



+St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Church

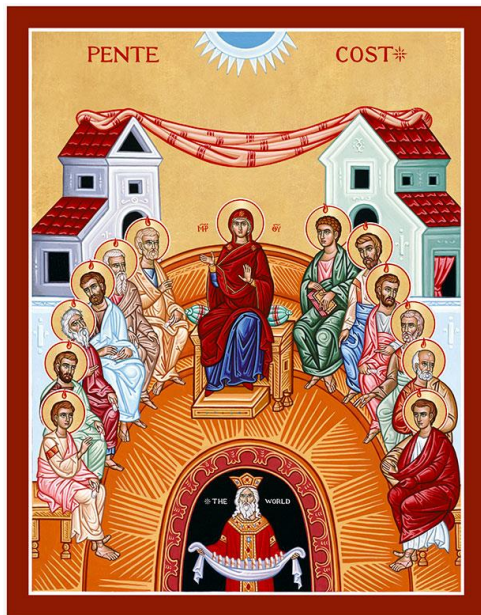
Antiochian Archdiocese of North America
Metropolitan Saba of New York and all North America
V. Rev. Fr. Nicholas Borzghol, Pastor
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SUNDAY, JUNE 08, 2025

THE FIFTIETH DAY AFTER PASCHA

THE GREAT FEAST OF PENTECOST



THE GREAT FEAST OF PENTECOST

On this day, the eighth Sunday of Pascha, we celebrate Holy Pentecost.

On this day—the fiftieth after Great and Holy Pascha—we commemorate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the holy Disciples and Apostles in the form of tongues of fire. Numbering about 120, they who followed the Master gathered in Jerusalem in the upper room of a house to await the Lord's promise to send the Holy Spirit. At about the third hour of the day, there came a sound from Heaven as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the house. Cloven tongues immediately appeared, like as of fire, and sat upon the head of each of them. The Apostles began to speak, not with the languages of

their ancestors, but with other languages with which the Holy Spirit supplied them, as He inspired them. After the Apostle Peter explained what had happened, 3,000 people joined the Church on the inauguration of the priesthood of grace. The objectives of Pentecost are, namely, the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world, the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus Christ, and the completion of the undefiled hope of the Apostles.

Kneeling Service

We will have the kneeling service for the Holy Spirit at the Divine Liturgy.

Don't go Into the Fellowship Hall

Dear Parishioners,

Please refrain from going to the new Fellowship Hall for the next 2 weeks. The workers are doing the flooring. The Hall will be blocked.

Thank you for your understanding!

THE EPISTLE

Their voice has gone out into all the earth. The heavens declare the glory of God.

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. (2:1-11)

When the day of Pentecost had come, the Disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

إِلَى كُلِّ الْأَرْضِ خَرَجَ صَوْتُهُمْ.

السَّمَاوَاتُ تَذِيعُ مَجْدَ اللَّهِ.

فَصَلِّ مِنْ أَعْمَالِ الرُّسُلِ الْقَدِيسِينَ الْأَطْهَارِ.

(1:2-11)

لَمَّا حَلَّ يَوْمُ الْخَمْسِينَ، كَانَ الرُّسُلُ كُلُّهُمْ مَعًا فِي مَكَانٍ وَاحِدٍ. فَحَدَّثَتْ بَعْتَةٌ صَوْتُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ، كَصَوْتِ رِيحٍ شَدِيدَةٍ تَعْصِفُ، وَمَلَأَتْ كُلَّ الْبَيْتِ الَّذِي كَانُوا جَالِسِينَ فِيهِ. وَظَهَرَتْ لَهُمْ أَلْسِنَةٌ مُنْقَسِمَةٌ كَأَنَّهَا مِنْ نَارٍ، فَاسْتَقَرَّتْ عَلَى كُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمْ، فَأَمْتَلُوا كُلُّهُمْ مِنَ الرُّوحِ الْقُدُسِ، وَطَفِقُوا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ بِلُغَاتٍ أُخْرَى، كَمَا أَعْطَاهُم الرُّوحُ أَنْ يَنْطِقُوا. وَكَانَ فِي أُورُشَلِيمَ رَجَالٌ يَهُودٌ أَتَقِيَاءُ، مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ تَحْتَ السَّمَاءِ. فَلَمَّا صَارَ هَذَا الصَّوْتُ، اجْتَمَعَ الْجُمُهورُ، فَتَحَيَّرُوا، لِأَنَّ كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ كَانَ يَسْمَعُهُمْ يَنْطِقُونَ بِلُغَتِهِ. فَدَهَشُوا جَمِيعُهُمْ، وَتَعَجَّبُوا قَائِلِينَ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ: أَلَيْسَ هَؤُلَاءِ الْمُتَكَلِّمُونَ كُلُّهُمْ جَلِيلِيِّينَ؟ فَكَيْفَ نَسْمَعُ كُلُّ مَنَا لُغَتَهُ الَّتِي وُلِدَ فِيهَا؟ نَحْنُ الْفَرِثِيِّينَ، وَالْمَادْيِيِّينَ، وَالْعِيلَامِيِّينَ، وَسُكَّانَ مَا بَيْنَ النَّهْرَيْنِ، وَالْيَهُودِيَّةِ، وَكِبَادُوكِيَّةِ، وَبُنْتُسَ وَأَسِيَّةِ، وَفَرِيجِيَّةِ، وَبِمْفِيلِيَّةِ، وَمِصْرَ، وَنَوَاحِي لِبْيَةِ عِنْدَ الْقَيْرَوَانِ، وَالرُّومَانِيِّينَ الْمُسْتَوَظِنِينَ، وَالْيَهُودَ، وَالذُّخْلَاءَ، وَالْكَرِيتِيِّينَ، وَالْعَرَبَ، نَسْمَعُهُمْ يَنْطِقُونَ بِأَلْسِنَتِنَا بِعَظَائِمِ اللَّهِ.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (7:37-52; 8:12)

