOR GOOD-FRIDAY AND EASTER LILIES**

- We are in need of flowers for Good Friday to decorate the bier of Christ. We also need Easter Lilies to decorate the church. If your family would like to donate towards flowers and Easter Lilies, please see **Mr. George Ghneim** or call the office **905-731-7210**

**CHURCH OFFICE**

- Anyone wishing to church a child, removal of crowns, have a memorial service, or would like Fr. George to give communion or visit their loved sick ones, should contact the church office ahead of time (905) 731-7210. In case of emergency, call Fr. Georges Mokbel (416) 725-2888.

## THANK YOU

- We wish to thank all **the Kakish and Qaqish families** for their kind donation towards the Madayeh dinner.

## HOMESCHOOLING GROUP

- The Orthodox Christian Homeschool (OCH) Group will begin meeting on January 12, 2023 (10:30 am) for homeschool support. Anyone wanting information about homeschooling can email [ochstgeorge@gmail.com](mailto:ochstgeorge@gmail.com)

## BLESSING OF HOMES

- Father Georges is visiting our parishioners and blessing their homes. If you like to have your home blessed, please call Fr. Georges 416-725-2888 or email the office [info@stgeorgeantiochianchurch.org](mailto:info@stgeorgeantiochianchurch.org) with your name and address. Father prefers that those who live in apartment's building to arrange for few apartments to be blessed together.

## MAINTAINING SILENCE DURING THE SERVICE

- **The congregation is expected to actively participate in worship. However, God's house is a place for reverence and worship, not loud and idle conversations (between each other or on cell phones). Please, turn off cell phones and any other devices when you are attending the Liturgy. If you have a situation that requires you to speak to other parishioners, please do that quietly outside the church or downstairs in the basement.**

## FIRE ROUTE, **HANDICAPPED PARKING**, AND PARKING LINES

- Please make sure not to park on the side of the church or in front of the Fire hydrant, for this is a fire route. **Also ensure not to park in the spots designated for handicapped parking. Anyone who parks and does not show a handicap permit on the window will be tagged.**

## TEEN SOYO

- **SOYO = Society of Orthodox Youth Organizations We are a dynamic group of Orthodox Christians that provides teens the opportunity to grow spiritually with fellow SOYO members within the community.  
We focus on Spiritual, Fundraising, and Bonding Activities for ages 13-18**

**Are you between the ages of 13-18?**

**Do you want to get involved?**

**Do you want to see behind the scene photos?**

**Do you have any questions?**

**Join our WhatsApp group for direct communication for all our events.**

**Contact your Youth Advisors!**

**Angela Ghazal: (416) 720-0308 Or Fady Freiga: (647) 892-6136**

**You can also find us on...**

**Facebook @ St. George Toronto Teen SOYO**

**Instagram @ toronto.soyo**

**Email @ [toronto.soyo@gmail.com](mailto:toronto.soyo@gmail.com)**

- **Kindly Submit your Contribution through the Following Methods: Connect to the Church Website [www.stgeorgeto.org](http://www.stgeorgeto.org) Click on *Donate***
  - **“e-transfer” [info@stgeorgeantiochianchurch.org](mailto:info@stgeorgeantiochianchurch.org) Account Name: St. George Church**
  - **PayPal, or send your Cheque by Mail to: St. George Antiochian Church, 9116 Bayview Ave, Richmond Hill ON, L4B 3M9**
- Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely, who conduct their affairs with justice.  
(Psalm 112:5)**



## Lenten Calendar 2023

Saturday February 18 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Divine Liturgy – Saturday of Souls
	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Great Vespers
Meat Fare Sunday February 19 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 am	Orthros & Confessions
	10:30 am	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
Saturday February 25 <sup>th</sup>	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Great Vespers
Cheese Fare Sunday February 26 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 am	Orthros & Confessions
	10:30 am	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
	7:00 pm	Lenten Vespers with Ceremony of Mutual Forgiveness

The Great Lent this year starts on Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and ends with the Resurrection on Sunday April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023. During this period, we are not allowed to eat the following:

- 1) Meat and meat by-products.
- 2) Eggs, milk and dairy by-products.
- 3) Fish with backbones. (Octopus and Shell fish are allowed).
- 4) On the Feast of the Annunciation Saturday March 25<sup>th</sup>, and on Palm Sunday April 9<sup>th</sup>, fish is allowed after the Divine Liturgy.

