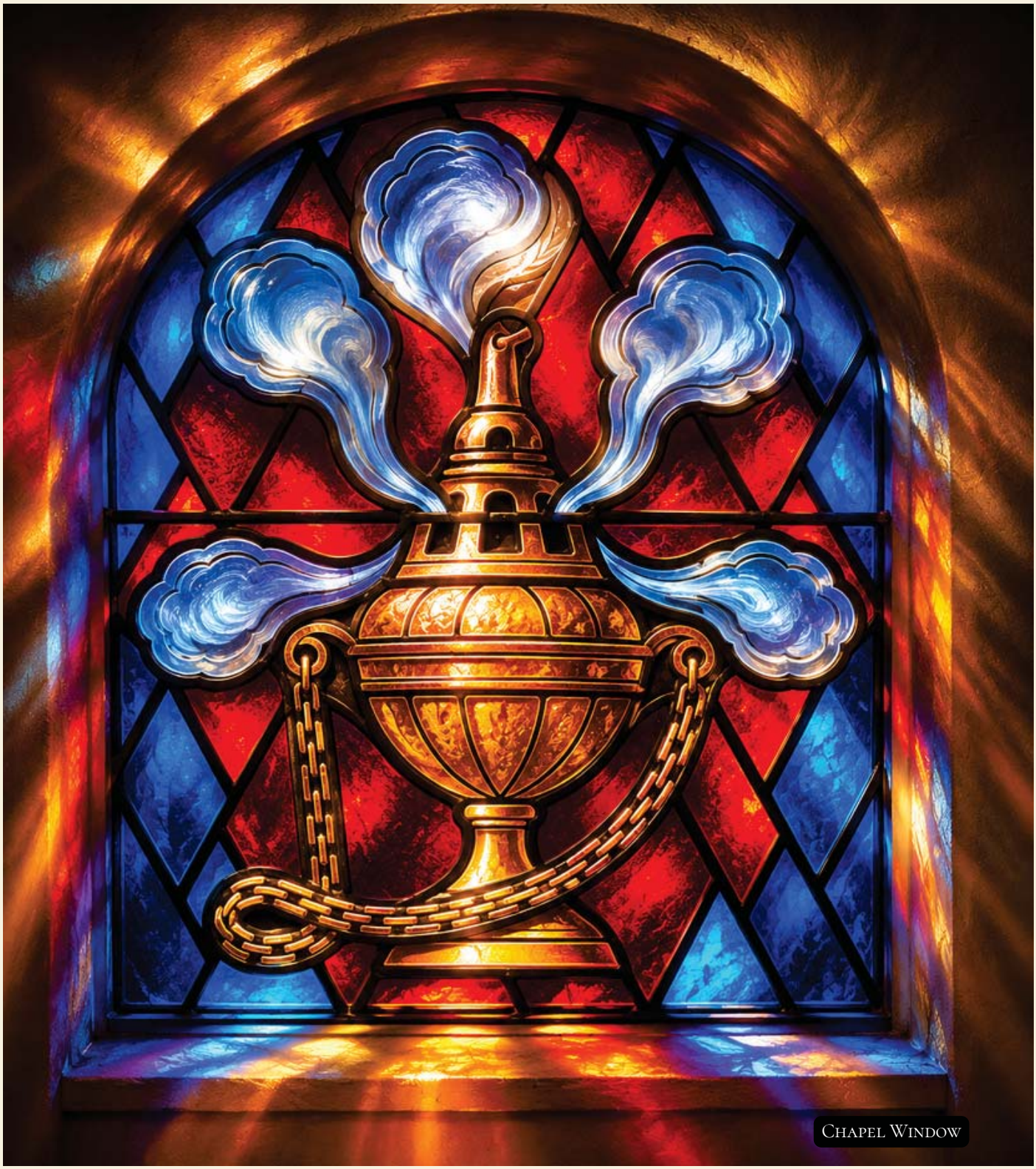
SAINT ANTHONY MARONITE CHURCH
SEASON OF THE GLORIOUS BIRTH OF OUR LORD

Announcement to Zechariah

أحد بشارة زكريّا



Chapel Window

PARISH OFFICE: 978-685-7233 FAX: 978-688-4475 Website: stanthonylawrence.org
E-mail: rectory@stanthonylawrence.org Address: 145 Amesbury Street, Lawrence, MA 01841

