

Synod 2021 2023

For a synodal Church

communion | participation | mission

من اجل کنیسة سینودسیة شرکة , مشارکة , رسالة

#### **PARISH MISSION STATEMENT**

You are welcomed and loved by St Anthony's Community. We are transformed through prayer, acts of love, forgiveness, service and stewardship.

PARISH OFFICE: ... 978.685.7233 ... FAX: 978-688-4475... rectory@stanthonylawrence.org

DAILY LITURGIES MON (Arabic) / TUE (English) / WED (Arabic) / THU (English) 9 am WEEKEND LITURGIES:

**SAT** 4:00PM(*Eng.*) **SUN** 8:00AM (*Ara*) 9:00AM (*Eng.*) / 11:30AM (*Eng.*& Arabic)

Holy days of obligation: Vigil Liturgy @ 7:00 PM

OFFICE HOURS M-TH 9:00 AM-4:00 PM / FRI 9:00 AM-2:00 PM / SAT By Appointment

MEET OUR PRIEST: Fr. Elie Mikhael ... 305-807-9087... .... pastor@stanthonylawrence.org

#### **MEET OUR DEACONS:**

Deacon Nadim B. Daou / Deacon Michael Charchaflian / Deacon David Leard Sub-Deacon James T. Demers / Sub-Deacon Antoine Nammour



# Announcement to Zechariah أحد \ أسبوع بشارة زكريا

#### Saturday, November 13

4:00pm For: 40 Day - Richard Ferguson,

By his wife, Patricia, his son,

Matthew, & Family.

#### Sunday, November 14

8:00am All Souls in Purgatory

9:00am For: +Maroun Mouawad, By his wife, Habouba, children: Simon, Michael, & Renee.

11:30 am For: +Ibrahim & Saide Kassas, By their son, George, his wife, Kristen, and family.

#### Saturday, November 20

LITURGIES INTENTIONS

4:00pm For: In Honor of Fr. Joseph Thomas - 50 Years Priestly Anniversary

#### Sunday, November 21

8:00am For: 40 Day - Akle Abi Sleiman, Mother of Fr Elie Mikhael

9:00am For: 40 Day Anniversary-Akle Abi Sleiman, Mother of Fr Elie Mikhael

11:30 am For: For: 40 Day Anniversary-Akle Abi Sleiman, Mother of Fr Elie Mikhael

For: +Georges, Zeidan & Helen Ata, *By Their Family* .

#### **WEEKDAY LITURGIES**

Monday, November 15

9:00am All Souls in Purgatory

Tuesday, November 16

9:00am For: + Larry & Donald Pereira, & All Souls in Purgatory *By*Dora Pereira

Wednesday, November 17

9:00am All Souls in Purgatory

Thursday, November 18

9:00am All Souls in Purgatory

Adoration 9:30 am - 12 Noon

Friday, November 19 NO LITURGY

#### **Sanctuary Lamps**



In Memory of Richard Ferguson, by his wife, Patricia, & son, Matthew.

In Memory of Richard Ferguson, by his sister, Patricia Ferguson.

# ONLINE OFFERING

#### **VENMO**

#### **REGISTER ONLINE**



<u>Stanthonylawrence.org/donate-now/</u>



THURSDAY FROM 9:30AM -12NOON

#### **Pray for the Souls in Purgatory**

Our parish is entering a Spiritual Warfare, initiating a Prayer Mission for all Souls In Purgatory. Save a Soul by joining us in offering Liturgies & Sanctuary candles.





We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts;

Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful:

do not let us promote disorder.

Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong

path nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity

so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.

All this we ask of You,

who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever.

Amen.

#### **UPCOMING 2ND COLLECTIONS**

Maronite Patriarchal Charities November 13 & 14

> Pastor's Collection December 25

#### **CHRISTMAS LITURGICAL SCHEDULE**

Please stay tuned for our Christmas Activities:

- ♦ Christmas Novena—Dec.13-17 & 20-23
- Christmas Recital -December 18
- ♦ Christmas Pageant and Activities: CCD, Knights of Mary, MYO, & MYA
- Men's and Women's Christmas Parties

**Christmas Poinsettias** in Memory or in Honor of a loved one: Form will be available soon

#### Bishop Gregory's Visit

Our Bishop will be visiting our parish on the weekend of November 20 & 21.