<b>First Week of Great Lent</b>		
Monday, February 27 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline & Great Canon of Repentance by St. Andrew of Crete
Tuesday, February 28 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline & Great Canon of Repentance by St. Andrew of Crete
Wednesday, March 1 <sup>st</sup>	7:00 pm	The Presanctified Divine Liturgy
Thursday, March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline & Great Canon of Repentance by St. Andrew of Crete
Friday, March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	6:30 pm	1 <sup>st</sup> Lenten Supper, sponsored by Men Society (Antiochian Men)
	7:30 am	1 <sup>st</sup> Akathist Hymn (Madayeh Service)
Saturday, March 4 <sup>th</sup>	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Great Vespers
Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 5 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 am	Orthros & Confessions
	10:30 am	Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great & Procession with Icons
	6:00 pm	PAN-ORTHODOX VESPERS

<b>Second Week of Great Lent</b>		
Monday, March 6 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Tuesday, March 7 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Wednesday, March 8 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	The Presanctified Divine Liturgy
Thursday, March 9 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Friday, March 10 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lenten Supper, sponsored by the YAM (Young Adult Ministry), the Teen SOYO & the Chanters
	7:30 am	2 <sup>nd</sup> Akathist Hymn (Madayeh Service)
Saturday, March 11 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	Divine Liturgy – Saturday of Souls
	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Great Vespers
Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas, March 12 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 am	Orthros & Confessions
	10:30 am	Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

<b>Third Week of Great Lent</b>		
Monday, March 13 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Tuesday, March 14 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Wednesday, March 15 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	The Presanctified Divine Liturgy
Thursday, March 16 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Friday, March 17 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	3 <sup>rd</sup> Lenten Supper, sponsored by the Antiochian Women
	7:30 am	3 <sup>rd</sup> Akathist Hymn (Madayeh Service)
Saturday, March 18 <sup>th</sup>	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Great Vespers
Sunday of the Holy Cross, March 19 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 am	Orthros & Confessions
	10:30 am	Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, Followed by a Procession & Veneration of the Holy Cross

<b>Fourth Week of Great Lent</b>		
Monday, March 20 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Tuesday, March 21 <sup>st</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Wednesday, March 22 <sup>nd</sup>	7:00 pm	The Presanctified Divine Liturgy
Thursday, March 23 <sup>rd</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Friday, March 24 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 pm	4 <sup>th</sup> Lenten Supper, sponsored by the order of St. Ignatius
	7:30 pm	Great Vespers with Litia-Artoklasia and the fourth stasis of the Akathist Hymn
Saturday, March 25 <sup>th</sup> Feast of the Annunciation	9:00 am	Festal Orthros
	10:30 am	Festal Divine Liturgy
	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Great Vespers
Sunday of St. John Climacus, March 26 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 am	Orthros & Confessions
	10:30 am	Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

<b>Fifth Week of Great Lent</b>		
Monday, March 27 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Tuesday, March 28 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Wednesday, March 29 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	The Presanctified Divine Liturgy
Thursday, March 30 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Little Compline with the full Great Canon of Repentance by St. Andrew of Crete & the life of St. Mary of Egypt
Friday, March 31 <sup>st</sup>	6:30 pm	5 <sup>th</sup> Lenten Supper, sponsored by the Parish Council
	7:30 am	5 <sup>th</sup> Akathist Hymn (Madayeh Service)
Saturday, April 1 <sup>st</sup>	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Great Vespers
Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt, April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	9:00 am	Orthros & Confessions
	10:30 am	Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

