



+St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Church

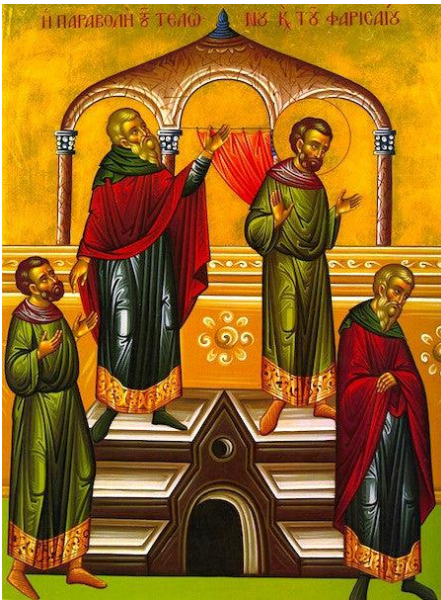
Antiochian Archdiocese of North America
Metropolitan Saba of New York and all North America
V. Rev. Fr. Nicholas Borzghol, Pastor
Dn. Nicholas Adranly

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 01, 2026; TONE 1 / EOTHINON 1

SUNDAY OF THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN &

FOREFEAST OF THE PRESENTATION (MEETING) OF CHRIST



On February 1 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate Martyr Tryphon of Syria; and Martyr Perpetua of Carthage and her four companions.

On this day, we make remembrance of the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, which occurs in the Holy Gospel according to Luke the Evangelist.

In our Savior's parable, Jesus uses a Pharisee, a leader of the synagogue, who was regarded in public opinion as virtuous; and a publican, a tax collector, who was regarded as oppressive, greedy and a sinner. In their prayers to God, we discover the real hearts of these two men. We thus learn of the harm that comes from pride and the good that comes from humility. The divine Church Fathers sought to alert and prepare the Christ-loving clergy and laity for the upcoming period of the Great Fast. Therefore, on this Sunday we are reminded that humility is the greatest weapon against pride, as we imitate the humility of the publican to ascend to the divine heights.

THE EPISTLE

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us.

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.

The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to St. Timothy. (3:10-15)

My son Timothy, you have followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience, persecutions, sufferings, what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra. What persecutions I endured! And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Indeed, all who would live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But people who are wicked and deceivers will proceed from worse to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and how from infancy you have known the sacred temple writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

لِتُكُنْ يَا رَبُّ رَحْمَتُكَ عَلَيْنَا. ابْتَهِجُوا أَتِيهَا الصِّدِّيقُونَ بِالرَّبِّ.
فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ بُولُسَ الرَّسُولِ الثَّانِيَةِ إِلَى تِيموثَاوَسَ. (15-10:3)

يَا وَلَدِي تِيموثَاوَسَ، إِنَّكَ قَدْ اسْتَقْرَيْتَ تَعْلِيمِي، وَسِيرَتِي، وَقَصْدِي، وَإِيمَانِي، وَأَنَاتِي، وَمَحَبَّتِي، وَصَبْرِي، وَاضْطِهَادَاتِي، وَالْأَمِي، وَمَا أَصَابَنِي فِي انْطَاكِيَّةٍ وَأَيُّقُونِيَّةٍ وَلِسْتَرَةَ، وَأَيَّةِ اضْطِهَادَاتٍ احْتَمَلْتُ، وَقَدْ أَنْقَذَنِي الرَّبُّ مِنْ جَمِيعِهَا. وَجَمِيعُ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَعْيشُوا بِالتَّقْوَى فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ يُضْطَهَدُونَ. أَمَّا الْأَشْرَارُ وَالْمُغْوُونَ مِنَ النَّاسِ، فَيَزِدُّونَ شَرًّا، مُضِلِّينَ وَمُضَلَّلِينَ. فَاسْتَمِرِّي أَنْتِ عَلَى مَا تَعَلَّمْتَهُ وَأَيَّقْنْتِ بِهِ، عَالِمًا مِمَّنْ تَعَلَّمْتِ، وَأَنَّكَ مِنْذُ الطُّفُولِيَّةِ تَعْرِفُ الْكُتُبَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الْقَادِرَةَ أَنْ تُصَيِّرَكَ حَكِيمًا لِلْخَلَاصِ بِالْإِيمَانِ بِالْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (18:10-14)

