



OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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RT. REV. ANDRE ST. GERMAIN (retired)

REV. ROGER BOUCHER - Weekend Ministry

REV. THEOPHAN LEONARCZYK, Eparchial Chancellor

"Enter the Church and repent ... for here is the physician, not the judge. Here one is not investigated, one receives remission of sins." (St. John Chrysostom)

December 9, 2018

The Tenth Sunday After the Cross

The Commemoration of the Dedication

of the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem

THE FEAST OF THE MATERNITY OF ST. ANNE

Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

KEN MONTY (*PRESIDENT*), ROBERT ANDERSON, ROBIN ANDERSON, JOHN CULLEN,
MARTHA DAGHER, TIM ERMATINGER, KEN KOMISAREK, MARYLOU LAZOS, JESSICA LOMANNO,
MAURICE PARE', RAFAEL PESCHIERA, PAUL ST. GERMAIN, AND JOHN SIWIK

Parish Secretary: ROBIN ANDERSON

Cedars Society President: MARYLOU LAZOS

Sunday School Coordinator: MARTHA DAGHER

N.A.M.Y. Advisor: ROBIN ANDERSON

HOLY MYSTERY OF CONFESSION: Before or after any service, or by appointment;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATION: Please contact the clergy in advance to arrange for the required baptismal instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF CROWNING: At least six months prior to the proposed wedding, please contact the clergy to arrange for the required interview and instructions;

HOLY MYSTERY OF THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Please contact the pastor at any time when this sacrament is needed;

HOLY COMMUNION FOR THE SICK: Anyone too infirm to attend our services may receive Communion in the home. Please advise the clergy whenever this sacrament is needed.

THE ORDER OF TODAY'S LITURGY

The Troparion of the Resurrection (4th Tone) Page 52

The Troparion of the Maternity of Anne (4th Tone-Twice):

Today the bonds of barrenness are loosed: God has heard the prayers of Joachim and Anne. He has promised against all hope the birth of the Maiden of God from whom the Infinite Himself is to be born as a man, He who had ordered the angel to cry out to her, "Hail, O full of grace! The Lord is with you!"

The Troparion of the Dormition of the Theotokos (1st Tone): Page 16

The Knotakion of the Maternity of Anne (3rd Tone):

Today the whole world celebrates the conception of Anne, provided by God Himself, for Anne has born the Pure One who will give birth to the Word of God in a manner beyond all telling.

THE PROKIMENON:

THE JUST SHALL REJOICE IN THE LORD AND PLACE HIS HOPE IN HIM.

ALL THOSE WITH AN UPRIGHT HEART SHALL BE PRAISED.

O God, hear my voice when I pray to you! Save my life from the dreadful enemy!

Today's Readings: Galatians 4: 22-27 and Luke 13: 10-17

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday (December 8) 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Latify Attalla (33rd), Nabil Migali (2nd),
and Joseph Corey (50th)



Sunday, (December 9) 10:30 AM

For the repose of Jamileh Dagher (2 Year Anniversary),
by her children Ibrahim, Salam, and Saideh Dagher & Family



Saturday (December 15) 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Nabie Sahady (26th), Jane Ganem (7th), Sophie Ameen (63rd),
Florence Baroody (47th), Fred Attalla (35th), and Louise Wihby (31st)

Next Sunday (December 16) 10:30 AM

For the repose of Ernest Ashooh (3 Year Anniversary),
by his family

If you do not receiving offering envelopes, and would like to receive them for 2019, please let Fr. Tom know.



Newborn in Christ!

The Handmaids of God, Josephine Elizabeth Reynolds and Thea Caroline Sottung, will receive the Holy Mysteries of Illumination – Baptism, Chrismation, and Holy Communion – on Sunday morning. Josephine is the daughter of Joseph and Caroling Reynolds, and Thea is the daughter of Kyle Sottung and Katherine Underwood. Congratulations to Josephine and Thea and to their families! May God grant them many years in health and happiness.

Can you give a Christmas gift to help support your parish?