LITURGIES INTENTIONS

SEASON OF THE GLORIOUS BIRTH OF OUR LORD
Announcement to Zechariah

Saturday, November 14

St. Philip
Heb 3:1-6/Mk 1:21-28

4:00 pm +Richard Mallen, *By Judith McManamon*

Sunday, November 15

Sts. Gurias, Samonas, and Habib the Deacon

8:00 am +Angele Atallah, *By her daughter, Huguette Sfeir*

9:30 am +Evon Danus, *By the Rembis Family*

11:00 am +Jean El Helou, *By his son, Tony, daughter, Lola, their spouses & their families*

Announcement to the Virgin Mary

Saturday, November 21

Presentation of the Virgin Mary in the Temple
Rom 3:21-31/Jn 8:56-59

4:00 pm +Joanne Abdulla, *By Joanne Van Billiard & family*

Sunday, November 22

Sts. Joachim and Anne, Parents of Our Lady, the Virgin Mary

8:00 am Private Intention

9:30 am Team Fantastically Fantastic Gratitude Liturgy

11:00 am +Maroun Mouawad, *By his wife, Habouba, & children: Simon, Michael & Renee*



SANCTUARY LAMPS

In Memory of Robert J. & Evon Danus, & Maria Moujaes, By the Rembis Family

Book your Sanctuary lamp Online:
www.stanthonylawrence.org/sanctuary-lamp/

PLEASE NOTE

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

Daily Liturgies

Monday, November 16

St. Matthew the Evangelist
Rom 4:1-12/Jn 8:31-37

9:00 am +Abouna Samir Mikhael Daou, *By Deacon & Mrs. Nadim Daou & Family*

Tuesday, November 17

St. Gregory the Wonderworker
Rom 2:1-8/Jn 8:38-40

9:00 am +Joanne Abdulla, *By Joanne Van Billiard & family*

Wednesday, November 18

St. Romanos/St. Rose Philippine Duchene
Rom 2:9-16/Jn 8:41-45

9:00 am +David Penkus, *By Dr. & Mrs. George Abou-Ezzi*

Thursday, November 19

Pope St. Pontian (+235)
Rom 2:17-29/Jn 8:46-50

9:00 am +Larry & Dora M. Pereira, *By Dora Pereira*

9:30 am - 12 noon **Eucharistic Adoration**

Friday, November 20

St. Gregory of the Decapolis
Rom 3:1-12/Jn 8:51-55

NO LITURGY/OFFICE CLOSED

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.



Before Christmas, Learn to Be Silent and Listen

Dear Parishioners,

Our journey toward Christmas begins with a surprising event. Before we hear the angel announcing Jesus' birth to Mary, we meet Zechariah, a priest who has spent his life speaking to God. Yet, when God finally speaks to him through the angel Gabriel, Zechariah struggles to believe. He asks for proof and leaves the sanctuary unable to speak.

What a remarkable beginning to our preparation for Christmas: silence! God is about to enter human history, and the first lesson is not to speak more, but to listen more.

We live in a world that is afraid of silence. From the moment we wake up, we are surrounded by conversations, notifications, television, opinions, and endless demands. Even our prayer can become a long list of things we ask God to do. We speak so much that we sometimes forget that prayer is also the courage to remain quiet before Him.

Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta beautifully reminds us:

"God is the friend of silence. The fruit of silence is prayer. The fruit of prayer is faith."

What a profound lesson! Silence is not the absence of something; it is the presence of Someone. It is not emptiness but an opportunity to encounter God.

Zechariah's silence began as a consequence of his unbelief, but it also became an opportunity to wait for God's promise to unfold. He could no longer explain, argue, or control what was happening. He had to watch, trust, and discover that God's plans do not depend on our ability to understand everything.

Dear friends, perhaps the most important preparation we can make for Christmas this year is not something we buy, decorate, or organize. It is to create a little silence in our hearts.

