



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 3, 2017

The Gospel of the Blind Man of Jericho

The Commemoration of the Holy Prophet Zephaniah

THE 26th 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

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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 (1st 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:

MAY YOUR KINDNESS, O LORD, BE UPON US, FOR WE HAVE HOPED IN YOU!

Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise for the upright is fitting!

Today's Readings: Ephesians 5: 18-19 and Luke 18: 35-43

LITURGY INTENTIONS

Saturday, (December 2) 4:30 PM:

For the repose of Alice Jadda (16th), Gerald Harper (13th),
Habib Solomon (54th), Leo Lajoie (46th), Joseph Garrity (23rd),
Philip Ashooh (23rd), Nicholas Ashooh (67th), Walter Marchand (31st),
Halim Zeady (43rd), and Ernest Nedder (42nd)

Sunday, (December 3) 11:00 AM

For the repose of Roger Lawrence (One Year Anniversary)

Next Saturday, (December 9) 4:30 PM:

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

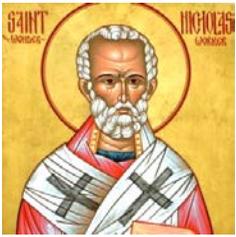
Next Sunday, (December 10) 11:00 AM

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 Dssgher

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





The St. Nicholas Dinner!

Our annual St. Nicholas Day Dinner will take place after the Sunday Divine Liturgy. The menu for the dinner is: roast beef au jus, mashed potatoes, candied baby carrots, and brownie sundaes.

Tickets are \$10 for adults, teens 12-19 are \$5, children under are free. Tickets will be available at the door.

December 9: The Maternity of St. Anne

St Anne was the youngest daughter of the priest Nathan from Bethlehem, descended from the tribe of Levi. She married St Joachim who was a native of Galilee. For a long time Joachim and Anne were childless, but after twenty years, through the fervent prayer of both spouses, an angel of the Lord announced to them that they would be the parents of a daughter, who would bring blessings to the whole human race. God fulfilled His promise: St. Anne conceived and would give birth to Mary, who would become Theotokos, the mother of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. *This feast will be commemorated with a celebration of the Divine Liturgy Friday evening at 7:00 PM.*

The Nativity Fast begins next Sunday!

The Nativity Fast is a joyous fast in anticipation of the Nativity of Christ and is less strict than other fasting periods. Suggestions for observance of the fast vary, but it is often divided into two periods. The first period is December 10 through December 19 and calls for abstinence from meat and dairy. The second period is December 20 through 24 when the traditional fasting discipline - no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil - is observed. These, of course, are offered as instructions and guidelines, not rules or laws.



The church provides us with this brief penitential season, a “little lent,” as a time of preparation to draw near to God in a special way. Set aside a period of each day to be with the Lord. Fast. Give generously of your time and treasure. Receive God's healing forgiveness through Holy Confession. Make an effort to come to the weekday services. Together we can use this time as an opportunity to be renewed in the Lord.

Attendance Last Week: To be announced

Last Weekend's Collection: To be announced

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Wed., Dec. 6	7:00 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Feast of St. Nicholas
Fri., Dec. 8	7:00 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Feast of the Maternity of St. Anne
Sat., Dec. 9	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The 27th Sunday After Pentecost
Sun., Dec. 10	10:15 AM	Sunday Orthros
Sun., Dec. 10	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The 27th Sunday After Pentecost

December 9:

The Feast of the Maternity of St. Anne

St. Anne, the mother of the Theotokos, was the wife of St. Joachim and the daughter of Mattham, a Levi priest. They were entering their later years and were still childless. This saddened them, and they vowed that should the Lord bless them with a child they would dedicate it to Him. Hoping their prayers would be answered, they brought gifts to the Lord's temple in Jerusalem on the yearly Feast of the Dedication (Hanukkah) and Feast of Lights. The priests, however, did not wish to accept them, since Joachim was scorned as a childless man. Publicly humiliated he soon remembered that Abraham whom God gave a son in his old age. He then retired to the wilderness to pray, where the Archangel Gabriel told him that his prayers have been heard, and that Anne will give birth to a daughter who shall be called Mary.