**Saturday November 20**, Liturgy will be celebrated in Honor of Fr. Joseph Thomas' 50th Anniversary.

**Sunday November 21**, Liturgies (8, 9 & 11:30AM) will be celebrated as 40 Day Anniversary for Akle Abi Sleiman, mother of our Fr. Elie Mikhael.

#### TREE OF LIFE

REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONES BY
PUTTING THEIR NAMES ON TREE OF
LIFE BRASS ALUMINUM PLAQUES SIZES:

1.5" X 3" = \$75 / 3" X 6"= \$150 / 4" X 8" = \$250 Please submit your request either by

**Phone**: **978.685.7233** or by E-mail: **rectory@stanthonylawrence.org** 

#### CALLING ALL LECTORS...

Interested in becoming a part of our Lector's Ministry? You're invited to attend a Lector Training in the Church on:

Tuesday, Nov 16th @ 7 PM

Mark your calendars, come by and show your desire to serve.

#### KNIGHTS OF THE ALTAR

Knights of the Altar are back on track!

Visit: https://
www.stanthonylawrence.org/calendar/
for a full Server Schedule.

#### **KNIGHTS OF MARY**

**Next Session:** 

Saturday, Nov 20th - 5-7PM Saturday, Dec 4th - 5-7PM

Full Calendar @ www.stanthonylawrence.org/events-2/

# MYO (MARONITE YOUTH ORGANIZATION)

Full Calendar of Events: www.stanthonylawrence.org/events-3/

Next meeting in the Church Hall: *November 14th 5-7PM* 

# The Sacrament of Marriage was administered to:

Alex Shepherd & Ciara Freeman

May your marriage be crowned with love, joy and God's presence.

# The Sacrament of Baptism & Confirmation was administered to:

**Filomena & Carmela Touma**Children of Joseph & Patrice Touma

#### **Sophia Reyes**

Child of Rigoberto & Maritza Reyes

#### Jaiden Amil

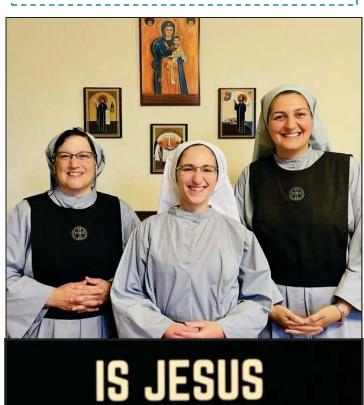
Child of Wilfredo & Yuleyka Amil

#### Ivan Merheb

Child of Wissam & Gretta Merheb

"So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God, through faith, for all you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ"

Galatians 3:26-27



# IS JESUS CALLING YOU?

Maronite Servants of Christ the Light maroniteservants.org

Please join us at the Annual

#### Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish Christmas Fair

Saturday, Nov. 20, 2021

In the hall of St. Theresa Church 22 Plymouth St, Methuen, MA

Beautiful Basket Raffles, Special Raffles include:

- Flat Screen TV, Bose Bluetooth Earbuds, \$\$\$ Prizes, Rounds of Golf.
- We have a Jewelry Table, Christmas Items to purchase and much more!
- French Pork Pies, Chicken + Apple Pies sold 1st come, 1st serve.
- Santa and his helpers will be there for pictures and children's entertainment.

Hope to see you at the fair!

