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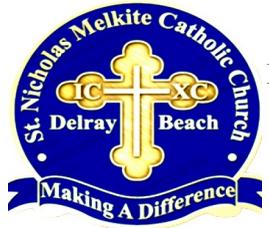
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Eli Khouri & Carmen Hajj
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www.stnicholasmelkite.org
Confessions: By Appointment

Sunday, February 9, 2020

Troparion of the : When You descended to death, O immortal Life, You destroyed Hades by the splendor of Your divinity. And when You raised the dead from below the earth, all the heavenly powers cried out to you: "O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!"

Kondakion of the prodigal Son: When in my wretchedness I ran away from your fatherly love, I squandered in wickedness the riches You had given me. And so now, like the Prodigal Son, I cry out to You: "I have sinned in your sight, O Merciful Father: receive me now that I repent and make me as one of your hired servants."

Message From Father Gabriel...

It Is A Matter of The Heart ©

Over the years, the interpretation of the *Parable of the Prodigal Son* (Luke 15:11-32) has always been centered around the youngest son, but in reality, the parable is really a story of two sons, "A certain man had 2 sons...;" both behaved in heart-less ways, until we look at the desires of both sons, we cannot understand the meaning of jealousy, forgiveness, humbleness and openness of the heart.

The elder brother represents the Pharisees, religious, always following the rules, righteous attitude, appearing pleasing only in word but not in action. While the younger son represents the Tax Collectors, irreligious, ungodly sinners. The younger son took his portion of the estate, left and "squandered his wealth in wild living." He was viewed as "lost" by his family.

In the Rabbinic traditions, it is the eldest brother's responsibility to go after his younger brother and bring him home to the family. But he did nothing of the sort. How many of us have longed for home and to be looked for by our family, yet have only found it an elusive dream!

The main point of the parable is that both sons were "lost", both self-serving of their selfish desires and needs, yet both sons were loved and welcomed by their father, *as we are loved and welcomed by God*. The younger son, reached bottom and decided to go home, not expecting to be treated like royalty, but "coming back" with his brokenness, saying that he was not worthy to be treated as hired workers. Upon his return, he was welcomed lovingly by his father who accepted his faults and celebrated his being "found." The elder brother was resentful of the extravagant treatment for the son who left, looking to his own ways of living as superior, being angry of the kindness bestowed upon the found son.

The father invited the "lost" son in and held a gracious party for him, and also invited in the elder brother saying "...everything I have is yours," understanding his anger and frustration, but pleading with him to open his heart in love. *God, represented by the father, desires to establish a relationship with us despite our flaws and failures.* How much our brokenness has alienated us from our homes and we have turned our backs vowing to stay away. **God wants us to "Come Back," to "Be Back!"**

When we harden the heart, we become jealous and unforgiving, not wanting to be filled with joy and see the good in those around us. When we humble the heart, we become full of love and peace to those around us. The choice before us seems to be either to turn from God and pursue the desires of our hearts, like the younger son; repress desires and do our moral duty, like the elder son; or *humble our hardened heart, and be accepted in loving kindness.*

We can indulge our own desires or can repress our own desires in an attempt to earn God's favor, or we can choose to rest in God's extravagant love! By only seeing the defects of others, your heart will become tired and hard.

By seeing only what is good in others, your heart will be full of light.

Special Offerings

BLESSINGS & WELLBEING of:

- . *Hoda Rayes & Family*
- . *Marty & Kim Ged and Family*
- . *Maurice Rahal, Camille Abdy, Albert Ghanoum, Linda Russo, George Ged, Bob Shaheen, Joe & Jeanine Achaia, Gaby Zakkour, Emil Kasses, Dr. Bishara Faris, Marilyn Barbary, Anthony Antaki, Samira Ajlouny*
- . *All who carry the name Maroun on the Feast Day of Mar Maroun*

BIRTHDAY: Dr. Nick Fakhoury & Donna DeMato

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY: Bob & Patricia Shaheen

Liturgy Memorials

- . *Rafik Rayes*, by his wife Hoda Rayes & family
- . *Myleen Ged*, by Marty & Kim Ged and family
- . *Victoria Lau* (B-Day Remembrance), by her children
- . *Bill Toole*
- . *Eliza Bahi*
- . *Simone Debs*, by the Community
- . *Louis Rahal*
- . *Lorraine & James Oussani, Sr.*

RELIGIOUS FORMATION - Regular class

EPISTLE 1 Cor 6:12-20 Sunday of the Prodigal Son

PROKIMENON: Psalm 32:22,1-*May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us, for we have hoped in you.*

Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting.

Brethren, all things are lawful for me, but not all things are fitting. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of anyone. Food is for the belly, and the belly for food, but God will destroy both the one and the other. Now, the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. For God has raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of a prostitute? By no means! Or do you not know that one who cleaves to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For the two, it is said, shall be one flesh (Gn.2 : 24). But he who cleaves to the Lord is one spirit with him. Flee immorality. Every sin a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God and that you are not your own? For you have been bought at a great price. Glorify God therefore in your body and in your soul which both are God's.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke 15: 11-32 (The Parable of the Prodigal Son)

The Lord told this parable: "A man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me. And he divided his possessions between them. And not many days later, the younger son gathered up all his wealth and traveled to a far country; and there he squandered his fortune in loose living. And after he had spent all, there came a severe famine over that country, and he began to suffer from it. And he went and joined one of the local landowners, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. And he longed to fill himself with the pods the pigs were eating, but no one offered to give them to him. But when he had come to his senses, he said, 'How many hired men in my father's house have bread in abundance, while I am perishing with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'" And he got up and went to his father. But while he was yet a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion and ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, I am no longer worthy to be called your son. But the Father said to his servants, Fetch quickly the best robe and put it on him, and give him a ring for his finger and sandals for his feet; and bring out the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; because this my son was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to make merry. Now his elder son was in the field; and as he came close to the house, he heard music and dancing. And calling one of the servants he asked what this meant. And he said to him, Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has got him back safe. But he was angered and would not go in. His father, therefore, came out and began to beg him. But he answered and said to his father, Look, these many years I have been serving you, and have never disobeyed any of your orders; and yet, you have never given me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. But when this son of yours comes, who has devoured your wealth with prostitutes; you have killed for him the fattened calf! But he said to him, Son you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours; but we were bound to make merry and rejoice, for this your brother was dead, and has come to life; he was lost and is found."

