



Season of the Glorious Epiphany



FEAST OF THE *Presentation of the Lord*

PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

*You are welcomed & loved by St Anthony's Maronite Church Community
We are transformed through prayer, acts of love, forgiveness, service & stewardship*

PARISH OFFICE: 978-685-7233 FAX: 978-688-4475 Website: stanthonylawrence.org
Office E-mail: rectory@stanthonylawrence.org

LITURGIES INTENTIONS

4th SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Daily Liturgies

Saturday, February 1 (Eng)

St. Pionius & His Companions

4:00 pm Private Intention

Sunday, February 2

Presentation of Christ in the Temple

8:00 am + Elias Owaida, *By Mr. & Mrs. Robert Owaida & family*

9:30 am + Private Intention

11:00 am + **1st Anniversary** - Josephine Jabbour Fares, *By her son, Joseph Fares, & sister, Mouna Hbaiter, & their families*

+ For deceased family members of the Jabbour Family

5:00 pm In Honor of Wissam Merheb, *By his children, Christopher, Anthony, Rebecca, & Ivan*

Monday, February 3 (Ar)

St. Simeon the Elder & St. Ana / Rom 7:7-13 / Jn 4:31-38

9:00 am For the Merheb & Daccache Family members, *By Mr. & Mrs. Wissam Merheb, & family*

Tuesday, February 4 (Eng)

St. Isidore of Pelusium / Rom 7:14-25 / Jn 4:39-42

9:00 am + Private Intention

Wednesday, February 5 (Ar)

St. Agatha / Acts 8:4-13 / Lk 9:51-56

9:00 am + Private Intention

Thursday, February 6 (Eng)

St. Proclus / Acts 8:14-25 / Lk 17:11-19

9:00 am + Deceased Members of the Goulart & Pereira Families, *By Dora Pereira*

9:30 am Eucharistic Adoration

Friday, February 7 - **OFFICE CLOSED**

Pope St. Anferus / 2 Cor 3:1-6 / Jn 7:37-39

SUNDAY OF THE PRIESTS

OBSERVANCES

Saturday, February 8 (Eng) *Zechariah the Prophet*

4:00 pm + Julia Periera Alvernaz, *By Jose Henrique*

Sunday, February 9

St. Maron

8:00 am Private Intentions

9:30 am + Private Intentions

11:00 am + Michel & Sayde Elghoul, *By their sons, Tony & Walid, their spouses, & their families*

- * **Sunday Feb 2, 2025** - **Presentation of Christ in the Temple** - Liturgy with blessings of the candles
- * **Sunday Feb 9, 2025** - **Feast Day of St Maron**

PLEASE NOTE

40 Day Liturgies are considered a priority. When necessary, they will be scheduled with other previously reserved intentions.



"Amazed by Christ, the Light"

Dear Parishioners,

The Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, as described in Luke 2:22-35, is a profound moment of encounter with Christ, the light of the world. This encounter radiates **joy, amazement, and salvation**, revealing the transformative power of Jesus, the light of the world.

Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the Temple in humble obedience to the Mosaic Law, an act that appears simple yet carries extraordinary significance. In this moment, Jesus, the light of the world, enters His Temple, and the faithful who encounter Him are filled with joy and awe. Simeon, a devout and righteous man, embodies this response as he takes the child Jesus into his arms and blesses God. Simeon's words express the **amazement** of recognizing in this child the fulfillment of God's promises—the light that will bring salvation to all nations. Are we still amazed by this encounter? Are we still amazed by the power of God's forgiveness? Are we still amazed every time we receive Christ through Holy Communion?

The **joy** of this encounter is not limited to Simeon. Anna, the prophetess, also responds with praise and thanksgiving, spreading the news of the child to all who awaited the redemption of Jerusalem. Their reactions remind us that encountering Christ transforms hearts, filling them with a joy that cannot be contained. Encountering Jesus always brings joy. When we come with sad faces, we leave with a smile. When we come to church with heavy hearts full of fears, we leave with light hearts full of trust and peace.