Before answering someone in anger, be silent and listen. Before judging a family member, be silent and listen. Before making an important decision, be silent and listen. And before asking God for something, be silent long enough to hear what He may be asking of you.

I invite every family in our parish to practice five minutes of silence each day during this season. Put aside the phone, turn off the noise, open the Gospel, and simply sit in God's presence.

Christmas celebrates the Word made flesh. But how can we welcome the Word if our hearts never become quiet enough to receive Him?

May this season teach us to speak with greater love because we have first learned to listen.

In Christ's love,
Fr. Neemtallah (Edgard) Oneissy

OFFICE HOURS:
M to TH 10AM-3PM
FRI OFFICE CLOSED
SAT By Appointment only

DAILY LITURGIES @ 9am
MON & WED (Ar)
TUE & THU (Eng)

WEEKEND LITURGIES
SAT 4pm (Eng)
SUN 8am (Ar) 9:30am (Eng)
11am (Eng & Ar)

HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION:
Vigil Liturgy @ 7pm

MEET OUR PRIESTS:
Fr. Edgard (Neemtallah) Oneissy
pastor@stanthonylawrence.org

Fr. Georges Antaby
pv@stanthonylawrence.org

MEET OUR DEACONS:
Nadim Daou, James T. Demers, David Leard
Sub-Deacons: Antoine Nammour & George Merheb

MEET OUR OFFICE STAFF:
Marie Azzi
Executive Assistant
rectory@stanthonylawrence.org

Christine Ryan
Administrative Assistant
bulletin@stanthonylawrence.org

CLERGY DAY OFF
Fridays

SACRAMENTS
Baptism & Confirmation:
1 month in advance with the Pastor
Donations: *Church $200*
Priest - Free Will

Matrimony:
Arrangements should be made by couple at least 6 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 qould like to receive communion at home
Please refer to our website for more Sacrament Celebrations Guidelines

OBSERVANCES

Thursday, November 26 - Thanksgiving Day
NO LITURGY/OFFICE CLOSED

BIRTHDAY WISHES

November 14: Anthony Chamoun, Margaret Ead, Addyson Plouffe, David Veilleux
November 15: Leila Ata, Mila Azzi, Melhem Azzi, Katy Bailin, Laure El Feghali, Katy Kalil, Eden Sfeir
November 16: Logan Gabriel, Leslie Hassan
November 17: Natasha Hashem, Pascal Zaarour
November 18: Chaouki Bouchrouche, Amale Chantiri, Andrew Dabrowski, Fadi Francis
November 19: Rana Abi-Rached, Ana Bradley, Ayla Jean, Nadine Sader, Wayne Swanson
November 20: Pierre Abdilmasih, Marie Akiki, Fredy Corey, Roy Rached, Sharbel Saab, Michelle Sfeir

ANNIVERSARY WISHES

November 14: Samer & Diana Geha
November 15: Bradford & Paula Brooks
November 19: Mounir & Antoinette Jermany
November 20: James & Lisa Abdallah, Joseph & Maria Azzi, Kenneth & Maureen Daher

CONGRATULATIONS!

Baptized & Confirmed

Steven Thomas Touma II
& Joseph Louis Touma III
children of
Joseph & Patrice (Casian) Touma

Amir Francisco Morales
son of
Francisco & Christine (Korbani) Morales

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."
~Mark 16:16

WEEKLY CONTRIBUTIONS
11/08/2026

Candles	$102.00
Sunday Collection	$3,719.00
2nd Collection	$646.00
Fuel	$135.00
Donations	$5,425.00
	$ 10,027.00

Please remember to remit your Fuel/Utilities Envelope. Your contribution helps us keep the heat on in the Winter, and the air conditioning in the Summer.



St. Anthony

Knights of Columbus Men's Group
Thanksgiving Food Drive

Please help us assist the Maronite Monks at Petersham and consider donating the following:

- Rolled oats
- Healthy breakfast cereal
- Quinoa
- Brown rice
- Pasta sauce
- Canned diced tomatos
- Tomato paste
- Canned vegetables
- Canned tuna and sardines (in water)
- Canned chickpeas
- Raisins
- Prunes
- Whole wheat bread flour
- Instant yeast
- Condiments
- Stevia packets
- Coffee Mate powder creamer
- Honey
- Lentils
- Ground coffee
- Instant coffee

Please drop off food items in the church lobby by November 22, 2026

Thank you for your generosity & continued support

M-WINE

UPCOMING SESSION

Monday, November 16
7 - 8:30pm

Join us for an inspiring reflection on "Acceptance" through the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the personal testimony of a special guest.

