



OUR LADY OF THE CEDARS CHURCH

A MELKITE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

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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 17, 2017

THE SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS

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 (3rd Tone) Page 52

Troparion of the Forefathers (2nd Tone)

Through faith, You have justified Your Ancestors, O Christ our God, and through them You have espoused in advance the Church set apart from the Gentiles. The saints rejoice in glory because, from the seed of these Ancestors, has come forth the glorious fruit, who gave You birth without seed. Through their intercession, O Christ God, save our souls.

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

The Kondakion of the Pre-festive Period of the Nativity (3rd Tone)

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:

**BLESSED ARE YOU, O LORD, GOD OF OUR FATHERS,
AND YOUR NAME IS WORTHY OF PRAISE AND GLORIOUS FOREVER!**

*For You are just in all You have done to us,
and all Your works are true and Your ways right!*

Today's Readings: Colossians 3:4-11 and Luke 14: 16-24

LITURGY INTENTIONS

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)

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

Next Saturday, (December 23) 4:30 PM:

For the repose of George Kessop (23rd), and Adma Solomon (14th)

Next Sunday, (December 24) 11:00 AM

For the repose of Nassim Sleiman (2nd Anniversary),
by the Moussoba Family



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 two week into the drive - we have raised \$8,900 – over halfway to our goal!**

Thank you for your generosity. - Fr. Tom

There is a second collection for flowers for Christmas this weekend.



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

Sunday School will not be held on Sun. December 24 or Sun. Dec. 31.

Christmas Carols: 7:00 PM on Christmas Eve!

Get in the spirit of the season! Come to church early on Christmas Eve and join in the singing of traditional Christmas carols. The caroling will begin at 7:00 PM and conclude at 7:30 PM, when the Divine Liturgy begins.



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 - Last Sat. 4:30 PM: 20 Last Sun. 11:00 AM: 102

Last Weekend's Collection: \$ \$1,178.⁰⁰

The average Sunday envelope donation: \$36.⁸⁸

The balance remaining on our mortgage is: \$76,504.³²

SERVICES FOR THE WEEK

Wed., Dec. 20	7:00 PM	Divine Liturgy: Offered for the sick of the parish
Sat., Dec. 23	4:30 PM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of the Genealogy of Christ
Sun., Dec. 24	10:15 AM	Sunday Orthros
Sun., Dec. 24	11:00 AM	Divine Liturgy: The Sunday of the Genealogy of Christ

The One Foretold

THE SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS intensifies the countdown to the feast of Christ's Nativity. During the Nativity Fast we celebrate the memorials of several Old Testament prophets – Obadiah (Nov. 19), Nahum (Dec. 1), Habbakuk (Dec. 2), Zephaniah (Dec. 3), Haggai (Dec. 16), and Daniel (Dec. 17). Today we reflect on how the entire Old Testament period has been a preparation for Christ and how we are called to be ready for His ultimate triumph.

Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament, begins with the stories of the creation and the fall of Adam and Eve. Genesis concludes their tragic story with these words addressed to the serpent: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers; he will strike at your head while you strike at his heel" (Gen 3:15). Many Fathers saw this as the first heralding of the Messiah's victory over sin and death. Satan's apparent defeat of Christ on the cross is but a striking of His heel while Christ's striking at his head is His ultimate defeat of Satan. It would take countless generations – from the beginning of humanity, through the years of both Old and New Testaments and the subsequent history of this age – for this event to be fulfilled.

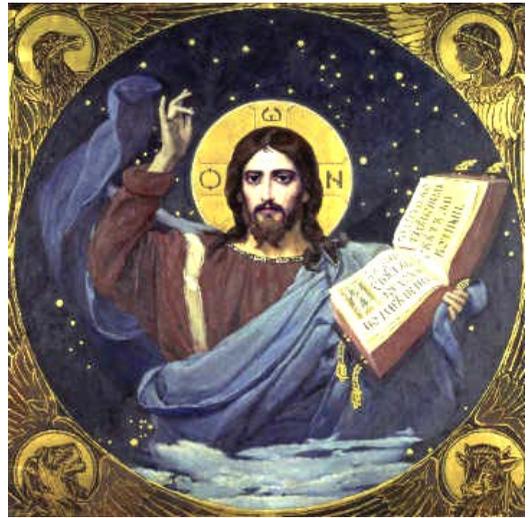
At the time of the Hebrew kingdoms (the 700 years before Christ) prophets were calling the people to trust in God despite the troubles of their nation. Despite conflicts with the Philistines or the Assyrians, and even in the midst of defeat and exile by the Babylonians and occupation by the Romans, the prophets encouraged the people to trust in God who would provide a deliverer.