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If anyone thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now this He said about the Spirit, which those who believed in

Him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. When they heard these words, many of the people said, "This is really the prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" So there was a division among the people over Him. Some of them wanted

to arrest Him, but no one laid hands on Him. The officers then went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this man!" The Pharisees answered them, "Are you led astray, you also? Have any of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, who do not know the Law, are accursed." Nicodemus, who had gone to Him before, and who was one of them, said to them, "Does our Law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee." Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ يوحنا الإنجيليِّ البَشِيرِ والتلميذِ الطاهرِ. (7:37-52؛ 12:8)

في اليومِ الآخرِ العظيمِ مِنَ العيدِ، كانَ يسوعُ واقفاً، فصاحَ قائلاً: إِنَّ عَطَشَ أَحَدٍ فليأتِ إليَّ ويشربْ. مَنْ آمَنَ بي، كما قالَ الكتابُ، ستَجري مِنْ بطنِهِ أنهارُ ماءٍ حيٍّ، إنَّما قالَ هذا عَنِ الرُّوحِ الذي كانَ المؤمنونَ بِهِ مُزْمِعِينَ أَنْ يَقْبَلُوهُ لَأَنَّ الرُّوحَ الْقُدُسَ لَمْ يَكُنْ قد أُعْطِيَ بَعْدَ، لَأَنَّ يسوعَ لَمْ يَكُنْ قد مُجِدَّ بَعْدَ، فَكَثِيرُونَ مِنَ الْجَمْعِ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا كَلَامَهُ، قالوا: هذا بالْحَقِيقَةِ هُوَ النَّبِيُّ. وقالَ آخَرُونَ: هذا هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ، وآخَرُونَ قالوا: أَلَعَلَّ الْمَسِيحَ مِنَ الْجَلِيلِ يَأْتِي؟ أَلَمْ يَقُلِ الْكِتَابُ إِنَّهُ مِنْ نَسْلِ دَاوُدَ، مِنْ بَيْتِ لَحْمٍ، الْقَرْيَةِ حَيْثُ كَانَ دَاوُدُ، يَأْتِي الْمَسِيحُ؟ فَحَدَّثَ شِقَاقٌ بَيْنَ الْجَمْعِ مِنْ أَجْلِهِ، وَكَانَ قَوْمٌ مِنْهُمْ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُمَسِّكُوهُ، وَلَكِنْ لَمْ يُلْقِ أَحَدٌ عَلَيْهِ يَدًا، فَجَاءَ الْخُدَّامُ إِلَى رُؤَسَاءِ الْكَهَنَةِ وَالْفَرِيسِيِّينَ، فَقَالَ هَؤُلَاءِ لَهُمْ: لِمَ لَمْ تَأْتُوا بِهِ؟ فَأَجَابَ الْخُدَّامُ: لَمْ يَتَكَلَّمْ قَطُّ إِنْسَانٌ هَكَذَا مِثْلَ هَذَا الْإِنْسَانِ! فَأَجَابَهُمُ الْفَرِيسِيُّونَ: أَلَعَلَّكُمْ أَنْتُمْ أَيْضاً قَدْ ضَلَلْتُمْ، هَلْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ الرُّؤَسَاءِ أَوْ مِنَ الْفَرِيسِيِّينَ آمَنَ بِهِ؟ أَمَّا هَؤُلَاءِ الْجَمْعُ، الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْرِفُونَ النَّامُوسَ، فَهُمْ مَلْعُونُونَ. فَقَالَ لَهُمْ نيقوديمسُ، الذي كانَ قَدْ جَاءَ إِلَيْهِ لَيْلاً، وَهُوَ وَاحِدٌ مِنْهُمْ: أَلَعَلَّ نَامُوسَنَا يَدِينُ إِنْسَاناً إِنْ لَمْ يَسْمَعْ مِنْهُ أَوَّلًا، وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فَعَلَ؟ أَجَابُوا وقالوا لَهُ: أَلَعَلَّ أَنْتَ أَيْضاً مِنَ الْجَلِيلِ؟ إِنْجِثْ وَانْظُرْ، إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَقُمْ نَبِيٌّ مِنَ الْجَلِيلِ. ثُمَّ كَلَّمَهُمْ أَيْضاً يسوعُ قائلاً: أَنَا هُوَ نُورُ الْعَالَمِ، مَنْ يَتَّبِعْنِي فَلَا يَمَشِي فِي الظَّلامِ، بَلْ يَكُونُ لَهُ نُورُ الْحَيَاةِ.

Dear Parents of Graduates, We at St. John's, would like to recognize our graduates by publishing their names, photos and biographies in the church bulletin. This way, we can all know who they are and what is next for them in life. We are proud of them. Please help us to do this by submitting their pictures and bio via email

Financial Pledges

Dear Parishioners,

I would like to thank you for your generosity in supporting the church and its projects. I'm asking you to fulfill your primary responsibility in meeting your financial pledges before your contributions to any project such as the Hall .. etc.!