The Lord spoke this parable: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank Thee that I am not like other men, extortionists, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to Heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ لَوْقَا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ، وَالتَّلْمِذِ الطَّاهِرِ. (14-10:18)
قَالَ الرَّبُّ هَذَا الْمَثَلُ: إِنْسَانَانِ صَعِدَا إِلَى الْهَيْكَلِ لِيُصَلِّيَا، أَحَدُهُمَا فَرِّيسِيٌّ وَالْآخَرُ عَشَّارٌ. فَكَانَ الْفَرِّيسِيُّ وَاقِفًا يُصَلِّي فِي نَفْسِهِ هَكَذَا، "اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَشْكُرُكَ لِأَنِّي لَسْتُ كَسَائِرِ النَّاسِ الْخَطْفَةِ، الظَّالِمِينَ، الْفَاسِقِينَ، وَلَا مِثْلَ هَذَا الْعَشَّارِ. فَإِنِّي أَصُومُ فِي الْأُسْبُوعِ مَرَّتَيْنِ، وَأَعْتَبِرُ كُلَّ مَا هُوَ لِي." أَمَّا الْعَشَّارُ فَوَقَفَ عَنْ بُعْدٍ، وَلَمْ يَرُدْ أَنْ يَرْفَعَ عَيْنَيْهِ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ، بَلْ كَانَ يَقْرَعُ صَدْرَهُ قَائِلًا، "اللَّهُمَّ ارْحَمْنِي أَنَا الْخَاطِيءُ." أَقُولُ لَكُمْ، إِنَّ هَذَا نَزَلَ إِلَى بَيْتِهِ مُبَرَّرًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ. لِأَنَّ كُلَّ مَنْ رَفَعَ نَفْسَهُ اتَّضَعَّ، وَمَنْ وَضَعَ نَفْسَهُ ارْتَفَعَ.

Upcoming Events

February 2nd	Monday February 2nd Divine Liturgy at 6:00 PM to celebrate the Feast of the Entrance of the Lord to the Temple ! عيد دخول السيد الى الهيكل
February 7th	Crab Feed: This year we are proud to have our 44th Annual Crab Feed at our NEW St. John Hall. Saturday February 7th, 2026. Please SAVE THE DATE, and let us celebrate together to make it as successful as possible!
February 15th	1 year memorial on February 15th in memory of George Wahbeh. May his memory be eternal!
February 15th	General parish meeting

Coffee Hour

February 1 st	Suzzy and Nabil Tawil in memory of Afaf Gebara and Hilda Tawil
February 8 th	Sponsor Needed
February 15 th	The Adranly Family for the good health of Dn. Nicholas
February 22 nd	Norma Khalil in memory of Randa and Charlie
March 8 th	3-year memorial for Mariam Khalil Munayer from Amal Ibrahim Munayer, Joseph, Stephen, Charlie, and Eden Munayer. May her memory be eternal!
March 22 nd	Dudum, Deitzmann, and Morgan Families in memory of Jim and Rose Romely and Liz Dietzmann
April 5 th	Palm Sunday. Bakesale instead of Coffee Hour
April 12 th	Pascha!

Holy Oblations

This week, Holy Oblations are offered by:

- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Nick Nicola, Sandy Dudum, George Messih, George Adranly, Fred Addas, Henriette Hilal, Souhad Halaka, George Cawog, Sam Nassab, Sue Gideon, Rocky Dudum and Norma Khalil.** Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Angel Husary** Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Nadia Frangieh** Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Bradley Youakim.** Many years!
- † 15-year memorial prayers are offered in memory of father, grandfather and father-in law, **Khalil Ibrahim** Munayer on behalf of Amal, Ibrahim, Joseph (Stephani) plus grandchildren, Charlie and Eden. May his memory be eternal!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **John Freij.** Many years!

Candles for the altar table and in front of the icons of Christ and the Theotokos offered by:

- † Ibrahim Fasheh in memory of Hanada Fasheh for one full year. May her memory be eternal!



- † Altar Servers:
Nathan Sweis, Clayton Morgan, Elias Freij, Angelo Freij, Andrew Freij, Mazyn Haddadin, James Dudum, John Dudum, David Evans, Evan Kavar, Mason Kavar, Jonathan Juha, Maron Juha and Zaiden Karanikola

Crab Feed Teen Volunteers Needed

If your teen is interested and available to volunteer to serve for our annual Crab Feed on Saturday February 7th, please contact Irene Guajardo at (925-413-3242) so we can be sure we have enough!