I am asking that each family prayerfully consider making a gift of \$100 to the church between now and Jan. 6. If you cannot afford a gift of \$100, then I ask you to give according to your means. If you can afford more than \$100, then I ask you to please be more generous.

When you make out your check to Our Lady of the Cedars Church please write: “*Parish Christmas Gift*” in the memo of the check. You may mail the check to the church or include it in the Sunday collection. Our goal is to raise \$17,000. So far –only one week into the drive - we have raised \$7,150! Thank you for your generosity. - Fr. Tom

The Angel Icons have been installed!

Many thanks to Donna and Brian Cullen, whose generous donation the purchase and installation of the icons of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel that now flank the Platytera on the apse wall of the church. “*O Lord ... sanctify those who love the beauty of Your House!*”

Please Support the Bishop’s Appeal!

As we travel with the Virgin to Bethlehem where she will give birth to the greatest gift in human history—God’s Only-Begotten Son—let us remember our Melkite Church by which Christ comes to us. Please consider giving an end-of-year, tax-deductible gift to the Melkite Church in America to support its vital mission. Help produce *SOPHIA* magazine, assist in the spiritual renewal of our parishes, support the vocation, recruitment, and the training of seminarians, assist our missions, and give support to our elderly priests. Please give generously, and remember: 50% of the gifts from our parish over our goal are returned to our parish.

Next week: Special collection for the flowers for Christmas

Attendance Last St. 4:30 PM: 19 Sun. 10:30 AM: 141

Last Weekend’s Collection: \$1,210.⁵⁰

The average Sunday envelope donation: \$38.²⁷

The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$67,354.¹⁷

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Wed., Dec. 12	7:00 PM	Divine Liturgy – offered for the deceased of the parish
Sat., Dec. 15	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers
Sun., Dec. 19	9:45 AM	Sunday Orthros
Sun., Dec. 16	10:30 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

The Nativity Fast begins Monday!

The Pre-Nativity Fast was created to prepare us for the twofold celebration of the Lord's Nativity and Theophany. These feasts are two sides of a single coin. On the Nativity we celebrate our joy at God's arrival, and on Theophany we experience the beginning of Christ's revelation to us of the mysteries of God, in particular the Mystery of the Trinity.

This Fast began to be observed in the 4th Century. It developed into a 40-day period beginning on November 15, the day after the feast of St. Philip, and is often referred to as "St. Philip's Fast." The Melkite Church has reduced the length of the Fast to fourteen days, and begins the Fast on December 10. During this Fast, the faithful are encouraged to strive towards holiness and are particularly encouraged to fast and pray on the Paramony of Christmas and Theophany (usually the day before the feast).

The guidelines for fasting for the Pre-Nativity Fast are far more lenient than Great Lent. In general, abstinence from meat, dairy products, and oil throughout the Fast is still recommended, but the amount of food is not as restricted as the Lenten Fast. For example, one might choose to eat only small amounts of food on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, while eating a more satisfying amount on the other days of the week. Traditionally on the Sundays of this Fast, fish is permitted.

We should be careful, however, not to approach the question of fasting too legalistically or rigidly. These guidelines are exactly that — guidelines — and not rules. You are free to decide for yourself how you will observe the Fast. Adequate preparation can never be counted in "days fasted." Instead, ask yourself: "How well am I progressing toward holiness?"

The reason that we fast and pray is to overcome what our tradition calls "passions" - anything that has control over us: overeating, smoking, watching too much television, misuse of sexuality, gossiping, lying, etc. All of these captivate the soul and distort the image and likeness of God within us. We fast and pray in order to regain control over these passions and to avoid becoming slaves to them.

We also fast and pray in order to draw closer to God. Every Christian —not just the clergy, or a select pious few —is called to undergo theosis, to be illumined and transfigured by God. This takes spiritual effort and fasting is a key means by which this occurs.

This period of preparation also means more than just abstaining from food. It should be a time of kindness and joy, marked by abstinence from hurting others, and from deceit, gossip, anger, quarrelling, and all other vices which arise from the tongue. During this Fast we should allow more time for prayer, for attending church service, and for acts of charity to others.