In the Risen Christ,

Fr. Nicholas Borzghol

Upcoming Events

June 8th	40 days memorial service by Siham Mitry and family in memory of Donna Mitry Potter . May her memory be eternal!
June 25th - 29th	Parish Life Conference: Hyatt Regency San Francisco Airport 2025 Host Parish: St. Nicholas Church (San Francisco, CA)
September 20th-21st	St. John's annual Middle Eastern Food Festival

Coffee Hour

June 1 st	Luncheon hosted by Fadwa Samara, Nelly Nassif and Samia Shaheen. \$20 per person.
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Holy Oblations

This week, Holy Oblations are offered by:

- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Nick Nicola, George Messih, Sam Nassab, Sandy Dudum Bennett, Fairouz Freij, Henriette Hilal and Aida Youakeem**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish family for the good health of **Samir and Pat Jeha**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **George Adranly**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family in memory of **Donna Potter**. May her memory be eternal!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Fred Addas**. Many years!
- † Rocky & Nada **Dudum** for the good health of their **children, grandchildren and great grandchildren**. 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

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

You could use this QR code for your donation



CONGRATS GRADS!

Dominic Farradj earned his Master of Science degree in Data Science from University of San Francisco



Mason Walter Burt, son of Lillian (Mitry) Burt and grandson of Siham Mitry, graduated from Ponderosa High School in Cameron Park, CA. He will be attending Folsom Community College to start his studies in music appreciation



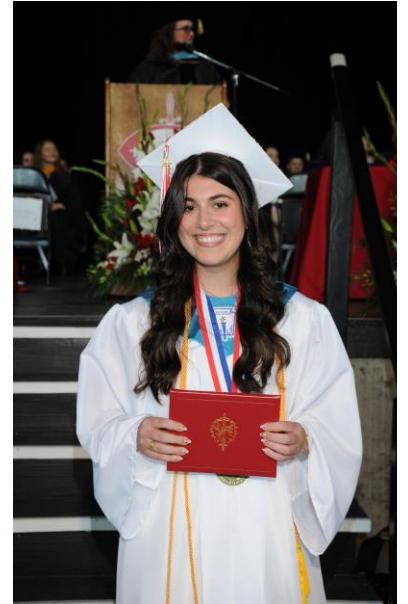
Katarena Borzghol
Graduated from Peninsula
High School.
Going to San Francisco
State University to study
interior design



Joseph David Rodrigues
MA in Theology and MA in
Philosophy from the Dominican
School of Philosophy and
Theology in Berkeley, CA.
Thesis title: "Lessons from the
Tombs: A Pragmatic Analysis of
the Asceticism of St. Antony the
Great and the 12-Step Program"



Diala Hanna is the
granddaughter of Helene
Ghantous. She graduated
from Carondelet High School
in May 2025. She is heading
to McGill University in
Montreal to study medicine



St. John's Church
FATHER'S DAY PICNIC
Sunday, June 18th



Let's treat all the Fathers, Grandfathers, Godfathers & Uncles to a delicious BBQ Lunch complete with burgers, hot dogs, salad, chips, cold drinks & a delectable homemade dessert bar!!!

Immediately following Divine Liturgy on the church grounds

\$15/adult

Kids 12 & under – FREE

Organized by the St. John Ladies

All proceeds to benefit the Building Fund!!



For more information contact Rula Adranly at rulaadranly@comcast.net



CALIFORNIA FISH GRILL IS PROUD TO SUPPORT

St. John Church

Thursday, June 12 at 11AM-8PM
2910 Ygnacio Valley Rd. Bldg. G
Walnut Creek, CA 94598

California Fish Grill will donate 25% of sales from this event back to the organization. Simply present this flyer, mention the organization upon ordering or **scan the QR code at kiosk.**

IN-STORE USE ONLY



If placing an order online, please enter code at checkout: **fund2025**

A BETTER WAY TO *Seafood™*

Fellowship Hall Update

We had a kitchen inspection last week for fire and safety issues and have ordered most major kitchen equipment items and countertops. Floors throughout the building are nearing completion and restroom partitions will be completed soon. Chandeliers are in and look fantastic against the beautiful ceiling in the hall. HVAC equipment is being completed as well as water heating systems.

Great news on the fundraising side. We have been approached with some generous pledges to help complete the kitchen equipment. You may recall that the actual kitchen equipment was not scoped in the construction contract, and these donations will help us to get to full use of the hall sooner.

These and other new donations bring us well over the \$1 Million mark for parishioner donations, and will help us complete ancillary parts of the project that might have had to be deferred until a later date. Of course continued donations are still welcomed and again, we ask that any donations to the hall be designated as such, and do not detract from your regular pledges to the church operating fund.

As we are approaching hall completion and occupancy, we are resuming work on our donor recognition plaque. The list attached shows the names of the donors to the hall that have donated or pledged \$1,000 or more since 2013. We ask that you let us know soon if we have inadvertently misspelled any names, or if you would like to change the way your donation is recognized on the plaque. Also, if you would like to know your exact contribution amount that we have on record, please contact the church office. If you have pledged donations to the hall, and have not yet completed your pledge, we ask that you please let us know when you will be able to do so.

We thank you all for your contributions of time, talents and resources to this project, for your patience as we approach the finish line, and we look forward to a wonderful celebration in the new fellowship hall soon

St John Fellowship Hall Donor Recognition

The St John Fellowship Hall Building and Fundraising Committees along with the Parish Council would like to thank and recognize those donors who have given over the years to the Building Fund. The contributions shown below include cumulative donations to the initial \$2 Million in the building fund at the start of construction, in addition to those donations to the current fundraising effort. Please note that our very generous Cornerstone Donor, as well as several of the Partner and Friend level donors have donated prior to the beginning of our current campaign. All donors will be recognized on a plaque or donor wall feature located in the reception area (foyer) of the hall at the levels shown below. If you would like your contribution recognized in another way, or if you have questions regarding your donation level, please contact the church office.