The teens would need to be there at 5:15 to help prepare and get important instructions on which tables they will be in charge of serving.

Parish Council Sign Up

If you are interested in running on the parish council, or know someone you would like to nominate, please reach out to Father Nicholas Borzghol or Ron Nicola. Your service is appreciated!

Annual Easter Egg Hunt

Mark in your calendars: Saturday April 11th is our annual Easter Egg hunt event. After morning service. Anyone who would like to co-chair this fantastic event, please contact Rania Kashou asap 415.722.0774 or raniamariekashou@gmail.com

More information to follow.

St. John Orthodox Church
501 Moraga Way
Orinda, CA 94563

You could use this QR code for your donation



Our first annual talent show will be on Saturday Evening April 25!



If you or anyone in your family would like to participate, please contact Lynn Farradj at 925-323-5746.

All ages welcome! We have quite a line-up for our show, you won't want to miss it!

Fundraiser Gala

*Featuring Super Star
Tamer Dabougi*

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31ST

6 PM

*Please join us in celebrating
the purchase of our new church!*

**SAINT NICHOLAS CHURCH HALL
5200 DIAMOND HEIGHTS BLVD
SAN FRANCISCO**

ADULTS \$100 CHILDREN \$35



Scan QR code to purchase tickets or

Call to RSVP

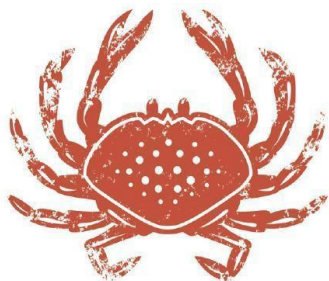
Deana Ziedan 415.225.6087 /

Fefe Asfour 707.328.4258

**HOSTED BY
ALL SAINTS ORTHODOX CHURCH**

THE MEN'S FELLOWSHIP OF

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



- 47TH ANNUAL CRAB FEED -

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH, 2026
COCKTAILS 6:00 PM
DINNER 7:00 PM**



SCAN QR CODE TO ORDER TICKETS

**ST. JOHN ORTHODOX CHURCH HALL
501 MORAGA WAY, ORINDA**



ALL ~ YOU ~ CAN ~ EAT

**APPETIZERS, CHICKEN, PASTA, CRAB, SALAD, GARLIC BREAD AND
DESSERT**

FEATURING GREAT RAFFLE PRIZES

ADULTS: \$80

CHILDREN (UNDER 13): \$25

*For information, tickets, or to volunteer please call: Parish Office (925) 258-4255, Deacon
Nicholas (Najeeb) (510) 207-1796*

YOUR DONATIONS ARE A HUGE PART OF OUR SUCCESS!

Crab Feed Placement Donation for 2026: Feature Business Card Size ads for \$100, Medium Size \$200,
Large Size \$300 & Premium for \$450

**Please make your Checks payable to St. John Orthodox Church. Or contact Dn
Nicholas**



**Diocese of Los Angeles and
the West 2026 Parish Life
Conference**

**Marriott Marquis San Diego
Marina (July 1st - 5th)**

**Host Parish: St. George
Church (San Diego, CA)**

Happy New Year PLC Family!

We are so excited to kick off our 2026 Parish Life Conference in beautiful San Diego, CA, during the 250th anniversary of our great Nation! Thanks to all the wonderful feedback you've shared over the years, the CPCC has heard you and has made some meaningful changes to make the PLC more affordable this year and for the years to come. Below are some of the major changes that will be implemented:

- Due to the positive feedback from the 2025 PLC, **one full day** has been removed from the 2026 PLC and will remain that way for all future PLCs. This will create significant cost savings for our Clergy and their Parishes.
- The standard public room rate at the Marriott Marquis during the 2026 PLC weekend is approximately **\$450 per night**. Through CPCC negotiations and donor support, attendees will receive a **\$199 per night rate (plus taxes)** during one of the most expensive weekends of the year. The CPCC is also working hard to secure room rates below **\$199 per night** for the 2027 and 2028 PLCs.
- Ticket prices on all events this year will be **~20% lower** than 2025 prices

We can't wait to be together in July for a weekend full of events, fellowship, and meaningful time together! Thanks to the incredible room rate secured, the prime PLC location, and the holiday weekend, rooms are filling up earlier and at a higher rate than usual. We highly recommend booking your rooms early using the link below.