The Archangel also reminded Joachim that, "according to your vow, she (Mary) shall be devoted to the Lord from her infancy, and she shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from her mother's womb. Mary shall not eat or drink anything unclean, nor shall her conversation or life be among the crowds of the people, but in the temple of the Lord, that it may not be possible to say, or so much as to suspect, any evil concerning her".

Anne, meanwhile, went home to her garden weeping bitterly. She sat under a laurel tree and prayed, "O God of our fathers, bless me and hear my prayer, as You opened the womb of Sarah and gave her a son Isaac".

The same Archangel appeared to Anne and told her, "I am the angel who has presented your prayers and alms before God; and now I have been sent to you to announce that you shall bring forth a daughter, who shall be called Mary, and who shall be blessed above all women. She shall be full of the favor of the Lord, even from her birth. She shall remain in her father's house until she is weaned and, thereafter, she shall be delivered to the service of the Lord. She shall serve God, day and night, in fasting and prayers. She shall abstain from every unclean thing and shall not depart from the temple until she shall reach the years of discretion. She shall never know man, but alone and without precedent, as an immaculate and undefiled virgin, without intercourse with man, she shall bring forth a Son. She, His handmaiden, shall bring forth the Lord, both in grace, and in name, and in work, the Savior of the world". Gabriel then said, "arise, therefore, and go up to Jerusalem; and when you arrive at the gate that, because it is plated with gold, is called 'Golden', there, for a sign, you shall meet your husband, for whose safety you have been anxious. When, therefore, you find these things accomplished, believe that all the rest which I have told you shall also undoubtedly be accomplished".

On the following day, Joachim brought his offerings into the temple, worshipped the Lord, and then returned home. There was great joy and celebration when it was heard that Anne conceived. When Mary was three years old, her parents, after offering up their sacrifice, left her to be brought up with the other maidens in the apartments of the temple. For the next seven years, Anne and Joachim visited Mary often until they reposed, leaving her an orphan.



Walking in the Light

CONTRASTING OPPOSITES WAS a popular rhetorical device during the time of St Paul. The Lord Himself used the method, usually contrasting concrete things such as new wine and old wineskins or the plank in one's own eye vs. the speck in one's brother's eye. He pointed to those who would be first vs. those who would be last in the Kingdom.

When St. Paul wrote to communities where believing Jews and their converts often tended to maintain their allegiance to the Law while accepting Christ as the Messiah, he focused on the contrast between those who found their salvation in keeping the Torah (Law) and those who found it by believing in Christ. But Christ alone, Paul insisted, is the source of our salvation and only through faith are we joined with Him.

Not having to keep the Law made some people think that they could do whatever they wanted. Paul responded with another contrast: that between flesh and spirit. *“The Law is fulfilled in this one word, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’”* (Gal 5:14) he affirmed. Our fallen passions – the flesh – push us to abuse our neighbor instead through sexual immorality, hatred, selfish ambitions and the like. But living in the Spirit produces love, joy, peace and the other characteristics St Paul calls *“the fruit of the Spirit”* (Gal 5:22-23).

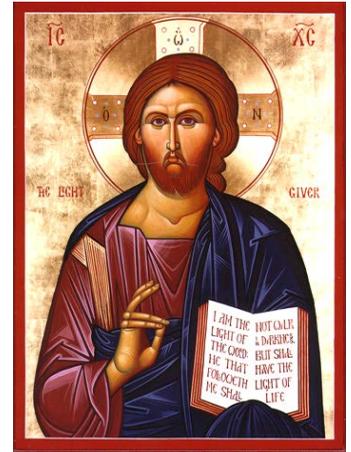
Darkness and Light in St. Paul

When Paul writes to the Ephesians he speaks of darkness and light to contrast a life lived in ignorance of God vs. a life illumined by the knowledge of God. When people are *“alienated from the life of God”* they walk *“in the futility of their minds”* (Eph 4:17-18) like pagans. Separated from God, they try to figure things out on their own and that inevitably leads to disaster: epitomized, in Paul's words, by lewdness and every kind of excess.