Yet, this encounter also carries a deeper dimension, one of **salvation** through sacrifice. Simeon's prophecy points to the cost of this light. Jesus will be "a sign that will be opposed," and His mission will lead to suffering and rejection. He tells Mary: "A sword will pierce your own soul too," foreshadowing her intimate participation in her Son's redemptive suffering. This revelation invites us to reflect on the mystery of salvation: the light of Christ shines most brightly through the darkness of sacrifice and love. Don't be afraid to make sacrifices even if the world promotes luxury and self-centeredness, always remember that the true meaning is by giving more than by taking.

Dear Parishioners, In this feast, let us meditate on the words of Pope Francis: "Ask for the grace of amazement, the amazement at the wonders that God is doing in us, hidden like that of the temple, when Simeon and Anna met Jesus." we are invited to marvel at the radiant love of Christ, the light that shines in the darkness and cannot be overcome. It is a moment to embrace the joy of salvation, be amazed by God's enduring faithfulness, and carry the light of Christ into a world yearning for hope and redemption.

In Christ's love,

Fr. Neemtallah (Edgard) Oneissy

OFFICE HOURS:

M-TH 10:00 am-3:00 pm

FRI OFFICE CLOSED

SAT By Appointment

DAILY LITURGIES @ 9 am

MON & WED (Ar)

TUE & THU (Eng)

WEEKEND LITURGIES

SAT 4 pm (Eng)

SUN 8am(Ar) 9:30 am (Eng)

11 am (Eng.& Ar)

Holy days of obligation:

Vigil Liturgy @ 7:00 pm

MEET OUR PRIESTS:

Chorbishop Elie Mikhael

(305) 807-9087

Fr. Edgard -Neemtallah- Oneissy

(857)390-4838

pastor@stanthonylawrence.org

MEET OUR DEACONS:

*Nadim Daou, James T. Demers,
& David Leard*

Sub-Deacon: Antoine Nammour

CLERGY DAY OFF

Fr. Neemtallah: **Fridays**

SACRAMENTS

Baptism & Confirmation:

1 month in advance with the Pastor,

Donations: Church: \$200

Priest: Free Will

Matrimony: Arrangements should be made by couples six months prior to the wedding date

Donations: Church \$500

Priest: Free Will

Reconciliation: One hour Before Thursday & Saturday Liturgies, or by appointment

Anointing of the Sick: Please notify the Rectory if a member of your family is ill, hospitalized, or unable to come to Church and would like to receive communion at home

Please refer to our website for more Sacrament Celebrations Guidelines.



Purpose:

Form a Men of Saint Joseph (MSJ) group at Saint Anthony's church taking the earthly father of Jesus as a guide and intercessor, and create the opportunity to pray, share our experience and grow in faith together on our journey to eternal life promised to us by Jesus the crucified.

Monthly Meeting Schedule

Third Saturday of every month @ 8 am at Saint Anthony Maronite Church Hall.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
-St. Anthony Council 16204



*"In Service To One,
In Service To All"*

Next meeting:

Tuesday February 11, 2025
@ 7 pm, Church Hall

Men 18 yrs. and older are encouraged to attend.
For information email: KOFC16204@gmail.com

**Family of St Sharbel &
Our Lady of Lebanon Ladies Guild**



Thursday, February 20, 2025:

Rosary @ 6:30pm

Followed by Liturgy & Procession

Every Tuesday—Zoom Prayer @ 8pm

Zoom ID: 335616991

Passcode: 816342


Or you can join by clicking this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/335616991>

For more information email:

communications@familyofsaintsharbel.org

M-WINE



"We Serve Better Together"

Next Meeting:
Monday, February 10, 2025
7pm @ Church hall

KNIGHTS OF THE ALTAR

Next Meeting:
Saturday, February 1st, 2025,
11 am– 12:30 pm @ Church hall

*Remember to bring your handbooks to the meetings.
New applicants are always welcome!*

KNIGHTS OF MARY

Next Session:

