



OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

140 MITCHELL STREET, MANCHESTER, NH 03103

TEL # (603) 623-8944 FAX # (603) 645-6017

Email: oloc.church@comcast.net

Website: www.olocnh.org

REV. THOMAS P. STEINMETZ, Pastor

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 10, 2017

The Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs

Menas, Hermogenes, and Eugephos

THE 27th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Parish Advisory & Finance Council:

KEN MONTY (PRESIDENT), ROBERT ANDERSON, ROBIN ANDERSON, JOHN CULLEN, MARTHA DAGHER, TIM ERMATINGER, KEN KOMISAREK, MARYLOU LAZOS, PAUL MANSUR, NAJWA MOUSSOBA, JOE NEHME, MAURICE PARE', PAUL ST. GERMAIN, AND CHRISTELLE SLAYBE

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 (2nd Tone) Page 51

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



The Kondakion of the Pre-festive Period of the Nativity

Today the Virgin is on her way to the cave where she will give birth to the Eternal Word of God in an ineffable manner. Rejoice therefore, O universe, when you hear this news, and glorify, with the angels and the shepherds, Him who shall appear as a new child, being God from all eternity.

THE PROKIMENON:

**MY STRENGTH AND MY COURAGE IS THE LORD,
AND HE HAS BEEN MY SAVIOR.**

*The Lord has chastised me through his teaching,
yet he has not delivered me to death.*

Today's Readings: Ephesians 6: 10-17 and Luke 13: 10-17

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, (December 9) 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Latify Attalla (32nd), Nabil Migali (1st),
and Joseph Corey (49th)

Sunday, (December 10) 11:00 AM

For the repose of Al Auclair (40 Day Memorial),
by his wife Alice

For the repose of Jamileh Dagher (One Year Memorial)
by her children Salam, Ibrahim, and Saideh Dagher

For the repose of Ernest Ashooh (2nd Anniversary),
by his family

Next Saturday, (December 16) 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Nabie Sahady (25th), Jane Ganem (6th), Sophie Ameen (62nd),
Florence Baroody (46th), Fred Attalla (34th), and Louise Wihby (30th)

Next Sunday, (December 17) 11:00 AM

For the repose of Rev. Father Elias Njeim, who fell asleep in the Lord on Nov. 30

For the repose of Rev. Deacon Thomas Burke, who fell asleep in the Lord on Nov. 26

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 \$5,900! Thank you for your generosity. - Fr. Tom



CHRISTMAS SERVICES

The Nativity of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ will be commemorated with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy on:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 24, at 7:30 PM
MONDAY, DECEMBER 25, at 11:00 AM



Vocation View: In the Gospel, Jesus restores her dignity to a woman, enabling her to stand upright after years of being crushed and bent over. In the epistle, Paul reminds Christian of their dignity as sons and daughters of God. Priests are called to continue that ministry today – pray for an increase of vocations to the priesthood in our Eparchy.

Sunday School will not be held on Sunday, December 24 or Sunday Dec. 31. Classes will be held next Sunday, December 17.



Time to Clean Up!

Jeanine Notter is organizing the annual effort to give the church a good cleaning before Christmas. The cleaning will take place on Thursday, Dec. 21 (sanctuary floors and vicinity) and Friday, Dec. 22 (pews, main church, narthex), beginning 9 AM both days. Bring a bucket, sponges, and cleaning rags. Rubber gloves are optional. Please see Jeanine, or call her at (603) 423-0408, or email at jeaninenotter@comcast.net if you can help.

Attendance –Sunday, Nov. 26: 102 Collection for Nov. 26: \$545.⁰⁰
Attendance - Last Saturday 4:30 PM: Last Sunday 11:00 AM: 119
Last Weekend's Collection: \$ 1,759.⁰⁰

The average Sunday envelope donation: \$44.⁵⁶
The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$76,504.³²

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Wed., Dec. 13	7:00 PM	Divine Liturgy: Offered for the deceased of the parish
Sat., Dec. 16	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of the Forefathers
Sun., Dec. 17	10:15 AM	Sunday Orthros
Sun., Dec. 17	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of the Forefathers



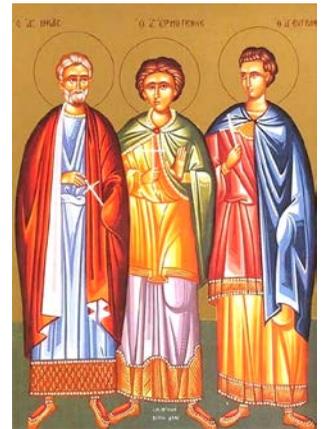
The Bishop's Appeal

The annual Bishop's Appeal is an important way in which our parish fulfills its duty to our larger Melkite family throughout the U.S. Our Father and Shepherd, Bishop Nicholas asks every Melkite household in the U.S. to give **at least \$100-\$200 each year** to support our Eparchy in America.