Recognition level	Names of Donors	
Cornerstone \$500,000 +	Hanada Fasheh	
Patron \$100,000-249,000	Rick and Sandra Dudum Jack and Sylvia Dudum	Jason and Lena Dudum Fuad and Nadia Sweiss
Benefactor \$50,000 - 99,999	Keith Dudum Joseph Sweis and Family	The McClintic Family
Provider \$25,000 - 49,999	Sami and Kathy Adranly James and Denise Dudum Rocky and Nada Dudum	Nick and Deena Farrah Jon and Larissa Geleris Stephen and Angela Kreta Elias and Samia Shaheen
Supporter \$10,000-24,999	Dn. Nicolas and Rula Adranly George and Samar Adranly Anonymous Dominick and Joby Aranda George and Freida Cawog Nick and Deena Farrah Ibrahim Fasheh Jordis Fasheh Lisa and David Hanna and Family Phillip and Gina Jaber Jawad and Violet Jaber	Ron and Ruth Jeha Sam Khoury Ron and Nancy Nicola Fady and Joumana Najjar The Potts Family Raymond and Georgianna Rishwain Raif and Sonya Rihani Ernest and Noha Shulze and Family Daniel and Mona Thayer ADOBE – matching gift for Hanna Family Orthodox Vision Foundation

Partner
\$5,000-9,999

Anonymous
Charles and Marilee Ajalat
Miranda Halaby
Sandy Hodges
John and Sylvia Jaber
Leila Farradj

Lynn and Usama Farradj
Issam and Rania Freij
Salem and Antoinette Mufarreh
Darrin Rishwain
George Theodosy
Ramsay Zacharia

Friend
\$1,000-4,999

Saleem & Samya Abudawood
Jack Ajluni
Richard and Joyce Ayooob
Anthony and Kimberly Bailey
Sandy Bennett
William and Judith Bosl
Fr. Nicholas Borzghol
Challenger Enterprises
Daryl and Katherine Dudum
J.D. and Jessie Dudum
F&M Bank
Fadi and Rana Feghali
Alex and Helen Ghantous
Khalil and Leila Hakeem
Ronald Issac
JDO Dakota Ventures
Ronald and Ruth Jeha
Mary Karadsheh
Maha Kury-Peterson
Brandon Laidlaw
Lieman Properties
Azmie and Melanie Madanat
Chris and Eva Malki
Margaret Mas
Fred and Tania Milkie
Siham Mitry
Myers Restaurant Supply

George Najjar
Samer Nassar
Dn George and Jane Nassief
Ramzi and Marina Nassoura
Ziad & Charlene Nassoura
Naim and Helen Nazzal
Susan Nazzal
Nicholas Luengo Construction
Nick Jr. and Najat Nicola and Family
Antone Nino
Fawda Samara
Jeanne Shikany
Samir and Caroline Syriani
Sami and Alia Sahouria
Andrew Thayer
Steven Thayer
The Kebab Shop Restaurant
John and Jan Theodosy
Samir and Abla Toubassy
In Memory of Dwight Underhill
Robert and Katrina Waddell
George and Afaf Wahbeh
Nabil and Souhila Wakileh
William Wood Architects
Hala Yowakeem
Samir and Nadia Zeidan

Builder
\$100-999

George E. Adranly
Felice and Eric Ajluni
Howard & Marilyn Ashcraft
Eman Baalbaki
Tania & Daniel Bajada
Randy and Barbara Bray
Ken Bullock Ins & Fin Services
Robert and Renee Crawford
Mary Cubeisy
Dn. John and Irena Dibs
Herb & Tania DeGroot
Tony Dudum
Fuad and Mary Farradj
Naim & Nadia Frangieh
John & Dina Freij
Fairouz Freij
Fred and Sue Gedeon
Sandra Gedeon
Benjamin and Ashley Geleris
Zzane & Irene Guajardo
Julianna Greensides
Bahij & Yardena Hanhan
Raymond Hilal
Mounir and Muna Hobaika
Angela Husary
Jack's Restaurant
Carol Jeha
Samir Juha
Andreas Kamlot
Rima Kashou
Norma Khalil
Elia Khalilieh
Elizabeth Kreta
Mary Lodge

William and Mary Massarweh
Daniel & Amy McLellan
Mendocino Farms Restaurant
Paul and Arwa Mogannam
Alan & Dale Morgan
Khalil Mounzer
Ibrahim Munayer
Marwan Mukhar
Sam & Nelly Nassif
William and Jida Nasser
Maureen Nelson
Mark Nicola
Michelle Nicola
Pacer Physical Therapy
Jacob Ritter
Alexis Robbins
Rocco's Restaurant & Pizza
Neezar Samara
Eddie and Evleen Salem
Wanda and Leonard Sarkissian
See's Candies
Jabra & Rania Shuheiber
Marie Simon
Matthew Simon
Summit Landscape Development
Christina Tast
Suzanne & Nabil Taovil
Sami Tawasha
Christina Thabit
Kamal & Samar Wahbe
TP Wolf
Khalil Yowakeem
Sam & Nevine Yowakim

Rev: June 5, 2025

Contemporary Luminous Faces: Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, Part One His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

"Consciously and at every hour I wish to take part in the redemption of the world, remaining a light amongst the storms, to be one of Thy beacons.

I go, O Lord, into the world to do Thy will. My only desire is to stand firm as a faithful servant at the post to which Thou didst appoint me, in order to meet Thee worthily." – Metropolitan Anthony Bloom (1914-2003)

A brilliant contemporary witness to the work of Christ in the hearts of His devoted followers, Metropolitan Anthony Bloom was a man of prayer and spiritual insight of the highest caliber. He embodied unwavering faith in Christ, a profound insight into humanity, especially the modern individual, refined theological scholarship and language, and a steadfast, boundless compassion. A master of dialogue and conversation, he was renowned for his sharp insight, analytical clarity, and ability to grasp reality before expressing any judgment or opinion. No one crossed his path without being deeply and positively moved by him.