<b>Sixth Week of Great Lent</b>		
Monday, April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Tuesday, April 4 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Wednesday, April 5 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	The Presanctified Divine Liturgy
Thursday, April 6 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	Great Compline
Friday, April 7 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	The Presanctified Divine Liturgy
	7:00 pm	Little Compline with the Canon of the Raising of Lazarus
Lazarus Saturday, April 8 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 am	Orthros
	10:30 am	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom *
	4:00 pm	Confessions
	5:00 pm	Great Vespers

\*All Church School children and their parents, their Grandparents and their Godparents, will attend the Divine Liturgy on Lazarus Saturday and take Communion. Following the Liturgy, they will all have Brunch together with the Sunday School teachers.

### **SCHEDULE OF SERVICES FOR PALM SUNDAY AND HOLY WEEK**

- 1) Candles for your children will be available at the Church Vestibule, donation \$5.00 per candle.
- 2) During the Divine Liturgy and the procession, you are kindly requested to keep proper decorum, let us all behave in order, in discipline and in peace so that we can pray in one mind and one heart, and that Our Lord may hear our supplications and bestow upon us His Blessings.
- 3) All beloved parishioners are requested not to park their cars in the driveways. Procession will start from the outside main door of the Church, turn left on driveway behind the building into the parking lot, around the Church back to the main door and into the Church.

<b>Palm Sunday &amp; Holy Week</b>		
Palm Sunday, April 9 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 am	Orthros
	10:30 am	Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, Blessings of Palms & Procession
	7:00 pm	1 <sup>st</sup> Bridegroom Orthros for Holy Monday
Great Holy Monday, April 10 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	The Presanctified Divine Liturgy
	7:00 pm	2 <sup>nd</sup> Bridegroom Orthros for Holy Tuesday
Great Holy Tuesday, April 11 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	The Presanctified Divine Liturgy
	7:00 pm	3 <sup>rd</sup> Bridegroom Orthros for Holy Wednesday
Great Holy Wednesday, April 12 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	The Presanctified Divine Liturgy
	7:00 pm	Holy Unction Service, Anointing of the Faithful with Holy Oil
Great Holy Thursday, April 13 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 am	Orthros for Holy Thursday
	9:00 am	Vespereal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great for the Institution of the Mystical Supper of Christ
	7:00 pm	Orthros with the Twelve Passion Gospels for Holy Friday – Gospels of the Crucifixion
Great Holy Friday, April 14 <sup>th</sup>	10:00 am	The Great (Royal) Hours and Typika on Holy Friday
	3:00 pm	Great Vespers for Holy Saturday, the Taking-down of Christ from the Cross
	7:00 pm	Orthros with the Lamentations for Holy Saturday
Great Holy Saturday, April 15 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 am	Vespereal Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great
	10:30 pm	Resurrection (Rush) Service, Paschal Orthros and Paschal Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
Great & All-Holy Pascha, Sunday, April 16 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 pm	The Agape Vespers, The Baouth Service Followed by a procession
Bright Monday, April 17 <sup>th</sup>	9:00 am	Festal Orthros
	10:00 am	Divine Liturgy

**CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED, HE IS RISEN!**



**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE  
OF NORTH AMERICA**

**Prot. no.:** PV118/2023

Palm Sunday, 2023

**To be read from the pulpit and printed in the bulletin.**

Beloved Brother Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy, and Christ-loving Faithful,

Joyous festal greetings to you in the Name of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ!

Today the Lord enters triumphantly into Jerusalem, striding forward as humanity's champion in order to do battle with our greatest enemies: sin, death, and the devil. By enduring the Cross, He will defeat them all and inaugurate a new and transcendent life of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17). Therefore, He is praised in churches throughout the world with the joyous words of this hymn: "We also, like the children, bearing the symbols of victory, cry to Thee, the Vanquisher of death: Hosanna in the highest; blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord!"