Blessings for a blessed Christmas season from OLGC Parish

#### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

Nov. 13: Dianne Hatem, Paul Iannuccillo, Tori Maroon, Naaman Sader, Stephanie Sader, Melissa Tarness

**Nov. 14:** Cynthia Bonanno, Anthony Chamoun, Addyson Plouffe, David Veilleux

Nov. 15: Melhem Azzi, Katy Kalil, Eden Sfeir

Nov. 16: Andrew Archambault, Logan Gabriel, Leslie Hassan

Nov. 17: Natasha Hashem, Joseph Saba, Serena Uliano. Pascal Zaarour

**Nov. 18:** Chaouki Bouchrouche, Amale Chantiri, Andrew Dabrowski

**Nov. 19:** Rana Abi-Rached, ana Bradley, Ayla Jean, Nadine Sader

#### HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Nov. 14: Samer & Diana Geha

#### Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary 6oth Anniversary Invitation

His Excellency, Bishop Gregory, invites you to join <u>a special online celebration</u> in honor of Our Lady of Lebanon Maronite Seminary's 60th Anniversary on **Saturday**, **November 13**, **2021 at 3PM EST**.

This <u>Virtual</u> Event will be held by Zoom. If you are interested, please register here: <u>Inter-Eparchial Virtual Gathering RSVP</u> (google.com)

Also, here are links to three recent videos on the Maronite Seminary and on the Maronite Church. Please feel free to use them on your social media.

> https://www.youtube.com/watch? v=31de8dOHDEo&list=PLbMtOHcKoXgnmvQ7EU84gfTm6VVEDnAs&index=20

https://youtu.be/YgYEa987rp4 https://youtu.be/mAANGXqNkJ8

# 2022 Lebanese Elections Registration

from October 1 - November 20, 2021.

One is eligible to register as a non-resident voter if one holds the Lebanese citizenship and was born before March 30, 2001.

- Eligible voters will be able to register online at <a href="https://diasporavote.mfa.gov.lb/">https://diasporavote.mfa.gov.lb/</a>
- Voters may also register in person at the Lebanese Embassy or at the New York Consulate General.

For more information visit: <a href="http://www.lebanonembassyus.org/2021/09/28/">http://www.lebanonembassyus.org/2021/09/28/</a>
<a href="mailto:registration-for-the-2022-elections/">registration-for-the-2022-elections/</a>
Or <a href="http://www.nylebcons.org">http://www.nylebcons.org</a>

#### 2021 MAHRAJAN REPORT

Food Total       \$ 27,583.00         Shawarma       27,807.00         Saj       6,319.00         Pastry       26,069.90         Bar       18,404.00         Baskets       6,150.00         Souvenirs       4,618.00
Saj 6,319.00 Pastry 26,069.99 Bar 18,404.00 Baskets 6,150.00
Pastry 26,069.99 Bar 18,404.00 Baskets 6,150.00
Bar 18,404.00 Baskets 6,150.00
Baskets 6,150.00
, , , .
Souvenirs 4,618.0
Raffle 2,265.00
Argilli 9,952.00
Henna 1,643.00
Balloons 189.00
Popcorn 348.00
Raffle Pre-sale 18,664.8
Donation & Sponsors 100,520.00

#### Gross Income \$ 250,532.78

Advertising	\$ 896.06
Equipment	1,331.00
Trash & Cleaning	6,259.14
Bar	6,911.36
Games	400.00
Entertainment	10,085.00
Argilli	779.00
Permits/Licenses	2,782.66
Souvenirs & Baskets	2,410.05
Total Food Cost	13,956.21
Refreshments	1,378.99
Paper Products	6,871.26
Security	2,376.00
Raffles	3,276.25
Propane, Tents & Toilets	14,552.22
Sundry Expenses	869.18

Total Expenses (75,134.38)

*NET Income* \$ 175,398.40

# DONATE A TREE IN MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE

The Memorial Tree Program offers families an Opportunity to remember and honor their loved ones while enhancing the beauty of Historic Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Cemetery.

#### Plant-A-Tree A—

For a donation of \$400.00 a new tree will be planted in memory of your loved one, and a memorial plaque will be displayed by the tree for a period of ten years.

#### Plant-A-Tree B—

**For a donation of \$250.00** Plant an Italian Cypress or Kousa Dogwood Tree in memory of a loved one. A memorial plaque will be displayed by the tree for the period of five years.