It may seem very difficult to keep this Fast today. In our culture, the pre-Christmas period is a time for merriment and parties. But the Church is calling us to reflect on the true and deeper meaning of Christmas, that God the Son and Word emptied Himself to take flesh as a man.

This penitential season is an invitation by the Church to empty ourselves in imitation of Christ, so that we might receive on Christmas day God's greatest gift: His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Christmas will have a special meaning for us if our preparation for Christ's birth is a time of growth in spirit, an effort to improve our lives of faith and love for others.



Dec. 9: The Dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher

The memory of the site of Jesus' crucifixion and tomb was faithfully retained and venerated by the Christians of Jerusalem for 100 years after His death and resurrection. The site was characterized by the small rounded hill of Golgotha, or skull, and by the tomb hollowed out of the same rock. In 135, Emperor Hadrian, in an effort to discourage Christian veneration of the site and to enlarge the city, had all of Golgotha covered with earth. The Holy Sepulcher was then buried and pagan temples were erected on the earthen platform.

To thank God for the happy conclusion of the Council of Nicaea, Constantine wished to erect a basilica on the spot of the Redemption of the world. Bishop Makarios of Jerusalem pointed out the site of the tomb, which the Christians of Jerusalem still remembered. Once the leveled ground was cleared away, the Lord's sepulcher was rediscovered, isolated in a rocky mass which was leveled all around it. Once fully excavated, it was enshrined in an imposing structure, topped by a dome, to which was added a basilica with five naves of the same type as the one in Bethlehem which still exists today, and was built at the same time. Constantine chose September 13 as its dedication day to replace the pagan feast of the dedication of the Roman temple of Jupiter which was traditionally celebrated on this day.

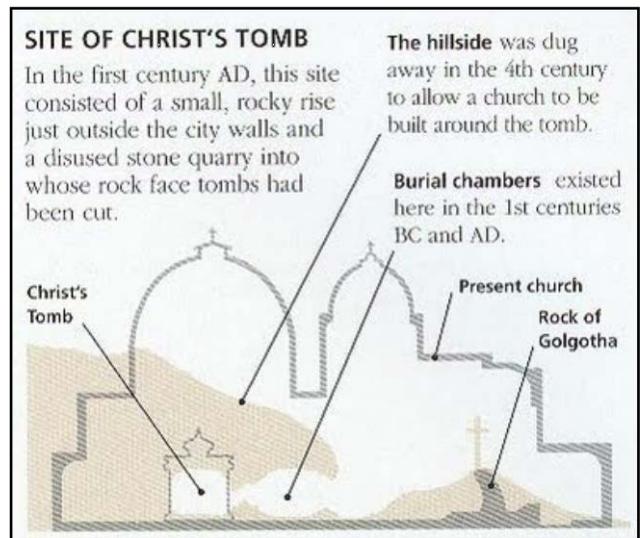
The structure was consecrated on September 13, 330, (and so this feast is also commemorated on Sept. 13) and stood until destroyed by the Persians in AD 614. Rebuilt shortly thereafter, it was more or less maltreated in the course of the centuries. The Basilica was entirely razed in 1009 by the Egyptian Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim, who even destroyed the very rock of the tomb by having the tomb hacked down to the bedrock. The Crusaders rebuilt the church and much of what is standing today is from that time period.

Inside the church is a rocky outcropping which is the traditional place where the cross was placed. Archaeological excavations have demonstrated that this site was outside the city but close to one of its gates and thus would have been a good location for a crucifixion.

The structure known as the Edicule preserves the location of Christ's tomb. Though the cave here was carved away by the Muslim ruler Al-Hakim 1000 years ago, a clear history remains that this has been the revered location of the tomb.

Other first-century tombs are also still preserved inside the church. Called the "Tomb of Joseph of Arimathea," these burial shafts (kokhim) are clearly from the time of Christ's death and thus attest to some kind of burial ground in the area.

Within its walls today the representatives of the Byzantine, Armenian, Coptic, and Latin traditions meet, and pilgrims of all races and languages venerate the place of our Redemption.