By contributing to the Appeal, each of us responds to Christ's call to support our Church and helps fund its vital works, such as: publishing *SOPHIA* magazine; establishing new missions and outreaches; supporting our seminarians for the Priesthood and Diaconate; providing for our elderly priests; educating our children and young adults, and 10% is tithed to our unfortunate and persecuted brother and sisters. It is the holy obligation of every member of our parish respond to his call. Please send your gift today. Extra Appeal donation slips are available in the back of the church.

The Holy Martyrs Menas, Hermogenes, and EUGRAPHOS

Menas was an Athenian, a courtier of the Emperor Maximinus, and a secret Christian. Once there was an outbreak of civil unrest in Alexandria, brought about by various political factions, and by the increasing success of Christian missionaries in turning the Alexandrian people from the idols. The Emperor sent Menas to reconcile the parties and settle the dispute. On his arrival, Menas quickly resolved the political troubles and restored peace to the city; but instead of putting down Christianity as the Emperor had desired, Menas instead openly began to preach the Christian Faith and he converted many pagans to Christ.



When word of this came to the Emperor, he sent another trusted courtier, Hermogenes, to re-establish Imperial authority and to execute Menas if he would not renounce Christ. Hermogenes followed these orders scrupulously: he subjected the godly Menas to various horrid tortures in the public arena. But Menas was miraculously preserved through them all, and when he finally appeared in the arena, flanked by two shining Angels, Hermogenes repented and confessed Christ.

Finally the Emperor decided that the only solution was to come to Alexandria himself. There he had both Menas and Hermogenes cruelly tortured to death in secret, lest they perform any public miracles; but when the Emperor presented himself before the people at the arena the following day, the two Saints, miraculously preserved, appeared there also, causing the people to cry out "Christ is the only true God!" At the sight, Menas' scribe EUGRAPHOS declared himself a Christian, leaped into the arena and publicly demanded the honor of dying with them. The emperor personally stabbed Saint EUGRAPHOS, the secretary of Saint Menas, and then gave orders to behead the holy Martyrs Menas and Hermogenes.

The relics of the holy martyrs, cast into the sea in an iron chest, were afterwards found and transferred to Constantinople in the ninth century. The emperor Justinian built a church in the name of the holy Martyr Menas of Alexandria.



The Nativity Fast begins today!

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 (observed on Friday, December 22 this year).

The guidelines for fasting for the Pre-Nativity Fast are far more lenient and less defined than Great Lent. 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. The "Christmas Spirit" 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.

Incarnate for Our Sake

EACH MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL may be said to have three dimensions: the past, the present and the future. In the past we look to the Old Testament prophecies and their fulfillment in the New Covenant. In the present we look to the fruits of the incarnation in our experience today. The future shows the completion of this mystery in the life of the world to come.

As we approach the feast of the Lord's Nativity, our Church "celebrates the past," by commemorating the forefathers, the spiritual and physical ancestors of Christ, the holy prophets and patriarchs of the Old Testament. To some of them the Scripture specifically attributes particular prophetic texts which point to Christ. Others, simply by their place in the Genealogy of Christ, point to the reality of His human nature and His connection to the people of Israel: "Son of David, son of Abraham."

Finally, our celebration of the Nativity, built around the imagery of the infancy narratives in Matthew and Luke, takes us back to the time of His coming in the flesh, the event to which the Old Testament pointed. As we sing on the Sunday before Christmas, "O Mary, unwedded Mother, in your virginal womb you bore Christ, whom the prophets had once foretold in contemplation. By His Nativity He now makes the Fathers exult with joy!" (canon, ode 6).

Celebrating the Present: Theosis

While the secular celebration of Christmas, with its crèches and carols, is often content to focus only on the past, the tradition of our Church is more interested in the present: the meaning of Christ's coming for our life today. Our Byzantine hymns continually connect Gospel events from the past to the present by affirming that "*Today* the Virgin is on her way to the cave..." – "*Now* the prophecy is about to be fulfilled..." and "Christ *is* born..." Christ's nativity – and all the mysteries of the Church year – are not are not a matter of looking back in time; we celebrate them because they are affecting us now.