Additionally, there is **limited seating for our Saturday night event**, offering a front-row view of the San Diego Marina and the famous San Diego 4th of July firework show. Be sure to register and purchase your tickets as soon as possible to secure your spot.

On behalf of the CPCC, we wish you a very Happy New Year! May 2026 be filled with countless blessings for each of you. We look forward to seeing you in July!

Divine Education: The Old Testament
By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

Divine revelation in Christianity is founded on God's own initiative to reveal Himself. God revealed Himself fully in Jesus Christ: "Whoever has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9); "No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6); "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). Yet this divine self-revelation required preparing human beings to become capable of receiving it. God patiently endured centuries of human frailty until He formed a faithful remnant—people who, through the spiritual maturity they attained, were able to respond to His transcendent truth. This spiritual growth came about through a direct, gradual, and formative divine education, beginning with Abraham and culminating in John the Baptist. God's salvific plan required that He Himself take the initiative, drawing near to humanity step by step and revealing, at each stage of human spiritual development, something new about Himself.

After the fall of the first humans from Paradise, humanity lost the path back and became incapable of walking it. Yet the image of God within humanity, though distorted by the fall, continued to long for its original source and archetype. Humanity imagined its god to be found in the forces that frightened it or sustained its life, and so it worshiped the sun, the wind, the rain, and the like. Christianity understands the rise of pagan religions as the expression of humanity's longing for its origin—an origin it no longer recognized. When a child is thirsty, he puts whatever is available into his mouth, thinking it will quench his thirst—whether water or alcohol, because cannot tell the difference. Only when he tastes does he realize his mistake. This is what happened to humanity. For this reason, no people before Christ existed without some form of religion.

We may liken the relationship between God and humanity after the fall of our first parents to two persons separated by many translucent silk curtains. God chose to remove these curtains one by one, to protect the eyes of His beloved—humanity—from the blinding brilliance of His light. This is what we call God's salvific dispensation in the Old Testament. Thus, He began with Abraham, and the process continued until John the Baptist. Then "when the fullness of time

had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman” (Gal. 4:4). Jesus Christ was born, and “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Humanity’s spiritual hardness compelled God to educate it anew, until it reached a level capable of receiving God as He truly is.

Was it by chance that God chose, on the one hand, a backward and uncivilized people? Certainly not. Had He revealed Himself to a highly civilized people, others would have regarded Him as the product of human thought. And was it coincidence, on the other hand, that Christ came at the heart of a civilized world, already prepared by philosophy that had reached the acknowledgment of one God? Many historians agree that the Roman Empire had attained a spiritual stage in which the true but unknown God, in the eyes of many at the time, lay hidden behind idols fashioned by human hands and minds. Consequently, esoteric religions reached their peak just before and during the time of Christ’s incarnation. Christ came at the most opportune moment, when humanity was spiritually mature and yearning for the true God. This is what is meant by the “fullness of time.”

What did God do in practice? He chose a backward people, distant from civilization, and through them revealed Himself to all humanity. “The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth—not because you were more numerous than any other people, for you were the fewest of all” (Deut. 7:6–7). Some translations even say, “the most insignificant.” Why? So that the power might be shown to belong not to human beings but to God. Some believe that God is a human invention. Our divine revelation teaches the opposite: human beings are God’s creation, and He is the One who revealed Himself to them and led them toward His true image.

Did all of them come to know Him? No. And can someone with poor eyesight perceive the delicate beauty of nature? The sight required to know God is spiritual sight. You know God to the extent that you are pure, humble, and loving. God delights in dwelling in pure hearts, and such hearts can taste His sweetness and delight in it.

God first revealed Himself through His actions. Thus the earliest community came to know Him and spoke of Him as “the God of our fathers,” “the God who delivered us from slavery,” “who drowned Pharaoh and his chariots,” “the God who fed us with manna in the wilderness,” “who brought water from the rock,” “who healed us from the bite of serpents,” and so forth. Then, through the Law, He began to raise them from the savage law of vengeance—“Sevenfold vengeance shall be taken on Cain, but on Lamech seventy-sevenfold” (Gen. 4:24)—to the law of justice, “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” (Deut. 19:21), and finally to the law of mercy: “Learn to do good; seek justice; rescue the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow” (Isa. 1:17). He moved them from a law written on stone to a law engraved on hearts, from the circumcision of the flesh to the circumcision of the heart. He refined them through exile and dispersion, so that they came to understand that He is not bound to a single temple or a single land. After the exile, they recognized that God is the God of all nations and that “the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 23:1).