Saturday, February 1 & 15, 2025 @ 5 - 7 pm
www.stanthonylawrence.org/events-2/

MARONITE YOUTH ORGANIZATION-MYO

Next Meeting:

Sunday, February 2, 2025 @ 6 - 7:30 pm
www.stanthonylawrence.org/myo/

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Next Sessions:

Saturday, February 8 & 22, 2025 @ 5 - 7 pm
Please visit our website for the yearly calendar
www.stanthonylawrence.org/calendar-classes-and-events/

Annual Hafli

Save the Date



Saturday, March 1st @ Church Hall



**LIGHT OF LIFE
SUMMER BIBLE
CAMP:
"ANCHORED IN HOPE"**

**JUNE
18-20TH**

Saint Anthony
Maronite Church
145 Amesbury St
Lawrence MA

Presented by the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light
MARONITESERVANTS.ORG



AMERICAN LEBANESE AWARENESS ASSOCIATION

All qualified **High School Seniors and College Undergraduates** students are invited to apply for the **ALAA Scholarships**.

All applicants are encouraged to use the electronic application. Deadline is March 1st, 2025.

Students can access this information at : americanlebaneseawarenessassociation.org

Or on ALAA Facebook page.

SAINT ANTHONY CEMETERY

Grave Purchase & Burial

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

By Phone (During Office Hours) 978-685-7233

Email rectory@stanthonylawrence.org

or Visit: stanthonylawrence.org/lots-sales/

Cemetery Guidelines

www.stanthonylawrence.org/cemetery/

Headstones & Cemetery Markers

Kindly review the information provided regarding acceptable dimensions per grave/lot on our website: stanthonylawrence.org/lots-sales/.

Please note:

Double-Depth Graves are considered "One Grave Size"

Looking for a Loved one buried at St Anthony's Cemetery?

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

DONATE A TREE- IN MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE

Enhancing the beauty of Historic Saint Anthony Maronite Catholic Cemetery.

Plant-A-Tree A— For a donation of \$400.00: memorial plaque displayed for ten years.

Plant-A-Tree B—For a donation of \$250.00: memorial plaque displayed for five years.

Your Donation is Tax-Deductible

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: Kousa Dogwood

TREE OF LIFE

BRASS ALUMINUM PLAQUES SIZES:

1.5" X 3" = \$75 / 3"X 6" = \$150 / 4"X8" = \$250

Please submit your request either by

Phone: 978.685.7233 or by E-mail:

rectory@stanthonylawrence.org

Come & See

MARONITE SERVANTS OF CHRIST THE LIGHT
~2025 JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE~

Prayer & Supper

Join the sisters for Maronite Evening Prayer (Ramsho) and Supper at our Mother of the Light Convent, 856 Tucker Rd Dartmouth from 4 to 7pm:

- Sunday February 23
- Sunday May 18

OPEN TO YOUNG ADULT WOMEN WHO ARE SINGLE (AGES 18 TO 39) AND SEEKING TO DISCERN THEIR VOCATION WITH THE MARONITE SERVANTS.



Monthly Discernment Group

If you are seeking to learn more about prayer and exploring God's call for your life and fellowship with the sisters and other women discerning their call please contact Vocation Director, Sr. Therese Maria Touma.

TO REACH OUT OR RSVP CONTACT:
SISTER THERESA MARIA, MSCL
CALL: 508-965-6945
EMAIL: SISTER@MARONITESERVANTS.ORG
WEBSITE: MARONITESERVANTS.ORG




MARONITE HISTORY

SAVE THE DATES!

Online Workshops at 8pm:

Feb. 6- St. Maron & the Maronite Liturgy
(Fr. Dominique Hanna)

Feb. 13- Maronite Music & Melodies
(Fr. Neemtallah Oneissy)

Feb. 20 - Maronites & the Holy See
(Chorbishop John Faris)


VIA ZOOM

Hosted by the Maronite Servants of Christ the Light in conjunction with the St. Sharbel Spiritual Life Center.