Discover how faith, trust in God, and acceptance of His will can guide us through life's challenges.

Come be inspired by a powerful story of faith, courage, and complete trust in God's plan.

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

UPCOMING SESSION

Thursday, November 19
Rosary @ 6:30pm followed by the Liturgy & procession

Every Tuesday - Zoom Prayer @ 8:00pm
Zoom ID: 335616991
Passcode: 816342

For more information email:
communications@familyofsaintsharbel.org



UPCOMING SESSIONS

RETURNING STUDENTS
Friday, November 20
6:30-8pm

NEW STUDENTS
Saturday, November 21
3:30pm - 5pm

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

UPCOMING SESSION

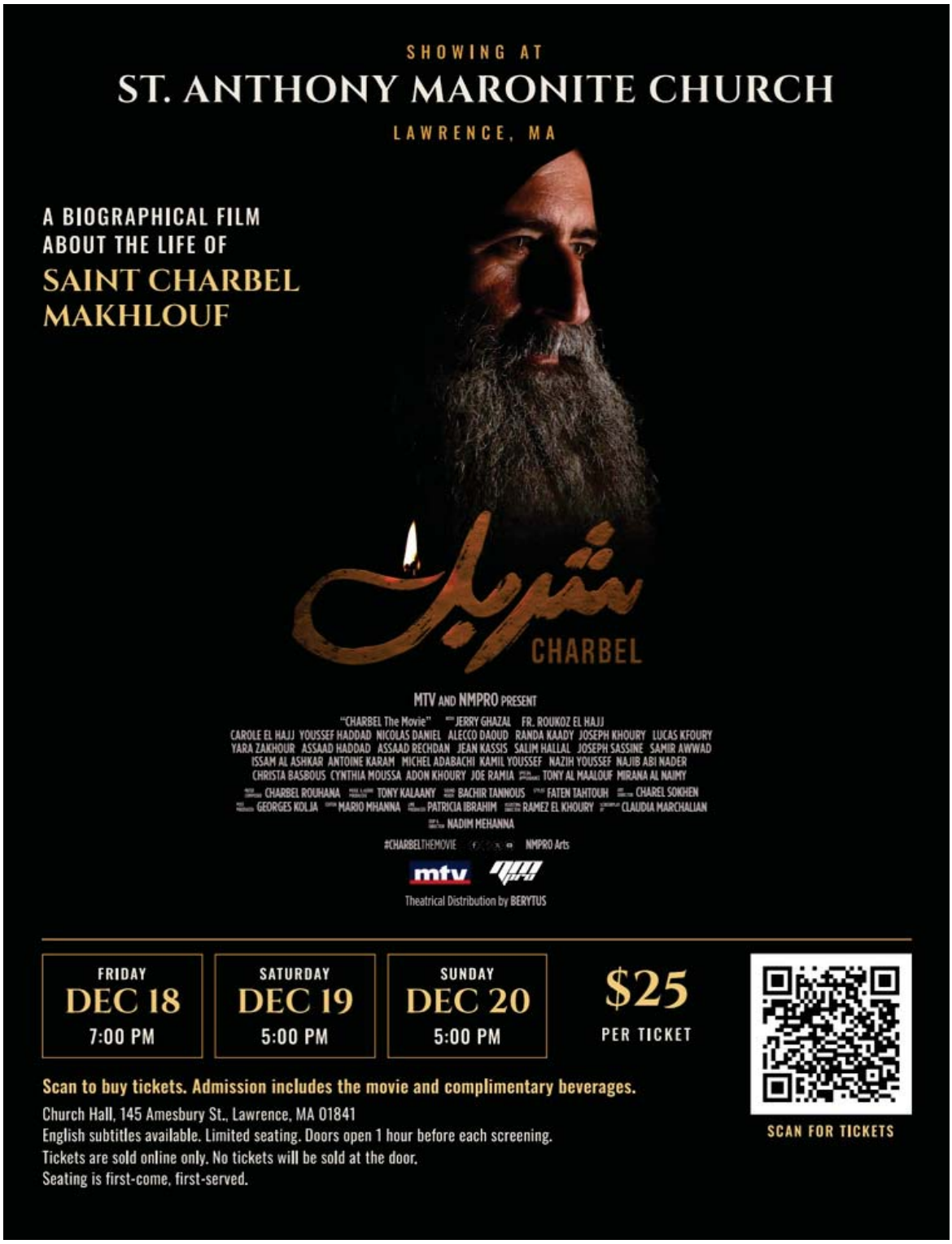
Saturday, November 21
5:00pm - 7:00pm






SAINT ANTHONY MARONITE CHURCH
MEELAD
CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL
DECEMBER 11-13, 2026
Christmas Tree Exhibition | Meelad Sook | Crafts | Artwork
Homemade and Artisanal Goods | Food | Pastries
Hot Beverages | Raffles | Baskets | Live Entertainment
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11 | 4PM-9PM
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12 | 3PM-9PM
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 | 9AM-6PM
145 Amesbury Street
Lawrence, MA | 01841
Stay tuned for more info:
@stanthonylawrence | www.stanthonylawrence.org
WANT TO PARTICIPATE? CONTACT:
rectory@stanthonylawrence.org
OR
Mary Francis: (978) 960-7479
Mounira Daher (603) 235-0801


Vendor Forms
are available on the bulletin rack
in the Church foyer.



LECTORS SCHEDULE

Saturday, November 14
4:00 pm - Susan Kalil

Sunday, November 15
8:00 am - Mouna Hbaiter
9:30 am - Theresea Bou Sanayah
11:00 am - (Eng) Angela Dahbour
(Ar) Giselle Dahbour

LECTORS SCHEDULE

Saturday, November 21
4:00 pm - Patricia Ferguson

Sunday, November 22
8:00 am - Subdeacon Antoine Nammour
9:30 am - Luke Pellerin
11:00 am - (Eng) Catherine Saade
(Ar) Marcel Saade

Announcement to Zechariah

