

# Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church of the Annunciation



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## Newsletter for April 8, 2007

Christ is risen Truly He is risen!

### Great and Holy Friday

When Friday dawned, Christ was sent bound from Caiaphas to Pontius Pilate, who was then Governor of Judea. Pilate interrogated Him in many ways, and once and acknowledged that He was innocent, but to please the Jews, he later passed the sentence of death against Him. After scourging the Lord of all as though He were a runaway slave, he surrendered Him to be crucified.

Thus the Lord Jesus was handed over to the soldiers, was stripped of His garments, was clothed in a purple robe, was crowned with a wreath of thorns, had a reed placed in His hand as though it were a sceptre, was bowed before in mockery, was spat upon, and was buffeted in the face and on the head. Then they again clothed Him in His own garments, and bearing the cross, He came to Golgotha, a place of condemnation, and there, about the third hour, He was crucified between two thieves. Although both blasphemed Him at the first, the thief at His right hand repented, and said: "Remember me, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom," to which our Saviour answered, "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." As He hung upon the Cross, He was blasphemed by those who were passing by, was mocked by the high priests, and by the soldiers was given vinegar to drink mixed with gall. About the ninth hour, He cried out with a loud voice, saying, "It is finished." And the Lamb of God "Which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) expired on the day when the moon was full, and at the hour when, according to the Law, was slain the Passover lamb, which was established as a type of Him in the time of Moses.

Even lifeless creation mourned the death of the Master, and it trembled and was altered out of fear. Yet, even though the Maker of creation was already dead, they pierced Him in His immaculate side, and forthwith came there out Blood and Water. Finally, at about the setting of the sun, Joseph of Arimathea came with Nicodemus (both of them had been secret disciples of Jesus), and they took down the all-holy Body of the Teacher from the Cross and anointed it with aromatic spices, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. When they had buried Him in a new tomb, they rolled a great stone over its entrance.

Such are the dread and saving sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ commemorated today, and in remembrance of them, we have received the Apostolic commandment that a fast be observed every Friday.

## الفصح المجيد

النعمة والحق اعطيا بيسوع المسيح. لأنه هو النعمة والحق. و هو الطريق والحق والحياة" هو في شخصه، في حبه المكشوف لنا على الصليب ينبوع حياتنا الحقيقية التي هي القداسة.

هذا هو فصحنا الأبدي. فإذا كانت كلمة فصح تعني العبور فإنما ننقل نحن من الخطيئة الى البر ومن الظلمة الى النور. كل توبة نقوم بها فصح لنا ما دامت التوبة. وإذا الكنيسة احبت مسيحتها تصبح عروسا له لا عيب فيها ولا تجعيد ولا وسخ. وتصبح الكنيسة متجاوزة لخطايا اعضائها وتغسلهم بتوبتهم فيسكنون حضانها وهي في حضان المخلص. بهذه الروح نستقبل القيامة لنكون قياميين، مستنيرين ومنيرين. الى هذا نتوق وهذا ما سنحققه برضاء الله عنا لنكون منذ الآن وارثين لملكوت النعمة امين

المسيح قام حقا قام.

الأب ابراهيم شحود

## Dates to Remember

### Easter Church Services

Friday April 6<sup>th</sup> - Lamentation - Procession of the Tomb  
at 7:30 PM

Saturday April 7<sup>th</sup> - The Resurrection - Easter Sunday Holy  
Pascha - 10:00 PM

Sunday, April 8<sup>th</sup> - Easter Monday service at 3:00 PM.  
We encourage all to bring snacks, eggs,  
juice, and sweets to celebrate Easter.

### General Meeting & Parish Council Elections

On Sunday April 22, 2006, the Church of the Annunciation will have its general meeting after church service downstairs in the church hall. All are welcome to attend.

April 22<sup>nd</sup> will also be the last day that our elections committee will be accepting nominations for two positions available on our Parish Council. Nominations are only open to those who have paid their 2007 church membership. If you feel that you are qualified and you would like to have a strong contribution to the growth of our church, please consider forwarding your name for nomination.

One May 6, a secret ballot vote will take place to elect the nominated Parish Council members.

### Spring Party – "Hafla"

Our annual "Spring Party" will be held on April 28, 2007 at the Westgate Community Center. Please contact Jourieh Chahine for more details and tickets at 240-1730.

## Youth and Church School

We are excited to offer comprehensive children and youth programming in our church. We have a vibrant and growing group of well over 30 children and we enjoy teaching and interacting with them. We have weekly church school and youth meetings as well as regular social events. Come on out and join us! We are committed to help your children have a better understanding of their faith as we strive to become like Christ in not only word and thought, but also in action.

### **Youth and Church School Times**

Children Grades 1 – 6:

Saturdays at the church from 5:00 - 6:00pm.

Youth Grades 7 – 10:

Fridays from 7:00 - 9:00pm. (Please call us for the location. We alternate between the church and other venues.)

Please don't hesitate to call us if you would like more information.

Abouna Ibrahim: 242-1250 or 561-8884

Jason Quiring & Rachel Huebert: 239-4456 or 801-9103

## Kind Reminders

### **Holy Bread and Church Cleaning**

We are always looking for people to make holy bread for Sunday services. As well, we always need help keeping our church clean on a weekly basis. After all we want our entire congregation to walk into a tidy and clean Church every Sunday. If you would like to offer your assistance, please contact anyone on the Parish Council to have your name put on a list for the day you wish to help.