St. Paul included idolatry as another example of our futile self-determination. Of course, actual idolatry was practiced in the ancient world for centuries, dying out in some places only in the fifth or sixth century. But St John Chrysostom, commenting on this passage, said that, for those who claim to worship Christ, idolatry may mean something else. Giving service to our passions, he argued, is actually worship of Venus, the goddess of love; allowing wrath to absorb us is actually worship of Mars, the god of war. You more truly worship by your deeds and practices than by your rituals, he insisted, and this is the higher kind of worship! (Homily 18 on Ephesians).

St Paul has been criticized for singling out sexual immorality as the height of godlessness. Note, however, that Paul only starts by focusing on promiscuity. He then goes on to include all kinds of behavior which, he teaches, are equally incompatible with the life in Christ. He names untruthful speech, unresolved anger, theft, and unseemly language as signs of – and here he introduces another contrast – the old man (vs. the new man created according to God).

It may be argued, however, that, our sexual failings are weathervanes indicating our need for self-satisfaction at all costs. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the Church when lust and greed drive its members to turn their backs on the light. Then we see the chilling force of Christ's own words, *“If the light that is in you is darkness, how great must it be”* (Mt 6:23).



Christ as Light in St John

The contrast of light and darkness here concerns our ethical behavior; elsewhere in the New Testament this imagery suggests something more. In the First Epistle of St John we read, “*This is the message which we have heard from Him [Christ] and declare to you: that God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all*” (1 Jn 1:5). There is something about God’s very being that can be described as light.

Later in the same epistle we are told that “*God is love*” (1 Jn 4:8). The Fathers came to see this love as the expression of the eternal relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and, by extension, between the Trinity and all creation, particularly mankind. In a similar way, they came to see light as the expression of God’s holiness, especially in the flesh of the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ, with His holy transfiguration on Mt. Tabor as the preeminent experience of that light in His flesh.

Baptism as Illumination

The Fathers regularly spoke of baptism as the mystery of illumination whereby we are filled with the light of Christ. In *The Life in Christ*, St. Nicholas Cabasilas writes, quoting St. John Chrysostom, “From our baptism, our soul, purified by the Spirit, is more resplendent than the sun. Not only do we contemplate the glory of God, but we receive again its luster. Just as pure silver, when exposed to its rays, completely sparkles so the soul, purified by baptism, is made brighter than silver, receiving from the Spirit the ray of glory such as to possess a proper brilliance such as only the Spirit can communicate. ... That which Moses bore on his forehead, the saints bore in the depths of their souls, but with far more brilliance...”

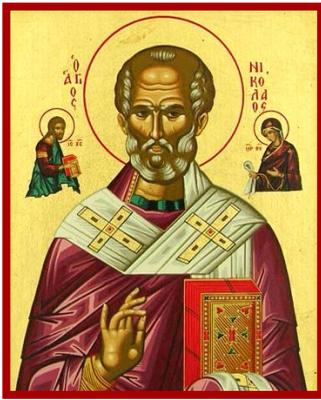
The Light of Mt. Tabor

This baptismal radiance is so commonly obscured in us by our subsequent acts of sin and neglect that we see Cabasilas’ words as hyperbole, exaggeration. Yet it is this very light which iconographers seek to portray by depicting haloes in the icons of the saints.

In addition we have numerous examples of a tangible light – called the Taboric light, in other words, the light experienced on Mt. Tabor – not only in the souls of certain saints, reflecting their union with Christ the Light, but in their bodies as well. Perhaps the most famous of them is St. Seraphim of Sarov, whose disciple, Nicholas Motovilov, described the event in detail. Nicholas was unable to look at the face of St. Seraphim, and said, "I cannot look, Father, because your eyes are flashing like lightning. Your face has become brighter than the sun, and my eyes ache with pain." Father Seraphim said: "Don't be alarmed! Now you yourself have become as bright as I am. You are now in the fullness of the Spirit of God; otherwise you would not be able to see me as I am."