Book of Genesis 17:15-22

God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.' Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, 'Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?' And Abraham said to God, 'O that Ishmael might live in your sight!' God said, 'No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you; I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year.' And when he had finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.

First Letter of Saint Paul to the 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.

Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint 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 favourably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people.'

أحد بشارة زكريّا

سفر التكوين 15:17-22

قَالَ اللهُ لإِبْرَاهِيمَ: «سَارَايُ امْرَأَتُكَ لاَ تُسَمِّيهَا سَارَايَ، بَلِ سَمِّهَا سَارَةُ. وَأَنَا أُبَارِكُهَا وَأُرْزُقُكَ مِنْهَا ابْنًا وَأُبَارِكُهَا فَتُصيرُ أُمَمًا، وَمُلُوكُ شُعُوبٍ مِنْهَا يَخرُجون». فَسَقَطَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ وَضَحِكَ، وَقَالَ فِي قَلْبِهِ: «أَلاِبْنٍ مِئَةِ سَنَةٍ يُولَدُ وَلَد، أَم سَارَةُ وَهِيَ ابْنَةُ تِسْعِينَ سَنَةً، تَلِد؟». فَقَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ للهِ: «لَو أَنَّ إِسْمَاعِيلَ يَحْيَا أَمَامَ وَجهِكَ!». فَقَالَ اللهُ: «بَلْ سَارَةُ امْرَأَتُكَ سَتَلِدُ لَكَ ٱبْنًا وَسَمِّه إِسْحَاقَ، وَأُقِيمُ عَهْدِي مَعَهُ، عَهْدًا أَبَدِيًّا، لأَكُونَ لَهُ إِلهًا لِنَسْلِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ. وَأَمَّا إِسْمَاعِيلُ فَقَدْ سَمِعْتُ قَولَكَ فِيهِ. وهَاءَنَذَا أُبَارِكُهُ وَأُنَمِّيه وَأُكَثِّرُهُ جِدًّا جِدًّا، وَيَلِدُ ٱثْنَيْ عَشَرَ رَئِيسًا، وَأَجْعَلُهُ أُمَّةً عَظِيمَةً. غَيْرَ أَنَّ عَهْدِي أُقِيمُهُ مَعَ إِسْحَاقَ الَّذِي تَلِدُهُ لَكَ سَارَةُ فِي مِثلِ هذَا الْوَقْتِ مِنَ السَّنَةِ الْمُقْبِلة». فَلَمَّا أنتهى اللهُ مِنَ مُخاطَبَةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، اِرتَفَعَ عنه.