The New Eve is Conceived

THE CHURCHES OF EAST AND WEST generally commemorate the saints on the day of their death, their “heavenly birthday,” as some describe it. In addition the Church remembers three conceptions: that of Christ (the Annunciation, March 25), His Mother (December 9), and St John the Forerunner (September 23). We celebrate these days their birth in lieu of the tremendous role they played in salvation history: Christ by virtue of His divine nature and Mary and John by the grace of God given to them.

In the Byzantine calendar, as in that of the West, Christ’s conception is celebrated exactly nine months before the festival of His birth. With the Theotokos and the Forerunner the nine months are not exact. Mary’s conception is remembered on December 9 and her nativity on September 8. St John’s conception is remembered on September 23 and his birth of June 24. This is a way of saying that the conceptions were not identical: Christ’s was unique.



The Story of Mary’s Conception

The conceptions of Christ and the Forerunner are recorded in chapter 1 of the Gospel of Luke. The story of Mary’s conception is not found in the canonical Scriptures but in the mid 2nd-century *Protoevangelium* (or Pre-Gospel) of St James. This text tells that, for many years, Mary’s parents, Joachim and Ann were childless and the couple suffered much reproach as a result. When they were in Jerusalem to offer sacrifice to God, the High Priest, Issachar, upbraided Joachim: “You are not worthy to offer sacrifice with those childless hands.” Both spouses gave themselves to fervent prayer, and the Archangel Gabriel announced to each of them separately that they would be the parents of a daughter who would bring blessings to the whole human race.

The icon of the feast shows Saints Joachim and Ann embracing after each had run to share the news of their daughter-to-be. It also very prominently displays a bed to indicate that this conception took place by the usual physical means, unlike the conception of Christ.

The first record of this feast being celebrated is from 5th-century Palestine. It spread to southern Italy during the 8th century and from there to England, France, Germany, and eventually Rome. In the East this feast has always been called “the Conception (or Maternity) of St. Ann,” stressing Ann’s conceiving of the Theotokos, just as the conception of Christ is revered as “the Annunciation to the Theotokos.” In the West the feast came to be called “the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary” and later “the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.”

The Unique Holiness of Mary

All the Churches of East and West have always believed that the Virgin Mary was, from her conception, filled with every grace of the Holy Spirit in view of her calling as the Mother of Christ

our God. This belief is even professed in Islam. Muslim lore records a *hadith* or tradition, which states that the only children born without the “touch of Satan,” were Mary and Jesus for God imposed “a veil” between them and Satan.

In the Middle Ages increasing devotion to the Mother of God in the West saw the rise of opinions on the holiness of Mary. Some came to believe that she was even conceived without human intercourse, as Christ was. Finally, in the 17th century, Pope Benedict XIV formally condemned this opinion.

While it was generally believed that the Theotokos was filled with divine grace from her conception, there was no general understanding on how this happened. The Eastern Church calls Mary *achrantos* (spotless or immaculate), but has never defined exactly what this meant. Following St. Augustine’s thought on original sin, the Western Church gradually came to accept the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception as defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854: “The most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was pre-served free from all stain of original sin.”

The Orthodox Churches preferred not to define Mary's conception as a dogma, but rather simply to proclaim the truth of her purity in prayer. The kontakion for December 9 proclaims: "Today, the whole world celebrates the Conception of Ann provided by God Himself, for Ann has borne the Pure One who will give birth to the Word of God..." The prayers of Orthros for this day also echo the wonder of Mary's conception: "O illustrious Mother of God, what wonders the creation has seen in you! Wondrous was your conception, extra-ordinary the manner in which your body was produced, manifesting the growing signs of immortality approaching." And in the 9th Ode for November 21, we pray: "O holy Theotokos, your wonders surpass the power of words, for I see that, ineffable, your body was never subject to the taint of sin. Thus I cry aloud in thanksgiving, O pure Virgin, you are indeed raised above all creatures." Thus while the Eastern Churches do not use the term "Immaculate Conception," we proclaim this reality in our prayers.