As is the custom in our archdiocese, we remember today our Father in Christ, Patriarch JOHN X, and all our brothers and sisters of the Patriarchate of Antioch in its historic homeland of the Middle East. As we wave our palm branches and shout, "Hosanna!" they are doing the same. As we proclaim this ancient Faith in the New World, they are keeping it alive in the apostolic and historic places of its advent. We are one with them, and they are one with us—one Body stretching across an ocean yet beating with one heart.

Sadly, however, as we worship in peace and prosperity, our brothers and sisters overseas are suffering disaster after disaster. For this reason, we again ask you to give in support of the patriarchate and its humanitarian work. Through your donations you can provide some comfort to our brothers and sisters in need and also stand with them as they provide love and help to so many others. Please give generously.

Wishing you all a deeply meaningful Holy Week and a glorious Pascha, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

✠Metropolitan ANTONIOS

Metropolitan of Zahle, Baalbek, and Dependencies  
Patriarchal Vicar of New York and All North America

*"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11: 26)*

# The Mystery of Redemption

*By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

There are some confused and incorrect ideas regarding the salvific work of Christ on the Cross. These ideas are dangerous because they disfigure the image of God and make Him like fallen and sinful man, instead of elucidating the real image of God in man and man's calling to pursue God's likeness.

These ideas go back to the teaching of Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109), which spread in the West but was refused by the Eastern Church. However, after the fall of Constantinople (1453), Anselm's teaching crept back into the Eastern Church. Anselm's hypothesis says that the "Original" sin (from Adam and Eve) insulted God a great deal and brought His anger against mankind. Therefore, there was a need to compensate and to offer a suitable "ransom" that bears people's sins, pleases God the Almighty, releases us from God's anger, and satisfies divine justice. All of that, according to Anselm, made God offer His Son (Christ) to be the victim.

This hypothesis reflects the legal understanding of the Western mind, which was prominent in Roman culture. In addition, this hypothesis reflects the Medieval understanding of the issues of honor and compensation. After the Great Schism between the two churches, theology in the West separated from the Divine Theoria and replaced it with philosophical thinking in an attempt to explain the divinity. This, in turn, caused many aberrations, of which this hypothesis was considered the most dangerous. Anselm's hypothesis, which was maintained by the Catholic and Protestant churches for 600 years, played a major role in the decline of Christianity in the West (according to some modern Western historians).

The effect of this hypothesis is still present in Western piety, literature, and sermons. The fact that the influence of this teaching for six centuries has impacted behavior, piety, theological thinking, and sentiment cannot be erased with mere official repudiation (the Catholic Church rejected this teaching after Vatican II in 1966). I remember one question in a 12<sup>th</sup>-grade public-school religion book that asks, "How did the Cross help in decreasing God's anger?" We also encounter some confusing statements in many Protestants' writings about Christ, such as "appeasing God's anger" and "His revenge was accomplished."

This teaching completely and radically contradicts what the Gospel teaches: “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16). His image is Christ, and Christ is great love, the healer of the sick, the feeder of the hungry, the friend of the poor and the marginalized, the deliverer of those who are vexed with unclean spirits, the consoler of those who mourn, and the one who is merciful toward sinners.

The Eastern Church Fathers rejected Anselm’s teaching, holding a great council in Constantinople in 1157 to reaffirm that Christ was not a ransom to the Father alone but (as man) offered His sacrifice to the Father and Himself (as the Son of God) and the Holy Spirit, together. The Holy Trinity thus participated in the salvific sacrifice of Christ, which in turn makes it a sacrifice of Divine Love out of love, not for recompense or appeasement.

Many of the early writers of the Church have avoided the use of the word “ransom” to avoid any confusion. They talked about redemption as a manifestation of God’s love. The words of the Gospel of John support this teaching: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

It was not the anger of God the Father that pushed the Son to die on the Cross, but the Father’s love. Can love work unlove? God is the Almighty, but His might is the might of love, because love is His essence.