To register and/or to learn more visit:
maroniteservants.org
saintsharbelcenter.org



SAINT SHARBEL SPIRITUAL LIFE CENTER PRESENTS




Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn

Flourish

WOMEN'S RETREAT


Friday & Saturday
April 25 & 26, 2025
Saint Sharbel Spiritual Life Center, Pittsburgh, PA

"Who is Mary? Facets of the Feminine Genius"



Join us for the First Annual Flourish Women's Retreat hosted by the Saint Sharbel Spiritual Life Center! Our keynote speaker this year, Johnette Benkovic Williams (host of "Women of Grace" on EWTN), will unpack for us our unique role as chosen women, who we are as chosen women of the Most High God, and teach us how to employ the gifts of our femininity in the way Our Blessed Mother Mary modeled for us.

For more information, the detailed retreat schedule and to register, scan the QR code or go to www.SaintSharbelCenter.org under "Programs" and then "Retreats/Workshops".



The cost for the retreat is \$135.

Accommodations are not included. Contact Holiday Inn Express & Suites Pittsburgh West-Greentree at 412-922-7070 to reserve one of the rooms blocked off for the retreat. Deadline to reserve a room is March 26, 2025.



FAITH IGNITED - HOPE RENEWED
60 YEARS ROOTED IN MARONITE TRADITION



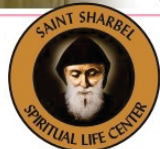



SAVE THE DATE

July 3-6, 2025

Hosted by Saint Sharbel Church
Raleigh - NC
Hilton Hotel, Raleigh North Hills

  NAMConvention



WEEKLY CONTRIBUTIONS

01/26/2025

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| Candles | \$59.00 |
| Donation | \$267.00 |
| Sunday Collection | \$2,826.10 |
| Sunday Second Collection | \$721.00 |
| Utilities, Fuel, & Electricity | \$220.00 |

Total \$ 4,093.10

Thank you for your generous support to our parish. Please remember to remit your Fuel/Utilities Envelope. Your contribution helps us keep the Heat on in the Winter and the AC on in the Summer. Thank you!

SANCTUARY LAMPS



In Honor of Kozhaya & Lola Abou-Khalil & their children



In Honor of our children & their families, By Kozhaya & Lola Abou-Khalil

Book your Sanctuary lamp Online:

www.stanthonylawrence.org/sanctuary-lamp/

LECTORS SCHEDULE

Saturday, February 1 - 4 pm - Lisa Abdallah

Sunday, February 2 -

- 8:00 am - Huguette Sfeir
- 9:30 am - Theresea Bou Sanayeh
- 11:00 am - (Eng) Mansour Chaya
(Ar) Mouna Hbaiter
- 5:00 pm - Anthony Merheb
Rebecca Merheb

LECTORS SCHEDULE

Saturday, February 8- 4 pm - Susan Kalil

Sunday, February 9 -

- 8:00 am - Roula Nassar
- 9:30 am - Brady Barry
- 11:00 am - (Eng) Ramona Yammine
(Ar) Sassine Merheb

BIRTHDAY WISHES

February 1 : Chloe Abou-Ezzi, Joseph Azzi, Carlos Daher, Ginine Flanagan, Alessandra Georges, Marc Karam, Mary Pica, Clarice Ramy

February 2 : Celine Albert, Alfred Ata, Wissam Merheb, Antonio Saad, Nouhad Sadek

February 3: Elias Azzi, Joelle Cunha, Jim Hajj

February 5: Arthur Khoury, Joseph Maroun, Jennifer Plouffe

February 6: Pauline Bistany, Robert Brousseau, Clara El-Achi, Luca Hutton, Michael Jbeily, Yasmina Nassar

February 7: Marie-Therese Assaf, Mitri Nader, Lucas Zouein

ANNIVERSARY WISHES

February 4: Antoun & Marie Haddad
Zakhia & Sanaa Kosseifi

February 7: Gregory & Karen Daher

MASS INTENTIONS

Liturgies are offered for many reasons:

- ◆ For the souls in purgatory
- ◆ In remembrance of our loved ones who are deceased
- ◆ In honor of someone's birthday
- ◆ Special anniversary, and more.