#### How the Money is Used

Your money is used for the conservation and enhancement of St Anthony Maronite Cemetery. Not only will your donation offset the purchases of new trees and plants for the grounds, your contribution helps maintain the beautiful, natural environment of our Cemetery.

#### Your Donation is Tax-Deductible

Your contribution is tax deductible. You will receive a written acknowledgement of your donation from the Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Cemetery.

If you like to donate a tree, please call the office at 978.685.7233 or email us at rectory@stanthonylawrence.org

Tree to be planted (30 to 50):

Kousa Dogwood or Italian Cypress

# TITHES & OFFERINGS STEP UP YOUR WEEKLY / MONTHLY / ANNUAL GIVING COMMITMENT

**REGISTER FOR ONLINE DONATION:** 

#### **Apply Online:**

 $\underline{stanthonylawrence.org/donate-now/}$ 

#### **CEMETERY RULES & GUIDELINES**

Several inquiries have been made regarding Cemetery flowers and plants at the graves. In order for us to maintain a respectable resting place for our loved ones, guidelines are set in place and available on our website for your reference.

#### **Planting Policy**

The planting policy of St. Anthony Maronite Cemetery is as follows. Flowers only (either annuals or perennials) may be planted at the base of a monument with the following stipulations:

- 1. The flowerbed may be no wider than the width of the monument base and must come out from the monument base no more than eight (8) inches.
- 2.No shrubs, trees, or bushes may be planted in the planting bed.
- 3. Ornaments, such as plastic decorations, pinwheels, animal figurines, balloons, etc. are not allowed.
- 4.No bed covering, such as mulch or stones, etc. may be added to the planting bed.
- 5. Upkeep of the planted materials is the sole responsibility of the person who has planted the flowers.
- 6.St. Anthony Cemetery bears no responsibility for upkeep nor does it assume liability for damage, theft, or vandalism with regard to the plantings or the planting bed.
- 7.If plantings and planting bed are not maintained, or if inappropriate materials appear in the bed, St. Anthony Cemetery reserves the right to remove any dead plants or inappropriate materials.
- 8.On occasion, the cemetery maintenance staff may remove plantings to accommodate a burial or other activity. Cemetery staff cannot replace plantings.

Note that plantings cannot be placed on a Flat Marker Lot, but only on an upright Monument Lot.

Please take the time to review the complete cemetery guidelines by visiting our website www.stanthonylawrence.org/cemetery/

We ask that you share this information with your family members and friends, especially those who do not have access to our website.

#### **Grave Purchase and Burial at St Anthony**

#### Grave Purchase—\*For Active Parishioners

- Grave Purchase–Double Depth: \$1900 (one time fee)
- Perpetual Care: \$200 (one time fee)

Total of Grave (Double Depth) Purchase: \$2100

• Memorial Stone Permit: \$75 (one time fee paid upon installation)

#### **Burial Costs (Itemized)**

- Opening and Closing (Summer Fees): \$1000
- Opening and Closing (Winter Burial): \$1,200
- Church Stipend: \$250
- Church Stipend (Wake in Church): \$450
- Soloist: \$150
- Organist: \$150
- Clergy Stipend: \$200 or left to the Family Discretion

#### **Total of Burial Costs:**

- Burial (Summer Fees): \$1,750
- Burial (Summer Fees-Wake in Church): \$ \$1,950
- Burial (Winter Fees): \$1,950
- Burial (Winter Fees-Wake in Church): \$2,150

Prices are subject to change.

\*Active Parishioners are considered those who have participated: Socially, spiritually and have contributed regularly in our database.

#### **ONLINE BURIAL SEARCH**

- 1. Go to www.stanthonylawrence.org
- 2. Scroll to the bottom and click on BURIAL ONLINE SEARCH.
- 3. Type in the last/first name or in some cases just last name and click search.