God took upon Himself the consequences of the sin of Adam, through His Incarnation, to show solidarity with fallen human beings. “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ has saved us through a living experience.

In a fallen world enslaved to sin, this love must go, beyond the Incarnation, to the Cross—which in this context means that the divine *kenosis* (“emptying”; see 2 Cor. 5:21) has reached its destination. The incarnate God has entered and participated in all the aspects of our life and experiences, even in our death: “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows” (Is. 53:4). Christ, the incarnate God, has shared with us our humanity and passed through all kinds of pain, reaching the ultimate suffering—I mean the divine forsaking. Through His cry on the Cross, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matt. 27:46), Christ participated, out of love, in the climax of our pain.



Through Christ, we know God as one who does not accept that human beings will remain captive to evil and sin and their consequences and who does not want human beings to be led by compulsion and devoid of their freedom to obtain salvation. This God led by His love, participating in all human sufferings except for sin. This participation reached the ultimate end, which is death. But Christ, who “loved them to the end” (John 13:1), has said about us: “I lay down My life for the sheep... but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again” (John 10:15, 18).

After Christ was lifted up on the Cross and arose from the dead, the message of the Cross to each one of us is this: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me” (Psalm 22:4). I am not alone at all. I have a friend—more than a friend—this friend is not just a human like me but truly God. A Russian priest experienced the presence of God with him during his incarceration in one of the camps. After his release, he said, “Suffering has destroyed everything, only one remains: Love.”

Christ has done for us what we could not have done without Him. We must say that Christ has suffered, not “on our behalf,” but for our sake. He went through His Passion not to free us from pain but, rather, to identify our suffering with His suffering. Christ offers us not a way to avoid pain but a way to go through it, to encounter it, and to deal with it. Christ does not act for us, nor take our part, but rather accompanies us toward salvation (as Metropolitan Kallistos Ware says).

What a huge difference between Early Church teaching and the Western Medieval teaching. As St. Athanasius of Alexandria (fourth century) once said: “On the Cross alone, a man dies with his arms spread and open. Therefore, it was fitting that the Lord die in such a way that He opens to us His arms. By one arm He brought to Himself the Jews and with the other He brought to Himself the Gentiles.” He united both to one another in Himself and said: “If I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all peoples to Myself” (John 12:32).

## في سرّ الفداء

الميتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

ثمّة مفاهيم خاطئة ومغلوبة حول الفداء، الذي تمّمه المسيح على الصليب. تكمن خطورة هذه المفاهيم في تشويه صورة الله، وجعله على مثال الإنسان الساقط الخاطئ، بدلاً من جعل الإنسان يتمثّل صورة الله الحقّة، ويسمو إلى مثالها.

يعود مصدر معظم هذه المفاهيم إلى فرضية أطلقها أنسلم، رئيس أساقفة كانتربري (١٠٣٣ - ١١٠٩)، وشاعت في الغرب، وقد رفضتها الكنيسة الشرقيّة، لكنّها عادت فتسرّبت إلى الشرق، بسبب طغيان التأثير الغربي عليه، في عهد الانحطاط، الذي عرفه بعد سقوط القسطنطينية (١٤٥٣). تقول هذه الفرضيّة بأنّ الخطيئة "الأصليّة" ألحقت بالله إهانة لا تُحُدّ، استوجبت غضبه على البشر. فكان لا بدّ من تقديم تعويض مناسب بضحيّة تتحمّل خطايا البشر من جهة، وترضي متطلبات العزّة الإلهيّة من جهة أخرى، وذلك تنفيساً عن غضب الله!!!، وإرضاء للعدالة الإلهية!!! فكان أن دفع الله الآب ابنه (المسيح) ليكون هذه الضحيّة.