SECOND COLLECTION

St. Nicholas' Parish Council has carefully studied the church's ongoing expenses. Many volunteers help with much work on an ongoing basis; *To share this collective stewardship, we find it necessary to have a: 2nd collection on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of each month to go toward the BUILDING FUND MORTGAGE Commitment*

Monthly 2nd Collections: February 2nd & 16th of the month
If you wish to make arrangement to pay by Credit Card, please contact Samir Risk @ 954.561.5138

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Friday, Feb. 28:** 12th Annual Golf T
- Friday, March 6:** 2nd Friday of Lent
- Saturday, March 14th:** Mediterranean Food Festival
- Sunday, April 5:** Palm Sun. Parish Showcase Bake Sale
- Holy Week & Easter, April 8, 9, 10, 11, 12**
- Saturday, April 25 or May 2:** Spring Hafleh

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, (1 Peter 5:6)

SUPER BOWL POOL WINNERS

5th Annual Super Bowl Pool Winners are:

1st Quarter: Dr. Sami Dagher /\$75

2nd Quarter: Matthew Rahal /\$75

3rd Quarter: Matthew Rahal / \$75

4th Quarter: Laurice Lutfey / \$225

Event Net Proceeds / \$415

to Benefit the Church Building Fund.

Congrats to the Winners!

It was a fun, Men's Club parishioners awareness event for our ongoing Building Fund cooperation.

Thank You to All who Supported!!

Your support is always greatly appreciated!

Thank You to the Men's Club

for doing an Awesome Job!!!

St. Nicholas 1st Annual Mediterranean Food Festival
Saturday, March 14, 2020
11:30 am - 8:30 pm

Excitement is in the air....! This Festival will put us on the map, and will help show the beauty of our heritage, culture and faith. Thank you for being always present for your church and community.

The Food Festival presents an opportunity to showcase our community's delicious and savory food and divine desserts... This is an event open to the public. Everyone is invited to participate in helping out in various capacities. We ask each and every one to give us a hand to bring this festival to the success we are aiming and hoping for. We will have a work schedule and a plan of action very soon. Kindly let us know how you can help. Please stop by the Festival Project table to sign-up. More details to follow soon...

CHURCH FINANCIAL CORNER

As we continue to grow as a prayerful and supportive community thanks to your presence and efforts, we want to share with you our monthly church expenses.

Financial Summary for the month of January 2020 - Total Income (Gen. Collection & Bldg Fund) \$26,492*

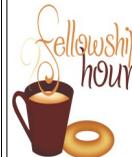
Expenses: Mortgage Payment: \$12,500 Operating Expenses: \$5,418

Total Expenses: \$17,918 Surplus: \$8,574

*Deposits from the Golf Tournament Registrations boosted this month Building Fund income.

For any questions, please contact Samir Risk: Risksamf@gmail.com

COFFEE-HOUR HOSTING



Today's Coffee-Hour is hosted by **Hoda Rayes and family** on the occasion of the

40-Day memorial service of her beloved departed husband † **Rafik**

May his memory be eternal!

Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

If you wish to host the Sunday Coffee-Hour, Kindly sign up with Laila: 561.346.8831

Parish Council Meeting - Wed. Feb. 12 at 7:00 pm

12th Annual Golf Tournament



We welcome early registration and sponsorship inquiries for our 12th Annual Golf Tournament On Feb. 28, 2020 as we return to the celebrated Boca Country Club of the Waldorf Astoria Resorts.

The event includes a delightful Cocktail Reception and Dinner Party which are open to non-golfers as well! **BUT at this time we can only wait list the Dinner Only Reservations.**

We greatly appreciate Ged Lawyers, LLC and the Ged Family for being our Corporate Title Sponsor since our church 1st tournament!

SILENT AUCTION & RAFFLE

We are collecting items & Certificates for the Silent Auction and the Raffle...

We need your help to solicit these valuable items.

(Donation Form & Solicitation Letter are available).

We ask you to try to reach out to businesses you patronize or where you know somebody who can help you solicit (Restaurants Dining Certificates, Salons, Spa, Art Galleries, Hotels getaway, Travel agencies, Wine & Spirits, Jewelry & Costume Jewelry, Memorabilia of any kind, Sports, Movie or Theater Tickets, Artwork ...)

Feel free to use your imagination, if you wish to put a basket together for the Raffle or the Silent Auction.

Please let us know how you can help, we are counting on you! We welcome your input, suggestions and ideas!!!

We need everything brought in N Later than Sunday, February 3rd. Email us - golf@stnicholasmelkite.org

Your help is greatly appreciated!

LITURGY OFFERING

For Liturgy Offering, Mass Scheduling & Special Intentions, kindly submit request 2 weeks in advance with your stole offering in an envelope and give it to Carmen.

Memorial Mass Cards are available.

Email: Carmen@stnicholasmelkite.org

BULLETIN ADS RENEWAL

Courtesy reminder - Kindly renew your bulletin ads and pay your annual renewal dues to:

Dr. Nick Fakhoury or Carmen. We do accept Credit Cards. **Thank you for your continuous support!**