The son of a Russian diplomat, he was born in Switzerland and named Andrei. His family later relocated to Iran for his father's post and eventually settled in France following the Communist Revolution.

His father had to give up his diplomatic career and took up jobs in various places, which plunged the family into financial hardship. Yet, his distinctive personality left a lasting impact on Andrei. His father once told him: "Never forget that it doesn't matter whether one lives or dies. What matters is what we live for and for which we are prepared to die." These words indicated the spirit that prevailed in their home and the deep sense of life's meaning that profoundly shaped Metropolitan Anthony from an early age.

His sharp intellect enabled him to continue giving private tutoring in mathematics and in any subject his students struggled, and that he had mastered. This covered his living expenses and allowed him to continue his studies, though not without hardship and struggle.

Tutoring consumed all his evenings, leaving only the weekends for his own studies, which took a toll on his health. Nevertheless, he managed to complete his education. Reflecting on that period, he said: "My life was very different from that of today's student; at times, I was harsh, hungry, and rough, and I was incapable of preaching a gentle and warm sermon."

He pursued studies in physics, chemistry, and biology at the Sorbonne, and later enrolled in medical school, earning his doctorate at the outbreak of World War II in 1939. By then, he had acquired French citizenship and served as a military surgeon in the French army at both the beginning and end of the war.

Until the age of fifteen, he did not believe in God. In fact, he hated and harbored a strong sense of hostility toward the Church. The idea of God stirred no interest in him; he even despised everything associated with it, whether directly or indirectly.

However, he experienced two spiritual events that deeply affected him. The first occurred when he was around eleven years old, during a summer camp, where he met a priest in his thirties whose gentle and unconditional love for the children stirred Andrei's (Anthony's) curiosity, prompting him to wonder about the source and secret of such love.

The second experience occurred after he returned home from boarding school and was reunited with his family under one roof for the first time in years. This brought him immense happiness, so much so that he realized that if happiness is aimless, it is unbearable. He decided to give himself one year to discover whether life had any meaning. If he found none, he resolved that he would no longer continue living.

Months passed without any sign of meaning on the horizon, until one day, the leader of a Russian youth group invited him to attend a lecture by a priest hosted by the youth organization. Anthony vehemently

refused, saying: "I don't care about the Church, and I don't believe in God." But the leader persuaded him to attend out of respect for the organization: "Just show up physically; you're not required to actually listen." Thus, he went but soon discovered that the priest was a remarkable man.

When he got home, he asked his mother for a Bible so he could verify the priest's words for himself. He began reading the Gospel of Mark, as it was the shortest. He described his experience as follows:

"I do not know how to tell you what happened. I will simply describe it, and those who have had a similar experience will understand. While I was reading the beginning of the Gospel of St. Mark, before reaching the third chapter, I became aware of a Presence but saw nothing. It was not a hallucination but rather a quiet certainty that the Lord was standing there, and I was in His presence. This, even though I had begun reading His life story out of an impulsive reaction and with a bad will."

From that moment on, he read the Gospel in the light of the Resurrection, which for him became a firm conviction and a reality beyond any doubt.

Since Christ was alive and sat in his presence as he described, he could establish with absolute certainty that the Gospel's account of the crucifixion of the prophet from Galilee was true, and that the Roman centurion was not mistaken when he cried out, "Truly, this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54).

Thus, he became certain that Christ is alive and there was no doubt of His existence. He trusted that in his journey of seeking to understand life more deeply, he would eventually be given the answers to his many questions. This quest pushed him to keep asking, keep exploring, and keep moving forward in his search for meaning.

After practicing medicine for some time, he took monastic vows, taking the name of Saint Anthony. However, due to the war and the shortage of priests at the time, he lived his monastic life in secret. After his monastic tonsure, he told his spiritual father: "You tonsured me as a monk, but you never gave me a rule of prayer!" To which his spiritual father replied: "What rule of prayer do you need? You are a monk now; pray at all times." His monastic commitment became publicly known only when he was ordained a priest in 1948.

He went on to live the rest of his life as a priest, a bishop, and a true monk. In response to a journalist who once asked him how he could be a monk while living such a public life as priest and bishop, he said:

"It is all the same to me, whether I live among people or in the desert. In some ways, it is easier to be materially poor than to be poor in one's inner life. I am indebted to the vow of poverty, for it has allowed me to truly evaluate everything. But for that to be possible, one must first be free within."

وجوه نورانية معاصرة: المطران أنطوان بلوم، الجزء الأول المتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

"أَرْغَبُ، يَا رَبُّ، بِكَامِلٍ وَعَيْي، وَفِي كُلِّ سَاعَةٍ، فِي أَنْ يَكُونَ لِي نَصِيبٌ فِي فِدَاءِ الْعَالَمِ، وَفِي أَنْ أَظِلَّ نُورًا وَسَطَ الْعَوَاصِفِ، لِأَكُونَ وَاحِدًا مِنْ مَنَارَاتِكَ.

أَذْهَبُ، يَا رَبُّ، إِلَى الْعَالَمِ لِأَعْمَلَ مَشِيئَتَكَ. كُلُّ مُشْتَهَايَ أَنْ أَبْقَى، كَخَادِمٍ أَمِينٍ، ثَابِتًا فِي الْمُهَمَّةِ الَّتِي أَسْنَدْتَهَا إِلَيَّ، كَي أَلْقَاكَ بِاسْتِحْقَاقٍ." -
الْمِيتْرُوبُولِيتِ أَنْطُونِي بُلُوم (١٩١٤-٢٠٠٣)

شَاهِدٌ مُعَاصِرٌ لَامِعٌ لَمَّا يَعْمَلُهُ الْمَسِيحُ فِي قُلُوبِ أَتْبَاعِهِ مِنَ الْمُحِبِّينَ. رَجُلٌ صَلَاةٍ وَفَهْمٍ رُوحِيٍّ مِنَ الطَّرَازِ الرَّفِيعِ. جَمَعَ فِي شَخْصِهِ دَرَجَةً عَالِيَةً مِنَ الْأَمَانَةِ لِإِيمَانِهِ بِالْمَسِيحِ، وَفَهْمًا عَظِيمًا لِلإِنْسَانِ، الْمُعَاصِرِ بِخَاصَّةٍ، وَعِلْمًا وَلُغَةً لاهُوتِيَّةً رَاقِيَةً، وَحَنُوءًا حَازِمًا وَغَامِرًا فِي أَنْ. رَجُلٌ حَوَارٍ وَمُقَابَلَاتٍ مِنَ الطَّرَازِ الرَّفِيعِ. عُرِفَ بِنَظَرِهِ الثَّاقِبِ لِلْأُمُورِ، وَقُدْرَتِهِ عَلَى التَّحْلِيلِ وَمَعْرِفَةِ الْوَاقِعِ قَبْلَ إِطْلَاقِ حُكْمِهِ وَرَأْيِهِ. مَا لَقِيَهُ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا وَتَأَثَّرَ بِهِ إِيْجَابًا.

وُلِدَ فِي سُويسْرَا، حَامِلًا اسْمَ أُنْدَرِيه، لِوَالِدٍ يَعْمَلُ فِي السِّلْكِ الدِّبْلُومَاسِيِّ الرُّوسِيِّ، ثُمَّ انْتَقَلَتِ الْعَائِلَةُ إِلَى إِيْرَانٍ بِسَبَبِ عَمَلِ الْأَبِ، وَانْتَهَى بِهَا الْمَطَافُ فِي فَرَنْسَا، بَعْدَ الثَّوْرَةِ الشُّيُوعِيَّةِ.

اضْطُرَّ وَالِدُهُ إِلَى التَّخَلِّيِ عَنْ مِهْنَةِ الدِّبْلُومَاسِيَّةِ، وَعَمِلَ فِي أَمَاكِنَ مُتَفَرِّقَةٍ، مَا جَعَلَ الْعَائِلَةَ تَعِيشُ فِي فَاقَةٍ شَدِيدَةٍ. لَكِنْ شَخْصِيَّتُهُ الْمُمَيَّزَةُ تَرَكَّتْ تَأْثِيرًا عَلَى أُنْدَرِيه. قَالَ لَهُ مَرَّةً: "لَا تَنْسَ أَبَدًا أَنَّهُ لَا يَهُمُّ إِذَا كَانَ عَاشَ الْمَرْءُ أَوْ مَاتَ. الْمُهَمُّ هُوَ ذَلِكَ الَّذِي مِنْ أَجْلِهِ نَعِيشُ وَمِنْ أَجْلِهِ نَكُونُ عَلَى اسْتِعْدَادٍ لِلْمَوْتِ." يَذُلُّ كَلَامُ الْوَالِدِ عَلَى الرُّوحِ الَّتِي سَادَتْ فِي الْبَيْتِ، وَعَلَى أَهْمِيَّةِ مَعْنَى الْحَيَاةِ الَّتِي نَشَأَ عَلَيْهَا الْمِطْرَانُ أَنْطُونِي مُنْذُ نَعُومَةِ أَظْفَارِهِ.

مَكَّنَهُ ذِكَاؤُهُ الْحَادُّ مِنَ الِاسْتِمْرَارِ فِي إِعْطَاءِ الدُّرُوسِ الْخُصُوصِيَّةِ فِي الْحِسَابِ وَكُلِّ مَا كَانَ طُلَّابُهُ يَجْهَلُونَهُ وَيَعْرِفُهُ هُوَ؛ مِمَّا أَمَّنَ لَهُ نَقَفَاتِ الْمَعِيشَةِ وَمُتَابَعَةَ دِرَاسَتِهِ، وَلَكِنْ بِمُعَانَاةٍ وَجْهَادٍ.

فَقَدْ كَانَتْ هَذِهِ الدُّرُوسُ تَمَلُّ كُلَّ أَمْسِيَاتِهِ، فَلَا يَتَبَقَّى لِدِرَاسَتِهِ هُوَ إِلَّا عُطْلَةٌ نِهَايَةً
الْأُسْبُوعَ، مِمَّا عَرَّضَ صِحَّتَهُ لِلْإِعْتِلَالِ، وَلَكِنَّهُ اسْتَطَاعَ إِكْمَالَ دِرَاسَتِهِ.
قَالَ عَنْ تِلْكَ الْفَتْرَةِ: "كَانَتْ حَيَاتِي مُخْتَلِفَةً عَنْ حَيَاةِ طَالِبِ هَذِهِ الْأَيَّامِ؛ كُنْتُ، فِي بَعْضِ
الْأَوْقَاتِ، قَاسِيًا، جَائِعًا وَخَشِينًا، وَمَا اسْتَطَعْتُ أَنْ أُعْطِ عِطَّةً رَقِيقَةً وَدَافِقَةً."