تعكس هذه النظرية المفهوم الحقوقي، الذي يميّز العقل الغربي، والذي اشتهرت به روما، الثقافة اللاتينيّة. كما تعكس مفهوم العصور الوسطى للشرف المتأدّي الذي يطالب بالتعويض. فبعد الانشقاق الكبير، انفصل اللاهوت، في الغرب، عن المعاينة الإلهيّة، وطغى التفكير الفلسفي عليه، في محاولة تفسير الإلهيّات. ما سبّب انحرافات عديدة، وكانت هذه النظرية من أخطرها. فقد لعبت نظرية أنسلم هذه، التي اعتنقتها الكنيسة الغربية بشقيها الكاثوليكي والبروتستانتى لمدة ستمائة سنة، الدور الأهمّ في انحسار المسيحيّة في الغرب، بحسب بعض المؤرّخين الغربيين الحديثين.

لكن آثارها ما تزال موجودة، متناثرة في التقوى الغربيّة، وفي بعض الأدبيات والعظات المتداولة. في الواقع، لا يُحصى تأثير ستة قرون من سيادة قناعة معيّنة طبعت الوجدان والسلوك والتقوى والفكر، بمجرد رفض رسمي لها (تراجعت الكنيسة الكاثوليكية بعد المجمع الفاتيكاني الثاني ١٩٦٦). أذكر، على سبيل المثال، لا الحصر، سؤالاً ورد في أحد دروس كتاب التعليم المسيحي الرسمي، للصف الثالث ثانوي يقول:

كيف هدأ الصليب غضب الله؟!!!! كما ترد في الكثير من كتب سير المسيح، وبالأخص تلك الصادرة عن هيئات بروتستانتية، وهي كثيرة التداول، عبارات رهيبة مثل: "برد غضب الله"!!! أو "تم انتقامه"!!! الغريب في هذا التعليم أنه يتناقض وتعليم الإنجيل تناقضاً جذرياً. فالإنجيل يعرفنا بأن "الله محبة" (١ يوحنا ٤/١٦و٨)، وصورته فيه هو المسيح. وصورة المسيح فيه صورة المحب الأعظم: شافي المرضى، ومُشبع الجوع، ومُعاشر الفقراء والمبوزين، ومُحرّر المسوسين، ومؤاسي الحزاني، والمتفرّق بالخطأة... إلخ .

رفض آباء الكنيسة الشرقيون هذه النظرية، وعقدوا مجمعاً كبيراً في القسطنطينية، في العام ١١٥٧، وقالوا فيه ما معناه: إن المسيح لم يقدم فداءه للآب، بل "للآب ولنفسه كإله وللروح القدس"، أي إن الثالوث القدوس شارك في ذبيحة المسيح الفدائية. ما يجعلها ذبيحة حب إلهية، لا تعويض فيها ولا إرضاء.

وفي الحقيقة، تجنّب الكثير من كتّاب الكنيسة الأوائل استعمال لفظة "فدية" بالمعنى الحرفي لها، استبعاداً للوقوع في المغالطة. وتكلّموا عن الفداء باعتباره إظهاراً لمحبة الله. تدعم كلمات الإنجيل يوحنا هذا التعليم: "هكذا أحبّ الله العالم حتى وهب ابنه الأوحد، فلا يهلك كل من يؤمن به، بل تكون له الحياة الأبدية" (يوحنا ٣/١٦).

فليس غضب الله الأب هو الذي دفعه إلى موت ابنه الذبائحي على الصليب، بل محبته. هل تقدر المحبة على القيام بفعل لا محبة؟ الله كلي القدرة، نعم، لكن قدرته هي قدرة المحبة، لأن المحبة جوهره.

لقد قبل الله، بتجسده، تضامناً مع الإنسان الساقط، بالكلية، نتائج خطيئة آدم، المادية منها والمعنوية . "لأنّ الذي ما عرف الخطيئة، جعله الله خطيئة من أجلنا لنصير به أبراراً عند الله" (٢ كورنثوس ٥/٢١). لقد خلّصنا المسيح بخبرة معاشة من الداخل كما لو أنّه واحد منا.