### **Church Etiquette**

As the Easter Paschal service nears, our small church will be busy and crowded. We hope that you all attend church on time, and being late would not guarantee you a seat upstairs. We try our best to accommodate everyone. We now have a speaker system downstairs which will allow adults and children alike to listen to the service and there are plans to have a TV set up to also watch it as well. We are finding that the noise level from downstairs is interrupting our church services and we ask for your cooperation and help in this matter. We would like to make Church a comfortable experience for all to attend.

## Special Thank You's

We would like to thank the Ladies Auxiliary for their usual hard work and commitment. The March Spring Bake Sale was a huge success. We also would like to thank all those who donated tasty sweets. The falafel sandwiches and the "manakish bil zaatar" were delicious as usual. We can't wait for the next one!

## Poem for Thought

*God almighty, our holy one  
Conquering, victorious and risen son  
Saviour, redeemer, Lord of light  
You saved me, freed me, and gave me life  
Is there a way that I can repay  
What it cost you my Lord that fateful day?  
When you gave your life upon the cross  
For all mankind eternally lost  
For I know I could never pay the price  
The cost of your eternal sacrifice  
For salvation is a gift that you freely gave  
When you died and arose from the grave  
The hope that came from your sacrifice  
Is the hope we have of eternal life*

### A Message from Father Ibrahim

"We welcome all of you to our church and may God bless you and keep you, and fill you with joy and peace of His presence. It's especially pleasant to see the many un-familiar faces in our Church and we pray for these faces to become a very familiar part of our congregation. A Happy Easter to all and we wish everyone that joy which our blessed Lord's Resurrection brings."

### هلموا خذوا

"وكن يقلن فيما بينهن: من يدحرج لنا الحجر؟" (مرقس 16: 1-8)

من هؤلاء، اللواتي يبكرن مع طلوع الفجر، ويصعدن جبل الجلجلة؟ إنهن زمرة من ثلاث نساء باسم مشترك: محبة.

كان يغطي فم القدس ضباب ما. وبدأ الظلام ينكس علمه ويتراجع، مهزوماً من النور. وتصدع المحبة الفائقة الجمال بطيوبها طلعة الواجب السامي الخطرة. لا يقيدنا أي تهديد، لأن المحبة أقوى من الموت ذاته ولا شيء يخيف حاملات الطيب الثلاث. لا نظرات الحراس المتجهمة، أو سيوف الحرس اللامعة وسط الظلام، ولا العقارب الفريسية المتجسدة. تصعد المحبة غير مضطربة لتقدم طيوب عابقتها إلى ذلك الذي مات على الصليب.

لكن بيبض حجر، في عمق خيال النساء الثلاث المظلم الحزين. الحجر الذي يضبط "حجر الحياة" ميتاً. يخفن هذا الحجر الأبيض أكثر من الظلام ويرتجفن أكثر من الحرس. "من يدحرج لنا الحجر عن باب القبر؟". هوذا العقبة المخيفة التي لا تستطيع المحبة وحدها أن تحركها. تحتاج إلى قوة أخرى قادرة على إزاحة الحجر. ما هي هذه القدرة؟ الملاك المنير آنذاك. الإيمان الملتهب اليوم.

لا شيء يستطيع أن ينقل الحجر عن باب القبر، ويظهر لأعين الناس تعاليم القبر الفارغ الفصحية والهامة سوى الإيمان.

لقد وقف حجر القيامة للكثيرين حجر عثرة، اصطدموا به وانسحقوا، لأنه ينقصهم الملاك – الإيمان الذي سيدحرج حجر القبر.

إنهم أولئك النساء الذين أطفأ لهم هواء التفكير الشمالي شمعة الإيمان، وأصمت الشك الكريه جرس المحبة الرنان، وجعل حياتهم جلجلة دائمة بلا قيامة، وجمعة عظيمة بدون فصح، وقيراً بارداً بدون حضور الملاك الناصع البياض، الذي سيعلن القيامة والحياة، العزاء والرجاء.

تقف رؤيا القيامة بنوع إنارة، وفرح، وقوة لكل الذين يحافظون على الإيمان ثابتاً غير مهتز. وحجر عثرة، وأحاديث وشكوك لكل الذين يؤمنون فقط بأنوار الأفكار البشرية الفقيرة. حجر "مدحرج" وحجر حياة لهؤلاء، حجر عقبة وعثرة للأخرين.

كم سيكون الناس سعداء، لو أناروا مع شموع القيامة اليوم شمعة الإيمان في أعماق نفسهم. وقرعوا جرس المحبة الشجن مع الجرس الفصحى الحلوى الصدى. لطفت حينئذ قلوب عصرنا الحزينة بعاصفة نور الفرح والسعادة. وما هذه العاصفة النورية إلا عاصفة القيامة التي تذيب ظلمات الكراهية.

إذا ما سرنا، إذن اليوم، في "السحر العميق" وطيوب المحبة في القلب وشعلة الإيمان في الصدور، لن يكون ملك الفرح السلامي حينئذ يعيداً، حيث سيعلن الرسالة البهجة المفرحة: "لقد قام، إنه ليس ههنا".

فلن يكون حينئذ موت بل حياة، ولن يكون حزن بل فرح، ولن يكون ظلام بل نور "هلوا، إذن! خذوا نوراً من النور الذي لا يغرب"