It was a long and patient journey, in which God truly manifested His “long-suffering.” This practical revelation bore fruit in the “faithful remnant”—those who had matured spiritually to receive His full revelation, disclosed in the incarnation of His Word, Jesus Christ. Among them were the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, Simeon the Elder, Anna the Prophetess, John the Evangelist, and many others.

Jesus Christ is the center of Holy Scripture. In the Old Testament, there is an expectation of Him that unfolds gradually. In the New Testament, this expectation reaches its fulfillment in His complete manifestation: “that which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes... and our hands have touched” (1 John 1:1). If we remove Him from our Scriptures, we strip ourselves of the traces of Jesus Christ revealed throughout His long plan of salvation and dispensation, and hand them over to others. Does fidelity in love mean discarding the traces of the beloved? The challenge is not met by casting our heritage aside, but by preserving it and revealing its true meaning.

التربية الإلهية: العهد القديم بقلم المطران سابا (اسبر)

يقوم الوحي الإلهي في المسيحية على مبادرة من الله، مفادها كشفه عن ذاته. لقد كشف الله ذاته للبشر بشكل كامل في يسوع المسيح "من رأي رأي الآب" (يو ١٤/٩)، "ما من أحد يأتي إلى الآب إلا بي" (يو ١٤/٦)، "أنا والآب واحد" (يو ١٠: ٣٠). لكن هذا الكشف الإلهي اقتضى تهيئة بشر قادرين على اقتباله. هذا صبر الله عليه قروناً، حتى هيأ بقية أمينة له، وقادرة، بالسمو الروحي التي بلغته، على التجاوب مع حقيقته تعالى. تحقق هذا السمو الروحي عبر تربية إلهية تدريجية وتنموية مباشرة، ابتداءً بإبراهيم وصولاً إلى يوحنا المعمدان. اقتضى تدبير الله الخلاصي أن يأخذ المبادرة بنفسه. فبدأ يتقرب من الإنسان تدريجياً كاشفاً له، في كل تطور روحي بلغه الإنسان، شيئاً جديداً عن ذاته.

بعد سقوط الإنسان الأول من الفردوس، أضاع الطريق إليه، وما عاد قادراً على سلوكها. لكن صورة الله التي فيه، وإن تشوّهت بالسقوط، إلا أنها بقيت تحنّ إلى أصلها ومثالها. ظنّ الإنسان أنّ إلهه في القوى التي تخيفه، أو تؤمّن حياته، فعبد الشمس والرياح والمطر... إلخ. تعزو المسيحية نشوء الأديان الوثنية، إلى حنين الإنسان إلى أصله، الذي بات لا يعرفه. عندما يعطش الطفل يضع في فمه ما تيسّر له ممّا يظنّه يرويه، ماءً كان أم كحولاً! هو لا يميّز! يعرف خطأ فعلته عندما يذوق، خطأً، ما قد ظنّه ماءً. هذا ما حدث مع الإنسان. ولذلك، ما وُجد شعبٌ قبل المسيح لم يكن له دين.

يمكننا تشبيه الحال بين الله والبشر، بعد سقوط الجدّين الأولين، بشخصين بعيدين عن بعضهما، تفصل، بينهما، مجموعة كبيرة من الستائر الحريّة الشفافة. ارتأى الله أن ينزعها ستارةً ستارةً، حفاظاً على عيني محبوبه، الإنسان، من سطوع نوره. هذا ما ندعوه تدبير الله الخلاصي في العهد القديم. وهكذا بدأ إبراهيم، ومن ثمّ تتالت العمليّة حتى يوحنا المعمدان. آنذاك "حلّ ملء الزمان فأرسل الله ابنه مولوداً من امرأة" (غلا ٤/٤). فوُلد يسوع المسيح "والكلمة صار بيننا" (يو ١٤/١). قسوة الإنسان روحياً اضطرت الله إلى تربيته من جديد، لكي يبلغ إلى مستوى يستطيع فيه تقبّل الله على حقيقته.