Liturgy stipend or offering given, signifies the sacrificial nature of giving something of yourself to associate more intimately with Christ who offers himself in the Eucharist.

Please contact the Parish Office to book your mass intentions or for more inquiries.

Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple

Book of Genesis 29: 1-14

After Jacob resumed his journey, he came to the land of the Kedemites. Looking about, he saw a well in the open country, with three flocks of sheep huddled near it, for flocks were watered from that well. A large stone covered the mouth of the well. When all the shepherds were assembled there they would roll the stone away from the mouth of the well and water the sheep. Then they would put the stone back again in its place over the mouth of the well. Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where are you from?" "We are from Haran," they replied. Then he asked them, "Do you know Laban, son of Nahor?" "We do," they answered. He inquired further, "Is he well?" "He is," they answered; "and here comes his daughter Rachel with the sheep." Then he said: "There is still much daylight left; it is hardly the time to bring the animals home. Water the sheep, and then continue pasturing them." They replied, "We cannot until all the shepherds are here to roll the stone away from the mouth of the well; then can we water the flocks." While he was still talking with them, Rachel arrived with her father's sheep, for she was the one who tended them. As soon as Jacob saw Rachel, the daughter of his mother's brother Laban, and the sheep of Laban, he went up, rolled the stone away from the mouth of the well, and watered Laban's sheep. Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept aloud. Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative, Rebekah's son. So she ran to tell her father. When Laban heard the news about Jacob, his sister's son, he ran to meet him. After embracing and kissing him, he brought him to his house. Jacob then repeated to Laban all these things, and Laban said to him, "You are indeed my bone and my flesh."

Letter to the Romans 9: 30-33. 10:1-4

What then are we to say? Gentiles, who did not strive for righteousness, have attained it, that is, righteousness through faith; but Israel, who did strive for the righteousness that is based on the law, did not succeed in fulfilling that law. Why not? Because they did not strive for it on the basis of faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling-stone, as it is written, 'See, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.' Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. I can testify that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 2: 22 - 35

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.' Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, 'Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.' And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