#### **CEMETERY LOT SALES AND AVAILABILITY**

Saint Anthony Cemetery offers affordable payment plans to fit any family's budget. For more information:

By Phone (*During Office Hours*) 978-685-7233 or email <a href="mailto:rectory@stanthonylawrence.org">rectory@stanthonylawrence.org</a>

 $\textbf{By visiting:} \underline{www.stanthonylawrence.org/lots-sales/}$ 

#### **EPISTLES / GOSPELS FOR THIS WEEKEND**

Romans 4:13-25

Brothers and sisters, The promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations') in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become 'the father of many nations', according to what was said, 'So numerous shall your descendants be.' He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith 'was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now the words, 'it was reckoned to him', were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

Luke 1:1-25

Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years. Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. Now at the time of the incense-offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' Zechariah said to the angel, 'How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.' The angel replied, 'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur.' Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. When his time of service was ended, he went to his home. After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, 'This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.'

### ألقراءة ألأولى\ألأنجيل

رومة 4:13-25

يا إِخْوَتِي، الْوَعْدُ لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ أَوْ لِنَسْلِهِ بِأَنْ يَكُونَ وَارِقًا لِلْعَالَم، لَمْ يَكُنْ بِواسِطَةِ الشَّرِيعَة، بَلْ بالبِرِّ الَّذِي نَالَهُ بالإِيْمَانِ فَلُو كَانَ أَهْلُ الشَّرِيعَة هُمُ الوَارِثِين، لأَبْطِلَ الإِيْمَانِ هُمُ الوَارِثُون، لِكَي تَكُونَ الورَاثَةُ هِبَةً مِنَ الله. وحَيْثُ لا شَرِيعَة، فَلا تَحَدِّيَ لِلشَّرِيعَة. لِذَلِكَ فَأَهْلُ الإِيْمَانِ هُمُ الوَارِثُون، لِكَي تَكُونَ الورَاثَةُ هِبَةً مِنَ الله. وهكذَا تَحَقِّقَ الوَعْدُ لِكُلِّ نَسْلِ إِبْرَاهِيم، لا لِلنَسْلِ الَّذِي هُوَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الشَّرِيعَةِ فَحَسْب، بَلْ أَيْضَا لِلنَسْلِ الَّذِي هُوَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الشَّرِيعَةِ فَحَسْب، بَلْ أَيْضَا لِلنَّسْلِ الَّذِي هُوَ مَنْ أَهْلِ الشَّرِيعَةِ فَحَسْب، بَلْ أَيْفَانِ إِبْرَاهِيم، الَّذِي هُوَ أَبٌ لَنَا أَجْمَعِين؛ كَمَا هُوَ مَكْثُوب: »إِنِي جَعَلْتُكَ أَبًا لأُمْمِ كَثِيرَة .« فَوْ مَنْ إِبْرَاهِيم، اللهِ هُوَ أَبٌ لَنَا أَمَامَ الله، الَّذِي يُحْيِي الأَمْوَات، ويَدْعُو غَيْرَ المَوْجُودِ إلى الوُجُود. وقَدْ فَإِبْرَاهِيمُ اللهِ هُوَ أَبُ لِنَا أَمْمَ الله، الَّذِي يُحْيِي الأَمْوَات، ويَدْعُو غَيْرَ المَوْجُودِ إلى الوُجُود. وقَدْ آمَنَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَاحِيًا عَلَى غَيْرِ رَجَاء، بِأَنَّهُ سَيَصِيرُ أَبًا لأَمْمِ كَثَيْرَة، كَمَا قِيلَ لَهُ: »همَاذَا يَكُونُ نَسْلُكَ . «ولَمْ أَبْرُ الْعُونُ اللهُ قَادِرٌ أَنْ يُنْفِي وَعُو اللهُ عَلَى وَعُو اللهِ عَلَى اللهُ قَادِرٌ أَنْ يُنْفِئَ عَلَى وَعُو اللهِ عَلَى مَا الله قَادِرٌ أَنْ يُنْ الله قَادِرٌ أَنْ يُنْفِعَ عَيْرَ اللهُ عَلَى اللهُ عَلَى مَا الله قَادِرٌ أَنْ يُنْجِزَ مَا عَلَى وَعُدِ الله، مَا شَكَفَ وَلا تَرَدَد، بَلْ تَقَوَّى بِالإِيْمَان، ومَجَدَ الله مُواتِ يَسُوعَ رَبَّنَا اللهُ عَلَيْ أَنْ يُنْولِكُ حُسِبَ لَهُ إِلْوَى أَسُولُ الْ الْمُولُ الْمُولُ الْمَواتِ يَسُوعَ رَبَّنَا اللهُ عَلَى أَنْ اللهُ عَلَى مَنْ أَجْلُ رَلَا الْمَعْلَى اللهَ عُلَى الللهُ عَلَى اللهُ عَلَى الْمَوْاتِ يَسُومَ عَلَيْ اللهُ عَلَى أَنْهُ الْمُؤْلُ وَلَا الللهُ عَلَى أَلْولُولُ لَولُولُ اللهُ الْعُولُ لَلْ الْمُؤْلُولُ اللهُ اللهُ اللهُ الْولَالْ اللهُ الْفُومِنُ الْمُولُولُ اللهُ اللهُ اللهُ المُعْلِ اللهُ المُولُولُ اللهُ المُعْلَى اللهُ