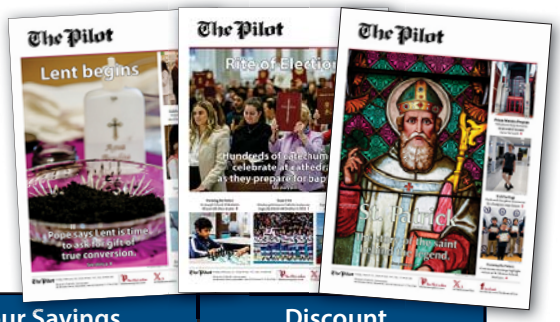
رسالة القدّيس بولس إلى أهل رومة 4:13-25

يا إِخوَتي، الْوَعْدُ لإِبْرَاهِيمَ أَوْ لِنَسْلِهِ بِأَنْ يَكُونَ وَارِثًا لِلعَالَم، لَمْ يَكُنْ بِوَاسِطَةِ الشَّرِيعَة، بَلْ بِالبِرِّ الَّذي نَالَهُ بِالإِيْمَان. فَلَوْ كَانَ أَهْلُ الشَّرِيعَةِ هُمُ الوَارِثِين، لأَبْطَلَ الإِيْمَان، وأَلْغَى الوَعْد؛ لأَنَّ الشَّرِيعَةَ تُسَبِّبُ غَضَبَ الله؛ وحَيْثُ لا شَرِيعَة، فَلا تَعَدِّيَ لِلشَّرِيعَة. لِذلِكَ فَأَهْلُ الإِيْمَانِ هُمُ الوَارِثُون، لِكَي تَكُونَ الوِرَاثَةُ هِبَةً مِنَ الله. وهكَذَا تَحَقَّقَ الوَعْدُ لِكُلِّ نَسْلِ إِبْرَاهِيم، لا لِلنَّسْلِ الَّذي هُوَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الشَّرِيعَةِ فَحَسْب، بَلْ أَيْضًا لِلنَّسْلِ الَّذي هُوَ مِنْ أَهْلِ الإِيْمَان، إِيْمَانِ إِبْرَاهِيم، الَّذي هُوَ أَبٌ لَنَا أَجْمَعِين؛ كَمَا هُوَ مَكْتُوب: «إِنِّي جَعَلْتُكَ أَبًا لأُمَمٍ كَثِيرَة». فَإِبْرَاهِيمُ الَّذي آمَنَ بِاللهِ هُوَ أَبٌ لَنَا أَمَامَ الله، الَّذي يُحْيِي الأَمْوَات، ويَدْعُو غَيْرَ المَوْجُودِ إِلى الوُجُود. وقَدْ آمَنَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَاجِيًا عَلى غَيرِ رَجَاء، بِأَنَّهُ سَيَصيرُ أَبًا لأُمَمٍ كَثِيرَة، كَمَا قِيلَ لَهُ: «هكَذَا يَكُونُ نَسْلُكَ». ولَمْ يَضْعُفْ بِإِيْمَانِهِ، بِرَغْمِ أَنَّهُ رَأَى، وهُوَ ٱبنُ نَحْوِ مِئَةِ سَنَة، أَنَّ جَسَدَهُ مَائِت، وأَنَّ حَشَا سَارَةَ قَدْ مَات. وبِنَاءً عَلى وَعْدِ الله، مَا شَكَّ وَلا تَرَدَّد، بَلْ تَقَوَّى بِالإِيْمَان، ومَجَّدَ الله. وأَيْقَنَ مِلْءَ اليَقِين أَنَّ اللهَ قَادِرٌ أَنْ يُنْجِزَ مَا وَعَدَ بِه. فَلِذلِكَ حُسِبَ لَهُ إِيْمَانُهُ بِرًّا. ولَمْ يُكْتَبْ مِنْ أَجْلِهِ وَحْدَهُ أَنَّهُ «حُسِبَ لَهُ بِرًّا»، بَلْ كُتِبَ أَيْضًا مِنْ أَجْلِنَا، نَحْنُ الَّذِينَ سَيُحْسَبُ لَنَا بِرًّا، لأَنَّنَا نُؤْمِنُ بِالَّذي أَقَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الأَمْوَاتِ يَسُوعَ رَبَّنَا، الَّذي أُسْلِمَ مِنْ أَجْلِ زَلاَّتِنَا، وأُقِيمَ مِنْ أَجْلِ تَبْرِيرِنَا.