After the death and resurrection of Christ, the apostles came to see these prophecies fulfilled in a decisive way by Jesus Christ, who delivers all mankind – not just the Jewish people – from its ultimate enemies, sin and death, not just foreign oppressors. Around the Old Testament prophecies the apostles built their preaching of the true Messiah of God, Christ Jesus the Savior.

The Scriptures do not depict Christ's birth as the ultimate point in the story of God's dealings with us. Instead we are told to look ahead to that final stage in history. In the imagery of Luke's Gospel, there shall be a great banquet – the triumph of the Messiah – and many shall be invited to share in that feast. St Paul is a bit more direct: "Christ shall appear, and when He does, you also will be revealed in glory with him" (Col 3: 4).

The great banquet is the final triumph of Christ which we proclaim in the Creed: "He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead..." and the revelation of those who are in Christ as well. "I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the age to come." And so our celebration of Christ – whether spread out throughout the liturgical year or experienced in each Divine Liturgy – always directs us to look ahead to "His glorious second coming."

The Nativity Fast is a time to reflect on our lives as people who have renounced lust, greed, wrath and to reaffirm our commitment to humility, forgiveness, and love, and to refocus on the mystery of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, Who invites us to His Great Banquet.



Taking the Form of a Bondservant

IN REFLECTING ON THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD OF GOD, we come to the question: *Why* did Christ become man? Our answer is that the reason He assumed our human nature – His incarnation – is to change us by making us partakers of the divine nature (theosis). As the Church Fathers never ceased to repeat: God became human so that man might be deified.

But the answer to that question brings us to ask another one: *how* do we become deified? The Scriptures give us a two-part answer: our deification results initially from being united to Christ at baptism. We maintain this gift of our deification by “*putting on the Lord Jesus Christ*” (Rom 13:14) in the way we conduct our lives.



We Have Put on Christ in Baptism

The hymn sung repeatedly at baptisms – drawn from St Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians – affirms the teaching that we “put on” Christ at our baptism. As the Incarnation began with a concrete, physical act, the conception of the Lord Jesus, so our deification begins with the concrete, physical act of baptism. In this mystery, the earthly humanity of a believer is joined to the divinized humanity of Christ. The believer is organically united to Christ, immersed in Him, just as he is immersed into the water. The believer has clothed himself with Christ, a spiritual reality symbolized by the baptismal garment.

St Paul frequently reminds his readers how their likeness to God has been restored in baptism through the image of “putting-off” and “putting-on.” He tells the Ephesians, “*you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness*” (Eph 4:24). He tells the Colossians, “*you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him*” (Col 3:10). Their divinization is a restoration of their likeness to God which was lost in Eden.

According to the epistle, that “putting-on Christ” also connects us to the eternal God in a new way. As St Paul says, “*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*” (Gal 3:26, 27). A person renewed in baptism is, in fact, no longer simply related to God as creature to Creator; the baptized is now an adopted son of God. Because of our baptism it is realistic to call God “Father.”

We Must Put on Christ in Our Actions

In baptism we *ontologically* put on Christ. We are connected to Him on the level of our deepest nature. We must also put on Christ *psychologically*, on the level of our actions and perceptions. In other words, we must strive to think and act like Him. To do that, we must study the actions of Christ and begin to know His mind.

Again, we must turn to St Paul, who gives us an entry into the mind of Christ, particularly in regard to the Incarnation. “*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in*

the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:5-11).