The recognized saints of the Church are not the only ones to reflect this light. The twentieth-century Romanian elder, Fr Dumitru Bejan tells how in the late 1960s he saw, unobserved, two old monks who always stayed behind in church after Matins. “After everyone had left they would lie outstretched on the floor of the church in the form of the Cross and begin to pray with tears to the Savior, asking for mercy, forgiveness, and absolution of sins....As Fr Dumitru watched them pray, to his amazement he saw a translucent flame of light rise and intensify over their heads. Seeing this flame of the grace of the Holy Spirit manifest, Fr Dumitru fell to his knees and joined the two elders in prayer” (Balan, *Shepherd of Souls*, p. 140-141).

Dec. 6: St. Nicholas the Wonderworker



A WORLD-WIDE SYMBOL OF GIFT-GIVING and love, St. Nicholas (270-343) is more revered by the Church as a Wonderworker, and many miracles are attributed to his intercession. Nicholas was born to wealthy Christian parents in Patara, on the southwest coast of the Roman province of Lycia in Asia Minor. He was orphaned in an epidemic while he was still young and raised by his uncle, another Nicholas, the bishop of Patara.

Nicholas was eventually ordained a priest, and was imprisoned during the persecutions of Diocletian and Galerius, which ended in 311. In response to his deliverance, Nicholas traveled to the Holy Land on pilgrimage. While there he reportedly lived with a group of monks in what is today Beit Jala. However, Nicholas was not called to the monastic life and returned to Patara.

On the return voyage the ship was threatened by a powerful storm. The terrified sailors were amazed to see the storm suddenly subside at Nicholas' prayers. This gave rise to the custom of praying to St Nicholas as protector of those who travel at sea.

In 317 Nicholas was chosen as Archbishop of Myra, the provincial capital of Lycia. He was neither a great ascetic nor a martyr, but was widely loved for his pastoral concern for the people under his care, particularly the poor and the defenseless.

In 325 Nicholas reportedly attended the First Ecumenical Council called by the emperor to combat the Arian schism prevailing on parts of the empire. Arius, a priest in Alexandria, taught that the Son was not equal to the Father but created by Him. The Holy Spirit, thought to be created by the Son, was subordinate to both. Arius' teaching was spread throughout the Empire as an "earlier" form of Christianity than that of the official Churches. The Council, called by the emperor to restore peace and unity to the Churches, produced the first part of the Creed we use today. St Athanasius the Great, who was present at the council, wrote that 318 bishops were present. Only two finally refused to accept the Creed, and it eventually became the standard of faith in all the Churches of its day.

Always a firm opponent of Arianism, Nicholas reputedly opposed Arius personally at the council. As John the Deacon described it, "Animated like the Prophet Elias with zeal for God, he put the heretic Arius to shame at the synod not only by word but also by deed, smiting him on the cheek." Nicholas, the account continues, was deposed as a result. His vestments and Gospel Book, the signs of his office, were confiscated and he was imprisoned. During the night the Lord Jesus and the Theotokos appeared to Nicholas in prison, restoring the items taken from him. Icons of St. Nicholas often depict his vision of Christ and the Theotokos returning his omophorion and Gospel.

Nicholas died in Myra on December 6, 343 and was buried in his cathedral. His tomb became a famous pilgrimage site, blessed with many miracles. The tomb exuded a sweet-smelling liquid called the Manna of St. Nicholas. In 1087, after the Seljuk Turks had conquered the area, Venetians broke into the tomb and spirited away the saint's body to Bari. It was enshrined by the pope in a great basilica built there in Nicholas' honor. The Manna continued to exude from the tomb in Bari as it had in Myra. Every year to this day a vial of this fluid is extracted from the tomb, mixed with blessed water and given to the faithful.

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.





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Today's Readings:

A reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians: 5: 81-9

BRETHREN, walk as children of light (for the fruit of the spirit is in all virtue and holiness and truth), testing what is well pleasing to the Lord, and have nothing to do with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For of the things that are done by people in secret, it is shameful even to speak; but all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light: for all that is made manifest is light. Thus there is a saying, Awake, sleeper, and arise from among the dead, and Christ will enlighten you. (Is.26: 19) See to it, therefore, brethren, that you walk with care, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. Do not become foolish, then, but understand what is the Lord's will. And do not be drunk with wine, for in that is wantonness; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and chanting in your hearts to the Lord.

الرسالة (أفسس 5: 8-19)

يا إخوة، أَسْلِكُوا كَأَبْنَاءِ النُّورِ، فَإِنَّ ثَمَرَ الرُّوحِ هُوَ فِي كُلِّ صَلاَحٍ وَبِرٍّ وَحَقٍّ، مَخْتَبِرِينَ مَا هُوَ مَرَضِيٌّ لَدَى الرَّبِّ. وَلَا تَشْتَرِكُوا فِي أَعْمَالِ الظُّلْمَةِ الَّتِي لَا ثَمَرَ لَهَا، بَلْ بِالْحَرِيِّ وَبِخُوا عَلَيْهَا. فَإِنَّ الْأَفْعَالَ الَّتِي يَفْعَلُونَهَا سِرًّا يَقْبُحُ حَتَّى ذِكْرُهَا. لَكِنَّ كُلَّ مَا يُؤَبَّخُ عَلَيْهِ يُعْلَنُ بِالنُّورِ، لِأَنَّ كُلَّ مَا يُعْلَنُ هُوَ نُورٌ. لِذَلِكَ يَقُولُ: اسْتَيْقِظْ أَيُّهَا النَّائِمُ، وَفُتِّمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، فَيُضِيَّ لَكَ الْمَسِيحُ. فَاحْتَرِصُوا أَنْ تَسْلُكُوا بِحَذَرٍ لَا كَجُهْلَاءَ، بَلْ كَحُكَمَاءَ مُفْتَدِينَ الْوَقْتِ، لِأَنَّ الْأَيَّامَ شَرِيرَةٌ. لِذَلِكَ لَا تَكُونُوا أَغْيَاءَ، بَلْ أَفْهَمُوا مَا مَشِيئَةُ الرَّبِّ. وَلَا تَسْكُرُوا مِنَ الْخَمْرِ الَّتِي فِيهَا الدُّعَارَةُ، بَلْ امْتَلَأُوا مِنَ الرُّوحِ، مَتَحَاوِرِينَ فِيمَا بَيْنَكُمْ بِمَزَامِيرَ وَتَسَابِيحَ وَأَغَانِي رُوحِيَّةٍ، مُرْتَمِينَ وَمُرْتَلِينَ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ لِلرَّبِّ.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (18: 35-43)

At that time when Jesus came close to Jericho, a certain blind man was sitting by the wayside, begging; but hearing a crowd passing by, he inquired what this might be. And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was going to pass. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who went in front angrily tried to silence him. But he cried out all the louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me.!" Then Jesus stopped and commanded that he should be brought to him. And when he came close, he asked him, saying, "What would you have me do for you?" And he said, "Lord, that I may see!" And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight, your faith have saved you." And at once he received his sight and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people upon seeing it gave praise to God.

(لوقا 18: 35 - 43)

في ذلك الزمان، لما اقترب يسوع من أريحا، كان أعمى جالساً على الطريق يستعطي. فلما سمع الجمع المجتاز، سأل ما هذا، فأخبر بأن يسوع الناصري عابر. فصرخ قائلاً: يا يسوع ابن داود ارحمني. فجعل المتقدمون يزجرونه ليسكت، أمّا هو فكان يزداد صرخاً: يا ابن داود ارحمني. فوقف يسوع وأمر أن يُقَاد إليه. فلما قرب سأله قائلاً: ماذا تريد أن أصنع لك؟ فقال: يا سيدي أن أبصر. فقال له يسوع: أبصر، إن إيمانك قد خلصك. وفي الحال أبصر وتبعه وهو يُمجدُ الله. وإذ رأى الشعب كله ذلك سبحوا الله.