عيد دخول الرب يسوع إلى الهيكل

سفر التكوين 1: 29-14

ثُمَّ قَامَ يَعْقُوبُ وَمَضَى إِلَى أَرْضِ بَنِي الْمَشْرِقِ. وَنَظَرَ فَإِذَا بَيْتٌ فِي الْحَقْلِ، وَإِذَا ثَلَاثَةُ قُطْعَانٍ مِنَ الْغَنَمِ رَابِضَةٌ عِنْدَهَا، لِأَنَّهُمْ مِنْ تِلْكَ الْبَيْتِ كَانُوا يَسْتَفُونَ الْقُطْعَانَ، وَالْحَجَرُ الَّذِي عَلَى فَمِ الْبَيْتِ كَانَ ضَخْمًا. وَكَانَ، إِذَا جُمِعَتِ الْقُطْعَانَ، يُدَحْرَجُ عَنْ فَمِ الْبَيْتِ، فَتَسْقَى الْغَنَمُ، ثُمَّ يَرُدُّ الْحَجَرُ عَلَى فَمِ الْبَيْتِ إِلَى مَوْضِعِهِ. فَقَالَ يَعْقُوبُ لِلرُّعَاةِ: «مَنْ أَيْنَ أَنْتُمْ أَيُّهَا الْإِخْوَانُ؟» «قَالُوا:» «مِنْ حَارَانَ.» «فَقَالَ لَهُمْ:» «أَتَعْرِفُونَ لَابَانَ بَنَ نَاحُورٍ؟» «فَقَالُوا:» «نَعْرِفُهُ.» «فَقَالَ لَهُمْ:» «أَسَالِمُ هُوَ؟» «قَالُوا:» «هُوَ سَالِمٌ، وَهَذِهِ رَاحِيلُ ابْنَتُهُ آتِيَةٌ مَعَ الْغَنَمِ.» «فَقَالَ لَهُمْ:» «هُوَذَا النَّهَارُ طَوِيلٌ بَعْدُ، وَلَيْسَ الْآنَ وَقْتُ جَمْعِ الْمَوَاشِي، فَاسْتَقُوا الْغَنَمَ وَأَمْضُوا بِهَا فَأَرْعُوهَا.» «قَالُوا:» «لَا نَقْدِرُ، حَتَّى نُجْمَعَ الْقُطْعَانُ كُلُّهَا وَيُدْحَرَجَ الْحَجَرُ عَنْ فَمِ الْبَيْتِ فَتَسْقَى الْغَنَمُ.» «وَبَيْنَمَا هُوَ يُخَاطِبُهُمْ، إِذْ أَقْبَلَتْ رَاحِيلُ مَعَ غَنَمِ أَبِيهَا، لِأَنَّهَا كَانَتْ رَاعِيَةً. فَلَمَّا رَأَى يَعْقُوبُ رَاحِيلَ، بِنْتَ لَابَانَ أَخِي أُمِّهِ، وَغَنَمَ لَابَانَ أَخِي أُمِّهِ، تَقَدَّمَ وَدَحْرَجَ الْحَجَرَ عَنْ فَمِ الْبَيْتِ وَسَقَى غَنَمَ لَابَانَ أَخِي أُمِّهِ. وَقَبَّلَ يَعْقُوبُ رَاحِيلَ وَرَفَعَ صَوْتَهُ وَبَكَى. وَأَخْبَرَ يَعْقُوبُ رَاحِيلَ أَنَّهُ ابْنُ أُخْتِ أَبِيهَا وَأَبْنُ رَفْقَةٍ، فَرَكَضَتْ وَأَخْبَرَتْ أَبَاهَا. فَلَمَّا سَمِعَ لَابَانُ خَبَرَ يَعْقُوبَ ابْنِ أُخْتِهِ، رَكَضَ إِلَى لِقَائِهِ وَعَانَقَهُ وَقَبَّلَهُ وَأَتَى بِهِ إِلَى مَنْزِلِهِ. وَأَخْبَرَ يَعْقُوبُ لَابَانَ بِكُلِّ مَا جَرَى. فَقَالَ لَهُ لَابَانُ:» «أَنْتَ عَظْمِي وَلَحْمِي حَقًّا»، وَأَقَامَ يَعْقُوبُ عِنْدَهُ شَهْرًا.

رسالة القديس بولس إلى أهل رومة 9: 30-33 . 1: 10-4

يَا إِخْوَتِي، مَاذَا نَقُولُ؟ إِنَّ الْأُمَّمَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَسْعُوا إِلَى الْبِرِّ قَدْ أَدْرَكُوا الْبِرَّ، أَيُّ الْبِرِّ الَّذِي هُوَ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ. أَمَّا إِسْرَائِيلُ الَّذِي سَعَى إِلَى شَرِيعَةِ الْبِرِّ، فَلَمْ يَبْلُغْ شَرِيعَةَ الْبِرِّ. لِمَذَا؟ لِأَنَّهُ لَمْ يَسْعَ إِلَى الْبِرِّ بِالْإِيمَانِ بَلْ بِالْأَعْمَالِ. فَعَثَرُوا بِحَجَرِ الْعَثْرَةِ، كَمَا هُوَ مَكْتُوبٌ: «هَا إِنِّي أَضَعُ فِي صِهْيُونِ حَجَرَ عَثْرَةٍ، وَصَخْرَةَ تَسْكٍ، فَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ لَا يُخْزَى.» «أَيُّهَا الْإِخْوَةَ، إِنَّ بُغْيَةَ قَلْبِي وَتَضَرُّعِي إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ أَجْلِ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لِيَخْلُصُوا. فَأَنَا أَشْهَدُ لَهُمْ أَنَّ فِيهِمْ غَيْرَةً لِلَّهِ، وَلَكِنْ بِدُونِ مَعْرِفَةٍ صَاحِبَةٍ. فَقَدْ جَهِلُوا بِرَّ اللَّهِ، وَحَاوَلُوا أَنْ يُثْبِتُوا بِرَّ أَنْفُسِهِمْ، فَلَمْ يَخْضَعُوا لِبِرِّ اللَّهِ؛ لِأَنَّ غَايَةَ الشَّرِيعَةِ إِنَّمَا هِيَ الْمَسِيحُ، لِكَيْ يَتَبَرَّرَ بِهِ كُلُّ مُؤْمِنٍ.