As the dogma of the Immaculate Conception defines Mary’s holiness in terms of a Western understanding of original sin, some Catholics believe that Mary did not die, though this has never been taught in the Western Church. In the East we celebrate the Dormition or "falling asleep" of the Theotokos and her body being taken up into heaven.

The Byzantine Churches celebrate the fact of Mary’s conception in the womb of Anna on December 9, and also commemorate her holiness on another feast: her Entrance into the Temple (November 21). In the kondakion for this feast, we sing “The most pure Temple of our holy Savior, and the most precious and bright bridal chamber, the Virgin, sacred treasury of the glory of God, openly appears today in the Temple of the Lord, *bringing with her the grace of the Most Holy Spirit*. Wherefore, the angels of God are singing: This is the heavenly Tabernacle!” Mary did not become holy in the temple – she brought the grace of God with her. When and how did God accomplish this mystery? Human reasoning does not help us answer this. Nevertheless, we ceaselessly proclaim her as our “all-holy, immaculate, most highly blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever virgin Mary.”

Please remember to pray for the health and protection of Genevieve Allen, Donna Andruskiewicz, Olivia Aragon, Paul Archambeault, Elizabeth Ashooh, Elsie Ashooh, Alice Auclair, Erin Baroody, Michael Baroody, Anthony Blando, Helena Burkush, Fr. Michael Carl, Danielle Caron, Michael Cavanaugh, Meghan Connors, Sarah Cullen, Theresa Cullen, Sarah Dagher, Bishop John Elya, Sher Farrow, Julie Fregeau, Mary Fregeau, Peter Fregeau, John Gallagher, Marguerite Ganem, Mary Ann Garvey, Loretto Gauvin, Bonnie Gomez, Gail Fisher, Laurice Haddad, Nick Haddad, Lucille Harper, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Leila Khoury, Shirley Lanoue, Susan Latvis, Diana Label, Haley Lesmerises, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, Ramona Matias, Susan Merrill, Maria Moser, Joanne Nader, Mimi Nasser, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Raymond Nehme, Samira Nehme, Steve Notter, Steven O'Leary, Ellen Osgood, Marco Enrique Peschiera, MaryJo Pond, Ellen Powell, Sheila Quinn, Daniel Quintal, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Fr. Andre St. Germain, Kara Salvas, Barbara Schultz, Raymond Sherburne, Tarrant Smith, Catherine Waldron, George Webber, Martha Webber, Marilyn Whitmore, and Iris Angelina Velasquez.

If you are visiting our church, our parish family is delighted to welcome you here! Please give us the chance to get to know you by joining us for some coffee, pastry, and conversation in the church hall following the Divine Liturgy. If you would like to know more about the Melkite Catholic Church, check out the brochure entitled *“Welcome to this Holy House,”* located on the table in the back of the church.





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Today's Readings:

From to the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians (4: 22-27)

BRETHREN, Abraham had two sons, the one by a slave-girl and the other by a free woman (Cf. Gn. 16 : 15 ; 21 :2). And the son of the slave-girl was born according to the flesh, but the son of the free woman, in virtue of the promise. This is said by way of allegory. For these are -the two covenants, one indeed from Mount Sinai, bringing forth children that were to be in bondage: this is Agar. For Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, which corresponds to the present Jerusalem, and is in slavery with her children.

But that Jerusalem which is above is free, which is our mother. For it is written, "Rejoice, you barren woman who do not bear; break forth and cry, you who do not travail; for many are the children of the desolate, more than of the one who has a husband" (Is. 54: 1).