The purpose of Christ's coming in the flesh – His incarnation – is to change our life. The early Fathers expressed that purpose in this way: "Christ became human so that man might become divine." As we sing at every Divine Liturgy, the "only-begotten Son and Word of God" took flesh, became incarnate, assumed our human nature. He took up our nature, becoming like us in all things, except sin, in order to give us a share in His divine nature. The fruit of His incarnation is our deification.

Theosis, the Greek term for deification, means that, because God has become one of us, we can become like Him. He is the only truly Holy One, yet we can become holy by sharing in His life. Because of the incarnation, the impossible has become possible: we can become perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.

Our celebration of Christ's Nativity proclaims Theosis as the very purpose of the incarnation. During the week leading up to Christmas, we sing this troparion which portrays the incarnation as



fulfilling the original purpose of creation: “Bethlehem, make ready, for Eden has been opened for all... Christ is coming forth to bring back to life the likeness that had been lost in the beginning.” This reflects the Genesis story of creation, in which “*God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness’... so God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them*” (Gen 1:26, 27).

In the teaching of the Church Fathers, this “image” of God in us means the spiritual side of our nature, which distinguishes us from the lower orders of creation. They explained the “likeness” to mean the ability to act in a holy, godlike manner. With the fall, the Fathers teach, we lost that likeness. We retained the image of God in us, but it was scarred, unable to function as God intended.

With the incarnation this likeness was restored to mankind in the person of the Lord Jesus. He was a “new Adam,” the man that God intended. Christ communicated a share in this restored likeness to others after His death and resurrection. By being united to Him in baptism, we could become by God’s grace “*partakers of the divine nature*” (2 Pt 1:4). We no longer relate to God simple as creature to Creator, but as sharers in His own life.

Christ’s incarnation, then, is an invitation to believers to be what we have become, to live in accordance with this share we have in the divine nature. We can live in a close fellowship with God: the intimacy described in Genesis as “walking with God” in the Garden. When we struggle to conform to the image of Christ as depicted in the Gospels, our potential to reflect the likeness to God gradually becomes evident. This is the path to sainthood, made possible by the incarnation.

Celebrating the Future: Transfiguration

The word “incarnation” literally means “becoming flesh.” The Son of God took on the fullness of our human nature, including the body, and transformed it. He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven in the body. The result of the incarnation is that there is a human body in heaven, seated at the Father’s right! The incarnation is unto the ages. In several of his epistles, St Paul sets forth the Gospel teaching that the risen Christ is “*the firstborn among many brethren*” (Rom 8:29), “*the firstborn from the dead*” (Col 1:18). As He is, so we are meant to be.

St Paul explains at length what the resurrection entails: “*When you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body... So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body ... And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man*” (1 Cor 15:37-49). This “image of the heavenly Man” was revealed to us in the transfiguration of Christ: the human body imbued with the presence of the divine life.

When we celebrate the incarnation, then, we are celebrating the future of the body which the Son of God assumed – and that is our future as well. As Christ’s body is glorified now, so our bodies – our “spiritual bodies,” to use St Paul’s phrase – are meant to be glorified in the age to come. Because of the incarnation, our life in Christ lived in our earthly bodies is destined to be climaxed by an eternal life lived in bodies raised in glory and power – in the image of the heavenly Man.

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, Christine Freitas, John Gallagher, Marguerite Ganem, Loretto Gauvin, Bonnie Gomez, Gail Fisher, Laurice Haddad, Nick Haddad, Lucille Harper, Laura Jorba, Virginia Kearney, Eileen Kennedy, Leila Khoury, Shirley Lanoue, Susan Latvis, Diana Label, Sadie Grace McCallum, Miriam McCallum, Ramona Matias, Susan Merrill, Maria Moser, Joanne Nader, Alfred Nasr, Afef Nasr, Raymond Nehme, Samira Nehme, Blaise Notter, Steve Notter, Steven O'Leary, Ellen Osgood, Josephine Paquette, MaryJo Pond, Sheila Quinn, Susan Quintal, Deborah Roberts, Adam Rubin, Fr. Andre St. Germain, Kara Salvas, Matthieu Sherburne, 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.