إنجيل القديس لوقا 22: 35

وَلَمَّا تَمَّتْ أَيَّامُ تَطْهِيرِ يُوسُفَ وَمَرْيَمَ بِحَسَبِ تَوْرَةِ مُوسَى، صَعَدَا بِهِ إِلَى أُورَشَلِيمَ لِيُقَدِّمَاهُ لِلرَّبِّ، كَمَا هُوَ مَكْتُوبٌ فِي شَرِيعَةِ الرَّبِّ: «كُلُّ ذَكَرٍ فَاتِحٍ رِجْمٍ يُدْعَى مُقَدَّسًا لِلرَّبِّ»، وَلَكِي يُقَدِّمًا ذَبِيحَةً، كَمَا وَرَدَ فِي شَرِيعَةِ الرَّبِّ: «زَوْجِي يَمَامَ، أَوْ فَرَخِي حَمَامَ.» «وَكَانَ فِي أُورَشَلِيمَ رَجُلٌ أَسْمُهُ سِمْعَانَ. وَكَانَ هَذَا الرَّجُلُ بَارًّا تَقِيًّا، يَنْتَظِرُ عَزَاءَ إِسْرَائِيلَ، وَالرُّوحُ الْقُدُّسُ كَانَ عَلَيْهِ. وَكَانَ الرُّوحُ الْقُدُّسُ قَدْ أَوْحَى إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَنْ يَرَى الْمَوْتَ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرَى مَسِيحَ الرَّبِّ. فَجَاءَ بِدَافِعٍ مِنَ الرُّوحِ إِلَى الْهَيْكَلِ. وَعِنْدَمَا دَخَلَ بِالصَّبِيِّ يَسُوعَ أَبَوَاهُ، لِيَقُومَا بِمَا تَفَرَّضُهُ التَّوْرَةُ فِي شَأْنِهِ، حَمَلَهُ سِمْعَانُ عَلَى ذِرَاعَيْهِ، وَبَارَكَ اللَّهَ وَقَالَ:» «الآن تَطْلُقُ عَبْدَكَ بِسَلَامٍ، أَيُّهَا السَّيِّدُ، بِحَسَبِ قَوْلِكَ، لِأَنَّ عَيْنِي قَدْ أَبْصَرْتُ خَلَاصَكَ، الَّذِي أَعَدَدْتَهُ أَمَامَ الشُّعُوبِ كُلِّهَا، نُورًا يَنْجَلِي لِلْأُمَّمِ، وَمَجْدًا لِشَعْبِكَ إِسْرَائِيلَ!». «وَكَانَ أَبُوهُ وَأُمُّهُ يَتَعَجَّبَانِ مِمَّا يُقَالُ فِيهِ. وَبَارَكَهُمَا سِمْعَانُ، وَقَالَ لِمَرْيَمَ أُمِّهِ:» «هَا إِنَّ هَذَا الطِّفْلَ قَدْ جَعَلَ لِسُقُوطِ وَنُهوضِ كَثِيرِينَ فِي إِسْرَائِيلَ، وَآيَةً لِلْخِصَامِ. وَأَنْتِ أَيْضًا، سَيَجُوزُ فِي نَفْسِكَ سَيْفٌ، فَتَنْجَلِي خَفَايَا قُلُوبِ كَثِيرَةٍ.»

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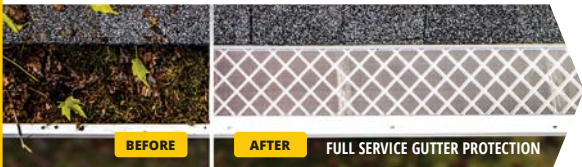
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