تَابَعَ دِرَاسَةً فِي الْفِيزِيَاءِ وَالْكِيمِيَاءِ وَالْبَيُولُوجِيَا فِي السُّورْبُونِ، وَمِنْ ثَمَّ دُرُوسَ الطَّبِّ،
وَحَصَلَ عَلَى الدُّكْتُورَاهِ فِي فِتْرَةِ انْدِلَاعِ الْحَرْبِ الْعَالَمِيَّةِ الثَّانِيَةِ، أَيِ فِي الْعَامِ ١٩٣٩.
وَكَانَ قَدْ حَصَلَ عَلَى الْجِنْسِيَّةِ الْفَرَنْسِيَّةِ، فَعَمِلَ فِي بَدَايَةِ الْحَرْبِ وَنِهَايَتِهَا طَبِيبًا جَرَّاحًا
فِي الْجَيْشِ الْفَرَنْسِيِّ.

حَتَّى سَنِ الْخَامِسَةِ عَشْرَةَ، لَمْ يَكُنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ، كَمَا وَيَكْرَهُ الْكَنِيسَةَ وَيَكُنْ لَهَا شُعُورًا
عَدَائِيًّا. لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيُثِيرَ اهْتِمَامَهُ، لَا بَلْ كَانَ يَمُتُّ كُلَّ مَا يَمُتُّ لِفِكْرَةِ الْإِلَهِ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ
أَوْ بَعِيدٍ.

وَلَكِنَّهُ عَاشَ خَبْرَتَيْنِ رُوحِيَّتَيْنِ أَثَرَتَا فِيهِ. الْأُولَى، وَكَانَ فِي سَنِ الْحَادِيَةِ عَشْرَةَ تَقْرِيًّا،
حِينَ تَعَرَّفَ، فِي مُحَيِّمِ صَيْفِي، عَلَى كَاهِنٍ فِي الثَّلَاثِينَ مِنْ عُمُرِهِ، أَثَارَتْ مَحَبَّتَهُ الْحَانِيَّةَ
وَعَبَّرَ الْمَشْرُوطَةَ لِلْأَوْلَادِ اهْتِمَامَ أَنْدَرِيه (أَنْطُونِي)، مِمَّا دَفَعَهُ إِلَى التَّسَاوُلِ عَنْ سِرِّ
وَمَصَدَرِ هَذِهِ الْمَحَبَّةِ.

أَمَّا الْخَبْرَةُ الثَّانِيَةُ فَحَصَلَتْ بَعْدَ عَوْدَتِهِ مِنَ الْمَدْرَسَةِ الدَّاخِلِيَّةِ وَاجْتِمَاعِهِ بِالْعَائِلَةِ لِأَوَّلِ
مَرَّةٍ تَحْتَ سَقْفٍ وَاحِدٍ، مِمَّا مَنَحَهُ مَصَدَرَ سَعَادَةٍ مُطْلَقَةٍ، فَأَدْرَكَ فِي تِلْكَ الْفَتْرَةِ أَنَّ كُلَّ
سَعَادَةٍ بَعْدَ هَذَا لَا تُطَاقُ. فَقَرَّرَ أَنْ يُمْهَلَ نَفْسُهُ مَدَّةَ سَنَةٍ لِيَكْتَشِفَ مَا إِذَا كَانَ لِلْحَيَاةِ
مَعْنَى مَا، وَإِلَّا فَإِنَّهُ لَنْ يَسْتَمِرَّ فِي الْعَيْشِ.

وَمَضَتْ الشُّهُورُ وَلَمْ يَظْهَرْ فِي الْأَفْقِ أَيُّ مَعْنَى، إِلَى أَنْ دَعَاهُ قَائِدُ الشَّبَابِ الرُّوسِيَّةِ إِلَى
حُضُورِ مُحَاضَرَةٍ لِكَاهِنٍ دَعَتْهُ مُنَظَّمَةُ الشَّبَابِ. رَفَضَ أَنْطُونِي الْحُضُورَ بِعُغْفٍ قَائِلًا:
"لَا تَهْمُنِي الْكَنِيسَةُ وَلَا أُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ." فَأَقْنَعَهُ الْقَائِدُ بِالْحُضُورِ كَرَمَى لِكِرَامَةِ الْمُنَظَّمَةِ وَقَالَ
لَهُ: "أُنَبِّئُ حُضُورَكَ بِالْجَسَدِ فَقَطْ. لَسْتُ مُضْطَرًّا إِلَى الْإِصْغَاءِ إِلَيْهِ." وَهَذَا مَا صَارَ،
لَكِنَّهُ اكْتَشَفَ أَنَّ الْكَاهِنَ كَانَ إِنْسَانًا عَظِيمًا.

وَعِنْدَمَا عَادَ إِلَى الْبَيْتِ طَلَبَ الْكِتَابَ الْمُقَدَّسَ مِنْ أُمِّهِ، لِكَيْ يَتَأَكَّدَ مِنْ حَقِيقَةِ كَلَامِ الْكَاهِنِ
بِنَفْسِهِ. وَبَدَأَ بِقِرَاءَةِ إِنْجِيلِ مَرْفُسٍ لِأَنَّهُ الْأَقْصَرُ. لِنَسْتَمِعَ إِلَيْهِ وَهُوَ يَصِفُ خَبْرَتَهُ هَكَذَا:

"لَا أَدْرِي كَيْفَ أَخْبِرُكُمْ بِمَا حَدَّثَ. سَوْفَ أَصِفُهُ بِبَسَاطَةٍ وَسَوْفَ يَفْهَمُ الَّذِينَ مَرُّوا فِي خَبْرَةٍ مُمَثِّلَةٍ مَا قَدْ حَصَلَ. بَيْنَمَا كُنْتُ أَقْرَأُ بَدَايَةَ إِنْجِيلِ الْقُدِّيسِ مَرْقُسَ، وَقَبْلَ أَنْ أَصِلَ إِلَى الْفَصْلِ الثَّالِثِ، وَعَيْتُ حُضُورًا. لَمْ أَشَاهِدْ شَيْئًا. لَمْ يَكُنْ هَلُوسَةً، بَلْ تَأَكَّدُ بِسِيْطٍ مِنْ أَنَّ الرَّبَّ كَانَ وَاقِفًا، وَأَنَا مُوجَدٌ فِي حُضُورِهِ، هُوَ الَّذِي كُنْتُ قَدْ بَدَأْتُ قِرَاءَةَ سِيرَتِهِ كَرْدَةً فِعْلٍ مُفَاجِئَةٍ وَإِرَادَةً مَرِيضَةٍ."