إنجيل القدّيس لوقا 1:1-25

بِمَا أَنَّ كَثِيرِينَ أَخَذُوا يُرَتِّبُونَ رِوَايَةً لِلأَحْدَاثِ ٱلَّتِي تَمَّتْ عِنْدَنَا، كَمَا سَلَّمَها إِلَيْنَا مَنْ كَانُوا مُنْذُ البَدْءِ شُهُودَ عِيَانٍ لِلْكَلِمَة، ثُمَّ صَارُوا خُدَّامًا لَهَا، رَأَيْتُ أَنَا أَيْضًا، أَيُّهَا الشَّرِيفُ تِيُوفِيل، أَنْ أَكْتُبَهَا لَكَ بِحَسَبِ تَرْتِيبِهَا، بَعْدَمَا تَتَبَّعْتُهَا كُلَّهَا، مُنْذُ بِدَايَتِهَا، تَتَبُّعًا دَقِيقًا، لِكَي تَتَيَقَّنَ صِحَّةَ الكَلاَمِ الَّذِي وُعِظْتَ بِهِ. كَانَ فِي أَيَّامِ هِيرُودُس، مَلِكِ اليَهُودِيَّة، كَاهِنٌ ٱسْمُهُ زَكَرِيَّا، مِنْ فِرْقَةِ أَبِيَّا، لَهُ ٱمْرَأَةٌ مِنْ بَنَاتِ هَارُونَ ٱسْمُهَا إِلِيصَابَات. وكَانَا كِلاهُمَا بَارَّيْنِ أَمَامَ الله، سَالِكَيْنِ فِي جَمِيعِ وصَايَا الرَّبِّ وأَحْكَامِهِ بِلا لَوْم. ومَا كَانَ لَهُمَا وَلَد، لأَنَّ إِلِيصَابَاتَ كَانَتْ عَاقِرًا، وكَانَا كِلاهُمَا قَدْ طَعَنَا فِي أَيَّامِهِمَا. وفِيمَا كَانَ زَكَرِيَّا يَقُومُ بِالخِدْمَةِ الكَهَنُوتِيَّةِ أَمَامَ الله، فِي أَثْنَاءِ نَوْبَةِ فِرْقَتِهِ، أَصَابَتْهُ القُرْعَة، بِحَسَبِ عَادَةِ الكَهَنُوت، لِيَدْخُلَ مَقْدِسَ هَيْكَلِ الرَّبِّ ويُحْرِقَ البَخُور. وكَانَ كُلُّ جُمْهُورِ الشَّعْبِ يُصَلِّي فِي الخَارِج، فِي أَثْنَاءِ إِحْرَاقِ البَخُور. وتَرَاءَى مَلاَكُ الرَّبِّ لِزَكَرِيَّا وَاقِفًا مِنْ عَنْ يَمِينِ مَذْبَحِ البَخُور، فَٱضْطَرَبَ زَكَرِيَّا حِينَ رَآه، وٱسْتَولَى عَلَيْهِ الخَوف. فَقَالَ لَهُ المَلاَك: «لا تَخَفْ، يَا زَكَرِيَّا، فَقَدِ ٱسْتُجِيبَتْ طِلْبَتُكَ، وَٱمْرَأَتُكَ إِلِيصَابَاتُ سَتَلِدُ لَكَ ٱبْنًا، فَسَمِّهِ يُوحَنَّا. ويَكُونُ لَكَ فَرَحٌ وَٱبْتِهَاج، ويَفْرَحُ بِمَوْلِدِهِ كَثِيرُون، لأَنَّهُ سَيَكُونُ عَظِيمًا فِي نَظَرِ الرَّبّ، لا يَشْرَبُ خَمْرًا ولا مُسْكِرًا، وَيَمْتَلِئُ مِنَ الرُّوحِ القُدُسِ وَهُوَ بَعْدُ فِي حَشَا أُمِّه. ويَرُدُّ كَثِيرِينَ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَى الرَّبِّ إِلهِهِم. ويَسِيرُ أَمَامَ الرَّبِّ بِرُوحِ إِيلِيَّا وقُوَّتِه، لِيَرُدَّ قُلُوبَ الآبَاءِ إِلَى الأَبْنَاء، والعُصَاةَ إِلَى حِكْمَةِ الأَبْرَار، فَيُهَيِّئَ لِلرَّبِّ شَعْبًا مُعَدًّا خَيْرَ إِعْدَاد». فَقَالَ زَكَرِيَّا لِلْمَلاك: «بِمَاذَا أَعْرِفُ هذَا؟ فَإِنِّي أَنَا شَيْخٌ، وٱمْرَأَتِي قَدْ طَعَنَتْ فِي أَيَّامِهَا!». فَأَجَابَ المَلاَكُ وقَالَ لَهُ: «أَنَا هُوَ جِبْرَائِيلُ ٱلوَاقِفُ فِي حَضْرَةِ الله، وقَدْ أُرْسِلْتُ لأُكَلِّمَكَ وأُبَشِّرَكَ بِهذَا. وهَا أَنْتَ تَكُونُ صَامِتًا، لا تَقْدِرُ أَنْ تَتَكَلَّم، حَتَّى اليَوْمِ الَّذِي يَحْدُثُ فِيهِ ذلِك، لأَنَّكَ لَمْ تُؤْمِنْ بِكَلاَمِي الَّذِي سَيَتِمُّ فِي أَوَانِه». وكَانَ الشَّعْبُ يَنْتَظِرُ زَكَرِيَّا، ويَتَعَجَّبُ مِنْ إِبْطَائِهِ فِي مَقْدِسِ الهَيْكَل. ولَمَّا خَرَجَ زَكَرِيَّا، لَمْ يَكُنْ قَادِرًا أَنْ يُكَلِّمَهُم، فَأَدْرَكُوا أَنَّهُ رَأَى رُؤْيَا فِي المَقْدِس، وكَانَ يُشِيرُ إِلَيْهِم بِالإِشَارَة، وبَقِيَ أَبْكَم. ولَمَّا تَمَّتْ أَيَّامُ خِدْمَتِه، مَضَى إِلَى بَيْتِه. وبَعْدَ تِلْكَ الأَيَّام، حَمَلَتِ ٱمْرَأَتُهُ إِلِيصَابَات، وكَتَمَتْ أَمْرَهَا خَمْسَةَ أَشْهُر، وهِيَ تَقُول: هكَذَا صَنَعَ الرَّبُّ إِلَيَّ، فِي الأَيَّامِ الَّتِي نَظَرَ إِلَيَّ فِيهَا، لِيُزِيلَ العَارَ عَنِّي مِنْ بَيْنِ النَّاس!.

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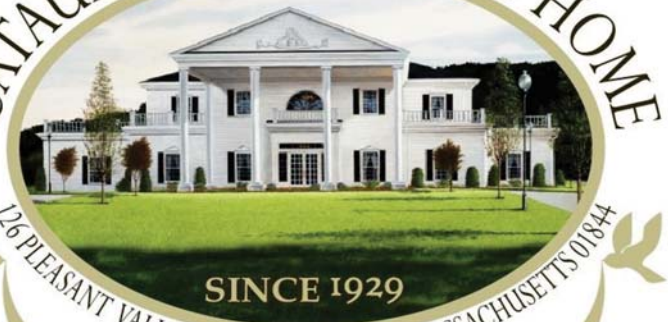
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