يا اخوة، قبل أن يأتِيَ الأيمانُ كُنَّا محفوظينَ تحتَ الناموسِ، مغلقاً علينا الى ان يُعلنَ الأيمانُ الآتي. فالناموسُ إذن كانَ مُؤدبنا يُرشدنا إلى المسيح، لكي نبررَ بالأيمان. فبعدَ ان جاءَ الأيمانُ بالمسيحِ يسوع. لأنكم جميعَ منَ اعتمدتمُ في المسيحِ قد لبستمُ المسيح. ليسَ يهوديَّ ولا يونانيَّ، ليسَ عبدٌ ولا حرٌّ، ليسَ ذكراً وأنثى، لأنكم جميعاً واحداً في المسيحِ يسوع. فإذا كنتمُ للمسيحِ فأنتمُ إذن نسلُ ابراهيم، وورثَةُ بحسبِ الموعد. واقولُ إنَّ الوارثَ ما دامَ طفلاً فلا فرقَ بينه وبينَ العبد، مع كونه ربَّ الجميع. لكنه تحتَ أيدي الأوصياءِ والوكلاء، الى الأجل الذي سبقَ الأبُ فحدده. وهكذا نحنُ أيضاً إذ كُنَّا أطفالاً، كُنَّا متعبدينَ تحتَ أركانِ العالم. فلما بلغَ مِلءُ الزمان، ارسلَ الله ابنه مولوداً من أمراه، مولوداً تحتَ الناموس. ليفتديَ الذينَ تحتَ الناموسِ لننالَ التبني.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (13: 10-17)

At that time Jesus was teaching in one of their synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent over and utterly unable to look upwards.

When Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, "Woman, you are delivered from your infirmity." And He laid his hands upon her, and instantly she was made straight, and glorified God.

But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant that Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, addressed the crowd, saying, "There are six days in which one ought to work; on these therefore come and be cured, and not on the Sabbath." But the Lord answered him and said, "Hypocrites! Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or ass from the manger, and lead it forth to water? And this woman, daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound, lo, for eighteen years, ought not she to be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?"

And as He said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame; and the entire crowd rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him.

فصل من بشارة القديس لوقا الانجيلي البشير (لوقا 13: 10 - 17)

في ذلك الزمان، كان يسوع يُعَلِّمُ في أحدِ المِجَامِعِ يَوْمَ السَّبْتِ، وَإِذَا امْرَأَةً بِهَا رُوحٌ مَرَضٍ مِنْذُ ثَمَانِي عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً، وَكَانَتْ مُنْحَنِيَةً لَا تَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ تَنْتَصِبَ الْبَتَّةَ. فَلَمَّا رَأَاهَا يَسُوعُ دَعَاهَا وَقَالَ لَهَا: يَا امْرَأَةُ أَنْتِ مُطْلَقَةٌ مِنْ مَرَضِكَ. وَوَضَعَ يَدَيْهِ عَلَيْهَا، وَفِي الْحَالِ انْتَصَبَتْ وَجَعَلَتْ تَمَجِّدُ اللَّهَ فَقَالَ رَبُّيُ الْمَجْمَعِ لِلْجَمِيعِ، وَهُوَ مُغْتَاطٌ لِإِبْرَاءِ يَسُوعَ فِي السَّبْتِ: لَكُمْ سِتَّةُ أَيَّامٍ يَنْبَغِي الْعَمَلُ فِيهَا، فَفِيهَا تَأْتُونَ وَتَسْتَشْفُونَ، لَا فِي يَوْمِ السَّبْتِ. فَأَجَابَهُ الرَّبُّ وَقَالَ: يَا مُرَائِي، أَمَا يَحُلُّ كُلُّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْكُمْ ثَوْرَهُ أَوْ حِمَارَهُ فِي السَّبْتِ مِنَ الْمَذُودِ وَيَنْتَلِقُ بِهِ فَيَسْقِيهِ؟ وَهَذِهِ ابْنَةُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّتِي رَبَطَهَا الشَّيْطَانُ مِنْذُ ثَمَانِي عَشْرَةَ سَنَةً، أَمَا كَانَ يَنْبَغِي أَنْ تُطْلَقَ مِنْ هَذَا الرِّبَاطِ يَوْمَ السَّبْتِ؟ وَلَمَّا قَالَ هَذَا، حَزَرَ جَمِيعُ مَقَاوِمِيهِ، وَفَرَحَ الْجَمْعُ كُلُّهُ بِجَمِيعِ الْأُمُورِ الْجَيِّدَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ تَجْرِي عَلَى يَدِهِ.