ففي عالم ساقط ومُستعبَد للخطيئة، كان على الحب أن يذهب إلى ما هو أبعد بكثير من التجسّد؛ إلى الصليب. الصليب، بهذا المعنى، يعني أنّ فعل المشاركة الإلهية للبشر قد وصل إلى حدوده النهائية. لقد دخل الإله المتجسّد في خبرتنا كلّها. واشترك لا في حياتنا فقط، بل في موتنا أيضاً" حمل عاهاتنا وتحمل أوجاعنا" (أشعيا ٥٣/٤). لقد شاركنا المسيح، الإله المتجسّد، خبرتنا البشرية، وعبر كل أنواع الألم،

وصولاً إلى العذاب الأقصى، أعني التخلّي الإلهي. ففي صراخه على الصليب " إلهي إلهي لماذا تركتني؟" (مت ٢٧/٤٦)، شاركنا المسيح، حباً، في ذروة آلامنا.

لقد عرفنا الله، في المسيح، إلهاً لا يقبل بأن يبقى البشر أسرى الشرّ والخطيئة وكلّ تبعاتهما، ولا يرضى بقسر الإنسان بالقوّة، وحرمانه من حرّيته، ليحصل على الخلاص، فدفعه حبّه إلى مشاركة البشر في آلامهم، ما عدا الخطيئة. وكان من الطبيعي أن تصل هذه المشاركة إلى الحدّ الأقصى، أي الموت. ألمّ يُقلّ المسيح: "أحبّهم منتهى الحبّ" (يو ١٣/١)، و "أضحّي بحياتي في سبيل خرافي ... لأنيّ أضحّي بحياتي حتّى أستردّها. ما من أحد ينتزع حياتي منّي، بل أنا أضحّي بها راضياً" (يو ١٥/١٠-١٨) و "ما من حبّ أعظم من هذا: أن يضحّي الإنسان بنفسه في سبيل أحبائه" (يو ١٥/١٣).

منذ ارتفاع المسيح على الصليب وقيامته من بين الأموات، صارت رسالة الصليب لكلّ منّا: "مهما سرت في وادي ظلّ الموت لا أخشى شراً، لأنّك معي" (مزمو ٢٢: ٤) ... أنا لست وحدي أبدأ. لي رفيق وأكثر من ذلك ... هذا الرفيق ليس إنساناً مثلي فقط، ولكن إله حقّ. اخترت كاهن روسيّ رفيقاً لله له، في معسكر الاعتقال الرهيب، فخرج منه بعد سنوات يشهد قائلاً: "لقد أتلف العذاب كلّ شيء، واحد فقط بقي: إنّه الحبّ".

لقد فعل المسيح من أجلنا، ما لا نستطيع فعله من دونه. ومع ذلك علينا ألاّ نقول إنّ المسيح تألم عنّا، بل بالأحرى تألم من أجلنا. لقد تألم، لا ليعفينا من الألم، ولكن لكي يتشابه ألمنا بألمه. فالمسيح لا يقدم لنا طريقة لتفادي الألم، بل طريقة لاختراق الألم، لمواجهة، للتعاطي معه. لا يحلّ المسيح محلّنا، ولا يأخذ دورنا، بل يرافقنا نحو الخلاص (الأسقف كاليستوس وير).

شّتان ما بين تعليم العصور الوسطى الغربي، وتعليم القرون الأولى للمسيحيّة! وإليكم مثل واحد فقط، من القديس أثناسيوس الإسكندري (القرن الرابع): "على الصليب وحده يموت الإنسان ويدها ممدودتان ومفتوحتان. ولذلك كان من اللائق أن يموت السيّد هذا النوع من الموت، حتّى يفتح لنا ذراعيه. فبذراع جذب إليه الشعب اليهودي، وبالذراع الأخرى جذب إليه سائر الشعوب، ووحدهم كلّهم فيه. وقد قال: "وأنا متى ارتفعت جذبت إليّ الجميع" (يو ١٢/٣٢).