لوقا 1:1-25

بِمَا أَنَّ كثيرينَ أَخَذُوا يُرَتِّبونَ روَايةً لِلأَحْدَاثِ ٱلَّتي تَمَّتْ عِنْدَنا، كَمَا سَلَّمَها إلَيْنَا مَنْ كَانُوا مُنْذُ البَدْءِ شُهُودَ عِيَانِ لِلْكَلِمَة، ثُمَّ صَارُوا خُدَّامًا لَهَا، رَأَيْتُ أَنا أَيْضًا، أَيُّهَا الشَّرِيفُ تِيُوفِيل، أَنْ أَكْتُبَها لَكَ بِحَسَبِ تَرْتِيبها، بَعْدَمًا تَنَبَّعْتُهَا كُلُّها، مُنْذُ بِدَايَتِهَا، تَتَبُّعًا دَقيقًا، لِكَي تَنَيَقَّنَ صِحَّةَ الكَلْامِ الَّذِي وُعِظْتَ بَهِ. كَأَنَ فَيَ أَيَّامِ هِيرُودُس، مَلِكِ اليَهُودِيَّةَ، كَاهِنُ ٱسْمُهُ زَكَرِيًّا، مِّنْ فِرْقَةِ أَبِيًّا، لَهُ ٱمْرَأَةٌ مِنْ بَنَاتِ هَارُونَ ٱسْمُها إليصنابَات. وكَانَا كِلاهُمَا بَارَّيْنِ أَمَامَ الله، سَالِكَيْنِ في جَمِيع وصنايَا الرَّبِّ وأَحْكَامِه بِلا لَوْم. ومَا كَانَ لَهُمَا وَلَد، لأَنّ إِليصنابَاتَ كَانَتْ عَاقِرًا، وكَانَا كِلاهُمَا قَدْ طَعَنَا ٓ في أَيَّامِهِمَا. وفِيمَا كَانَ زَكَرِيَّا يٰقُومُ بالخِدْمَةِ الكَهَنُوتِيَّةِ أَمَامَ الله، في أَثْنَاءِ نَوْبَةِ فِرْ قَتِهِ، أَصَابَتْهُ القُرْعَة، بِحَسَبِّ عَادَةً الكَهَنُوت، لِيَدْخُلَ مَقْدِسَ هَيْكُلِ الرَّبِّ ويُحْرِقَ البَخُور . وكَانَ كُلُّ جُمْهُورِ الشَّعْبِ يُصلِّى في الخَارِج، في أَثْنَاءِ إِحْرَاقِ البَخُورِ. وَتَراءَى مَلاكُ الرَّبِ لِزَكَرِيَّا وَاقِفًا مِنْ عَنْ يَمِينَ مَذْبَحِ البَخُورِ"، فَأَصْطَرَبَ زَكَرِيًّا حِينَ رَآه، وَٱسْتَولَى عَلَيْهِ الْخَوف. فقَالَ لـهُ الْمَلاَك: ﴿ لا تَخَفْ، يَا زَكَرِيًّا، فَقُدِ ٱسْتُجِيبَتْ طِلْبَتُكَ، وَٱمْرَأَتُكَ إِليصنابَاتُ سَتَلِدُ لَكَ ٱبْنًا، فَسَمِّهِ يُوحَنَّا. ويَكُونُ لَكَ فَرَحٌ وَٱبْتِهَاج، ويَفْرَحُ بِمَوْلِدِهِ كَثِيرُون، لأَنَّهُ سَيَكُونُ عَظِيمًا في نَظَر الرَّبّ، لا يَشْرَبُ خَمْرًا ولا مُسْكِرًا، وَيَمْتَلِئُ مِنَ الرُّوحِ الْقُدُسِ وَهُوَ بَعْدُ في حَشَا أُمِّهِ. ويَرُدُّ كَثِيرينَ مِنْ بَني إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلى الرَّبِّ إِلههم. ويَسيرُ أَمَامَ الرَّبِّ بِرُوحَ إِيلِيًّا وقُوَّتِهِ، لِيَرُدَّ قُلُوبَ الأَبَاءِ إِلى الأَبْنَاء، والعُصناةَ إِلَى حِكْمَةَ الأَبْرَار، فَيُهَيِّئَ لِلْرَّبِّ شَعْبًا ٰمُعَدًّا خَيْرَ إِعْدَاد .«فقَالَ زَكَرِيَّا لِلْمَلاك: »بِمَاذَا أَعْرِفُ هذَا؟ فإتِي أَنَا شَيْخُ ، وٱمْرَأَتي قَدْ طَعَنَتْ في أَيَّامِهَا! . «فأجَابَ الْمَلاكُ وقالَ لهُ: »أَنَا هُوَ جِبْرَائِيلُ ٱلوَاقِفُ في خَضَّرةِ الله، وقد أُرْسِّلْتُ لأُكَلِّمَكَ وَأَبَشِّرَكَ بِهِذَا. وهَا أَنْتَ تَكُونُ صَامِتًا، لا تَقْدِرُ أَنْ تَتَكَلَّم، حَتَّى اليَوْمِ الَّذي يَحْدُثُ فِيهِ ذلِكَ، لأَنَّكَ لَمْ تُؤْمِنْ بِكَلامِي الَّذَي سَيَتِمُّ في أَوَانِهِ . «وكَانَ الشَّعْبُ يَنْتَظرُ زَكَريًّا، ويَتَعَجَّبُ مِنْ ٱبْطَائِهِ في مَقْدِسِ الْهَيْكَلِ. ولَمَّا خَرَجَ زَكَريَّا، لَمْ يَكُنْ قَادِرًا أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُم، فأَدْرَكُوا أَنَّهُ رَأَى رُؤْيَا في المَقْدِس، وكَّانَ يُشيرُ إلَيْهم بِالإِشَارَة، وبَقِىَ أَبْكَم ٰ ولَمَّا تَمَّتْ أَيَّامُ خِدْمَتِهِ، مَضنَى إلى بَيْتِهِ. وبَعْدَ تِلْكَ الْأَيَّامِ، حَمَلَتِ ٱمْرَأَتُهُ إلِيصَابَاتُ، وَكُتمَتْ أَمْرَ هَا تَخَمْسَةً أَشْهُر، وهِيَ تُقُول: هكذا صننعَ الرَّبُّ إليَّ، في الأَيَّامِ الَّتني نَظَرَ إليَّ فِيهَا، لِيُزيلَ العَارَ عَنِّي مِنْ بَيْنِ النَّاسِ!



















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