أتراه عبثاً اختار، من جهة أولى، مجموعة متخلّفة؟ بالتأكيد لا. لأنّه لو كشف ذاته لشعب متحضّر لاعتبره البشر نتاج فكر بشري؛ ومن جهة ثانية، أتراه صدفة أتى في قلب عالم متحضّر، كان قد رعاه بالفلسفة، التي وصلت إلى الإقرار بإله واحد؟ يُجمع كثرة من المؤرخين على أنّ الإمبراطوريّة الرومانيّة بلغت مستوى روحياً، بات فيه الإله الحقيقي غير المعروف، بنظر الكثيرين آنذاك، يختبئ وراء أصنام الآلهة المخلوقة بأيدي البشر وفكرهم. ولذلك بلغت نسبة الأديان السّرانيّة حدّها الأعلى قبل زمن تجسّد المسيح وخلاله! جاء المسيح في الزمن الأفضل من حيث نضج البشريّة روحياً وتلّهبها إلى الإله الحقّ. هذا هو المقصود بملء الزمان.

ماذا فعل الله عملياً؟ اختار فئة متخلّفة بعيدة عن الحضارة، ليكشف ذاته، عبرها، لكلّ البشر. "اختاركم له من بين جميع الشعوب التي على وجه الأرض لا لأنكم أكثر من جميع الشعوب فأنتم أقلّها" (تث ٧/٧). وفي بعض الترجمات "لعلكم أحقرها". لماذا؟ ليكون فضل القوّة لا للبشر بل لله. يعتقد البعض أنّ الله صنّيعه البشر. بينما العكس هو الصحيح في وحيّنا الإلهي؛ البشر هم صنّيعه الله، وهو من عزّفهم بنفسه وقادهم إلى صورته الحقّ.

أتراهم عرفوه جميعاً؟ لا. وهل يرى جمال دقائق الطبيعة من لا يملك بصراً جيداً؟ البصر المطلوب، في ما يخصّ الله، هو الروحي. أنت تعرف الله بقدر ما تكون نقيّاً ومتواضعاً ومحبّاً. يستعذب الله السكّنى في القلوب الطاهرة، وتلك بإمكانها تذوّق حلاوته، وتالياً استعذابه.

كشف عن ذاته أولاً من خلال أفعاله. فعرفته الجماعة الأولى وعرفته بـ "إله آبائنا"، "الإله الذي نجّانا من العبودية"، "الذي غرّق فرعون ومركباته"، "الإله الذي أطعمنا ممّاً في البريّة"؛ "الذي فجّر ماءً من الصخرة"؛ "الذي شفّانا من لدغة الأفاعي"... إلخ. ثم بدأ، بواسطة الشريعة، يسمو بهم من شريعة الانتقام المتوحش: "لقاين يُنتقم سبعة أضعاف وأما للامك فسبعة وسبعين" (تك ٢٤/٤)، إلى شريعة العدل: "العين بالعين والسن بالسن" (تث ٢١/١٩)، إلى شريعة الرحمة: "تعلموا الإحسان واطلبوا العدل. أغيثوا المظلوم وأنصفوا اليتيم وحاموا عن الأرملة" (أش ١٧/١). نقلهم من شريعة مكتوبة على الحجر إلى شريعة منقوشة في القلوب. درّجهم من ختانة الجسد إلى ختانة القلب. محّصهم بالغربة

والنفي ففهموا أنه غير مرتبط بهيكل محدّد وأرض محدّدة. وعرفوا، بعد السبي، أنّ الله إله جميع الأمم وله "الأرض وملؤها" (مز ٢٣: ١).

كانت رحلة طويلة صبورة أظهر فيها، حقاً، "طول أناثه." وكان أن أثمر وحيه العملي هذا، "البقية الأمانة"، أي من نضجوا روحياً لاقتبال وحيه الكامل، الذي انكشف في تجسّد كلمته، يسوع المسيح. من هؤلاء مريم العذراء، ويوحنا المعمدان، وسمعان الشيخ، وحنّة النبية، ويوحنا الإنجيلي، وكثير غيرهم.

يسوع المسيح محور الكتاب المقدّس. في العهد القديم انتظار له يتكشف تدريجياً، وفي العهد الجديد اكتمال هذا الانتظار بظهوره الكامل "الذي سمعناه، الذي رأيناه بعيوننا، ولمسته أيدينا" (١ يو ١/١). إن حذفناه من كتابنا المقدّس، نكون قد استغينا عن آثار يسوع المسيح المتكشفة عبر تديره الخلاصي الطويل السنين، وأعطيناه لغيرنا. أو هل تفترض أمانة الحبّ رمي آثار المحبوب؟ لا يُواجه التحدّي برمي التراث للغير، بل بالاحتفاظ به، وإظهار معانيه الحقيقيّة؟