The *why* of the Incarnation, according to the Apostle Paul is our deification. The *how* of the Incarnation is what has been called the *kenosis* (self-emptying) of Christ: His voluntary putting aside of divine glory and putting on “the form of a bondservant” (our humanity). As man He further humbled Himself by submitting to all the circumstances of time, place and state of life which we find described in the Gospels. He put on the condition of a village carpenter who became an itinerant preacher, challenging the religious status quo of the Jewish establishment supported by Rome. Little wonder that His path led to the death of the cross.

When St Paul says that we should “*let this mind be in you*” as it was in Christ, He is echoing the Lord Jesus, who proposed humility as the hallmark of the Christian. After the Lord had washed His disciples’ feet, He told them, “*If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you*” {Jn 13:14, 15). The Lord was not proposing that His disciples be characterized by actual foot-washing, but by humble service to one another.

As the Word of God exchanged His heavenly glory for the manger in a Bethlehem cave, So we must learn to exchange our views of our own self-importance for the “*form of a bondservant.*” In this way, the humility of Christ rather than human “wisdom” will direct our actions.

In addition to humility, the mind of Christ according to the Scriptures is characterized chiefly by dependence on God and compassion toward others. Developing a mindset of humility, dependence and compassion is contrary to the way of thinking most people learn from the society and culture that surrounds us. It requires continual attention and effort to maintain our focus on the mind of Christ. “*Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and be holy in all your conduct ... as He who called you is holy*” (1 Pt 1:13, 15).

St Athanasius on the Incarnation:

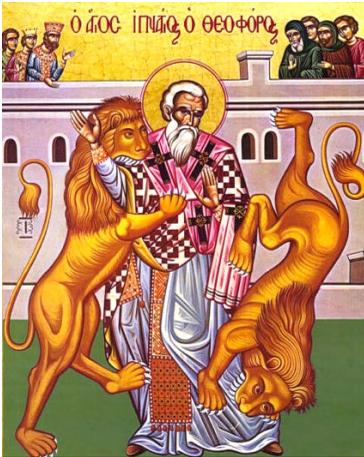
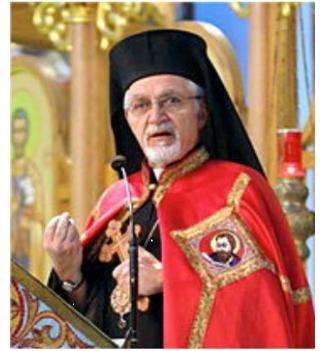
“What, then, was God to do? What else could He possibly do, being God, but renew His Image in mankind, so that through it we might once more come to know Him? And how could this be done save by the coming of the very Image Himself, our Savior Jesus Christ? We could not have done it, for we are only made after the Image; nor could angels have done it, for they are not the images of God. The Word of God came in His own Person, because it was He alone, the Image of the Father, Who could recreate man made after the Image.

“... By surrendering to death the body which He had taken, as an offering and sacrifice free from every stain, He abolished death for His human brethren ... Naturally also, through this union of the immortal Son of God with our human nature, all men were clothed with incorruption in the promise of the resurrection. For the solidarity of mankind is such that, by the Word’s indwelling in a single human body, the corruption which goes with death has lost its power over all” (*On the Incarnation* 34, 35).

The Bishop's Appeal

As we prepare our hearts and our homes to receive the greatest gift in human history—the "New Child who is God from all eternity"—let us remember our Melkite Church by which Christ Himself comes to our families and loved ones. **Please give a special end-of-year, tax-deductible gift to the Melkite Eparchy of Newton** to support all the vital works of our Church.

Evangelization, establishing new missions, spiritual renewal, helping our persecuted brothers and sisters in the Mideast, seminary training...the Bishop's Appeal supports all these and much more. If you enjoy reading *SOPHIA* magazine, please help defray the cost of its production and distribution. In order to accomplish all these vital works, Bishop Nicholas asks **for 100% participation by every Melkite family in the Eparchy**. Christ relies upon *your* generosity to accomplish His great work! If you have not already sent your gift, please do so today so that we can have 100% of our parish respond to Sayidna's call. Extra Appeal donation slips are available in the back of the church.