  <p>Joe Ashooh, Agent 297 South Willow St Manchester, NH 03103 603-624-1000 www.joesthere.com</p> <p>Providing Insurance and Financial Services Call us for a free quote</p>	<p>NORTH HILLS REALTY GROUP, LLC <i>Residential Real Estate Brokers</i> Abraham Dagher, Realtor 814 Elm St., Suite # 302 Manchester, NH 03101 (603) 629-9988</p>	 <p>Chuck Stephen 814 Elm Street, Suite 503 Manchester, NH 03101 Tel # 603.606.3391 Toll Free 866.491.9675 chuck@glenwoodinvestment.com www.glenwoodinvestment.com</p> <p>Glenwood Investment Group <i>“Grow and protect your hard-earned wealth”</i></p>
<p>THE STEPHEN GROUP</p> <p>814 Elm Street, Suite 309 Manchester, NH 03101 Office 603.625.8825 Cell 603.419.9592</p> <p>JOHN STEPHEN <i>Managing Partner</i> jstephen@stephengroupinc.com www.stephengroupinc.com</p>		 <p>Stephen LAW GROUP P.L.C.</p> <p>Robert Stephen, Attorney at Law 582 Chestnut Street Manchester, NH 03104 phone 603-663-1007 www.StephenLaw.com</p>
<p>Check out www.melkite.org -new educational material is posted regularly!</p>	<p>Your ad here: \$300/year</p>	 <p>Your Ad Here \$300 per Year</p>

Today's Readings:

A reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians: 6:10-17

BRETHREN, be strengthened in the Lord and in the might of his power. Put on God's armor that you may be able to stand against the devil's wiles. For our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness on high. Therefore take up God's armor that you may be able to resist on the evil day and stand perfect in all things. Stand, therefore, wearing the belt of truth. And the breastplate of holiness and with your feet shod in the readiness of the Good News of peace, and in all things take up the shield of faith with which you will be able to put out all the flaming darts of the most wicked one. And take for yourselves the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word.

فصل من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول الى اهل أفسس (أفسس 6: 10 - 17)

يا أخوة، تشدّدوا في الربّ وفي قدرة قوته. لبسوا سلاح الله الكامل، لتستطيعوا مقاومة مكايد إبليس. فإنّ مصارعتنا ليست ضدّ دمه ولحمه، بل ضدّ الرئاسات، ضد السلطات، ضد سائدي العالم، عالم ظلمة هذا الدهر، ضدّ قوى الشرّ الروحية في السماويات. فلذلك خذوا سلاح الله الكامل، لتستطيعوا المقاومة في اليوم الشرير، حتى اذا تممتم كلّ شيء تثبتون. فانهضوا اذن وشدّوا أحقاكم بالحقّ، ولبسوا درع البرّ. وانعلوا أقدامكم باستعداد انجيل السلام. وأحملوا فوق هذه كلّها نرس الإيمان، الذي به تقدرون أن تُطْفِنُوا جميع سهام الشرير الملتهبة. واتخذوا خوذة الخلاص وسيف الروح، الذي هو كلمة الله

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 المَجامعِ يومَ السبوت، وإذا امرأةٌ بها رُوحٌ مرضٍ منذُ ثمانِي عشرةَ سنةً، وكانت مُنْحَنِيَةً لا تستطيعُ أَنْ تَنْتَصِبَ البتَّةَ. فلَمَّا رآها يسوعُ دعاها وقالَ لها: يا امرأةُ أنتِ مُطْلَقَةٌ من مرضِكَ. ووضعَ يَدَيْهِ عليها، وفي الحالِ انتصبتُ وجعلتُ تمجِّدُ اللهَ فقالَ رئيسُ المجمعِ للجميعِ، وهو مُغتاضٌ لإبراءِ يسوعَ في السبوت: لَكُمْ سِنَّةٌ أَيَّامٍ يَنْبَغِي العَمَلُ فيها، ففيها تَأْتُونَ وتَسْتَشْفُونَ، لا في يومِ السبوت. فأجابهُ الربُّ وقالَ: يا مُرائي، أما يَحُلُّ كُلُّ واحدٍ منكم ثَوْرَهُ أو حِمَارَهُ في السبوتِ من المذودِ وَيَنْطَلِقُ بِهِ فيسقيه؟ وهذه ابنةُ ابراهيمَ التي رَبَطَهَا الشيطانُ منذُ ثمانِي عشرةَ سنةً، أما كانَ يَنْبَغِي أَنْ تُطْلَقَ من هذ الرِّباطِ يومَ السبوت؟ ولمَّا قالَ هذا، خَزِيَ جميعُ مقاوميه، وفرِحَ الجَمْعُ كُلُّهُ بجميعِ الأمورِ الجيدةِ التي كانت تَجري على يَدِهِ.