هَكَذَا قَرَأَ الْإِنْجِيلَ عَلَى ضَوْءِ الْقِيَامَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ يَقِينًا وَوَاقِعًا لَا شَكَّ فِيهِ أَبَدًا.

فَلِأَنَّ الْمَسِيحَ كَانَ حَيًّا وَلَا تَهْ جَلَسَ فِي حَضْرَتِهِ كَمَا يَقُولُ، كَانَ مِنَ الْمُمْكِنِ أَنْ يَتَنَبَّأَ بِكُلِّ تَأَكُّدٍ بِأَنَّ مَا قَالَهُ الْإِنْجِيلُ عَنْ صَلْبِ نَبِيِّ الْجَلِيلِ كَانَ صَحِيحًا، وَأَنَّ الْقَائِدَ الرُّومَانِيَّ لَمْ يَكُنْ عَلَى خَطَأٍ حِينَ هَتَفَ: "حَقًّا كَانَ هَذَا ابْنُ اللَّهِ" (متى ٢٧: ٥٤).

هَكَذَا وَجَدَ ذَاتَهُ مُوقِنًا كُلَّ الْيَقِينِ بِأَنَّ الْمَسِيحَ حَيٌّ، وَأَنَّ تَمَّ أَشْيَاءَ لَا يَزُقَى لَوْجُودِهَا أَيُّ شَكٍّ، وَوَثِقَ بِأَنَّهُ سَيُعْطَى الْأَجُوبَةَ عَنْ الْأَسْئَلَةِ الْكَثِيرَةِ خِلَالَ مَسِيرَتِهِ سَعْيًا لِاِكْتِشَافِ حَقِيقَةِ الْحَيَاةِ بِشَكْلِ أَفْضَلٍ. لَقَدْ دَفَعَهُ هَذَا السَّعْيُ إِلَى طَرْحِ الْأَسْئَلَةِ وَاِكْتِشَافِ الْمَزِيدِ مِنَ الْأُمُورِ وَالسَّيْرِ قُدَمًا فِي سَبْرِ الْأَغْوَارِ.

بَعْدَ فَنَرَةٍ مِنْ مُمَارَسَةِ الطِّبِّ نَذَرَ نَفْسَهُ لِلْحَيَاةِ الرَّهْبَانِيَّةِ، مُتَّخِذًا اسْمَ الْقُدِّيسِ أَنْطُونِيُوسَ، لَكِنَّهُ عَاشَهَا سِرًّا بِسَبَبِ الْحَرْبِ وَنَقْصِ عَدَدِ الْكَهَنَةِ آنَ ذَاكَ. بَعْدَمَا رُسِمَ رَاهِبًا قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ الرُّوحِيِّ: "لَقَدْ رَسَمْتَنِي رَاهِبًا لَكِنَّا لَمْ تُعْطِنِي قَانُونَ صَلَاةٍ قَطُّ؟" فَأَجَابَهُ ذَاكَ: "أَيُّ قَانُونَ صَلَاةٍ تُرِيدُ؟ أَنْتَ رَاهِبٌ الْآنَ - صَلِّ طَوَالَ الْوَقْتِ." وَلَمْ يُعْرِفْ أَمْرَ رَهْبَنِيَّتِهِ إِلَّا عِنْدَمَا رُسِمَ كَاهِنًا سَنَةَ ١٩٤٨.

اسْتَمَرَ فِي الْعَيْشِ طِيلَةَ حَيَاتِهِ الْبَاقِيَةِ، كَاهِنًا وَمُطْرَانًا، رَاهِبًا حَقِيقِيًّا. يَقُولُ فِي مَعْرُضِ سُؤَالِ أَحَدِ الصَّحَفِيِّينَ لَهُ عَنْ كَوْنِهِ رَاهِبًا وَيُمَارِسُ الْحَيَاةَ الْعَامَّةَ بِصِفَتِهِ كَاهِنًا وَمُطْرَانًا مَا يَلِي:

"سَيِّانٍ عِنْدِي بَيْنَ الْعَيْشِ مَعَ النَّاسِ أَوْ الْعَيْشِ فِي صَحْرَاءَ. فَمِنْ الْأَسْهَلِ فِي بَعْضِ النَّوَاحِي أَنْ يَكُونَ الْمَرْءُ فَقِيرًا فِي إِمْكَانَاتِهِ الْمَادِّيَّةِ عَلَى أَنْ يَكُونَ فَقِيرًا فِي حَيَاتِهِ الدَّاخِلِيَّةِ. أَنَا مَدِينٌ لِلنَّدْرِ الْفَقْرِ لِأَنَّهُ مَكَّنَنِي مِنَ الْإِجَادَةِ فِي تَقْصِيمِ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ، وَلَكِنْ يَنْبَغِي مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ أَنْ يَكُونَ الْإِنْسَانُ حُرًّا فِي دَاخِلِيَّتِهِ أَوْ لَا."