Dec. 20: The Feast of St. Ignatius of Antioch

The Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-Bearer, was a disciple of the holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, as was also Saint Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna. Saint Ignatius was the second bishop of Antioch, and successor to Bishop Euodius, Apostle of the Seventy.

Saint Ignatius, along with St. Polycarp, were disciples of the Apostle John the Theologian. As Bishop of Antioch, Saint Ignatius was zealous and spared no effort to build up the church of Christ.

In the year 107, St. Ignatius was arrested for the crime of being a Christian and sentenced to death. It was ordered that he be sent to Rome to be thrown to the wild beasts. Saint Ignatius joyfully accepted the sentence imposed upon him. His readiness for martyrdom was attested to by eyewitnesses, who accompanied Saint Ignatius from Antioch to Rome.

On the way to Rome Saint Ignatius visited several churches, teaching and guiding the Christians there. He also wrote seven epistles: to the churches of Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome, Philadelphia, and Smyrna. All these letters have survived to the present day, and contain a remarkable outline of the Catholic faith.

On December 20, the day of a pagan festival, they led Saint Ignatius into the arena, and he turned to the people: "Men of Rome, you know that I am sentenced to death, not because of any crime, but because of my love for God, by Whose love I am embraced. I long to be with Him, and offer myself to him as a pure loaf, made of fine wheat ground fine by the teeth of wild beasts." After this the lions were released and tore him to pieces, leaving only his heart and a few bones. The relics of Saint Ignatius were preserved and transferred to Antioch, and on February 1, 637 were returned to Rome and placed in the church of San Clemente.

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, Mary Ann Garvey, 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 Salvias, 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>
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Today's Readings:

A reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians 3: 4-11

Brethren, when Christ, our life, appears, then you too shall appear in glory. Put to death whatever in your members is of the earth: immorality, uncleanness, lust, evil desire, covetousness, which is a form of idol-worship. Because of these passions, God's wrath comes upon the sons of disobedience and you yourselves once walked in them when they were your (way of) life.

But now, you too put them all away; anger, wrath, malice, abusive language and foul-mouthed utterances. Do not lie to one another. Strip off the old man with his deeds and put on the new, one that is being renewed toward perfect knowledge *according to his creator's image* (Cf. Gn. 1:26). Here there is no Gentile and Jew, no circumcised and uncircumcised, no Barbarian and Scythian, no slave and freeman, but Christ is all things, and in all.

الرسالة (كولسي 3: 4-11)

يا أخوة، متى أظهر المسيح حياتنا، تظهرون أنتم أيضاً معه بمجد. فأميتوا اذن أعضاءكم التي على الارض، الزنى والنجاسة والهوى والشهوة الرذيلة، والطمع الذي هو عبادة وثن. فإنه لأجل هذه يحل غضب الله على أبناء المعصية. وفي هذه أنتم سلكتم حيناً اذ كنتم عائشين فيها. أما الآن فأنتم أيضاً اطرحوا الكلب، الغضب والسخط والخبث، والتجديف والكلام القبيح من أفواهكم. ولا يكذب بعضكم بعضاً. إخلعوا الانسان العتيق مع أعماله. وألبسوا الانسان الجديد الذي يتجدد للمعرفة على صورة خالقه، حيث ليس يوناني ولا يهودي، ولا ختان ولا قلف، ولا أعجمي ولا أسكوتي، ولا عبد ولا حر، بل المسيح هو كل شيء وفي الجميع.

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (14: 16-24)

The Lord told this parable, "A certain man gave a great supper, and he invited many. And he sent his servant at supper time to tell those invited to come, for everything is now ready. And they all with one accord began to excuse themselves.

The first said to him, 'I have bought a farm, and I must go out and see it; I pray you hold me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am on my way to try them; I pray you hold me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'

And the servant returned, and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant. 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor, and the crippled, and the lame, and the blind.' And the servant said, 'Sir, your order has been carried out, and still there is room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and make them come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you that none of those who were invited shall taste of my supper.' For many are called but few are chosen."

(لوقا 14: 16-24)

قال الربُّ هذا المثل: أنسانٌ صنَعَ عشاءً عظيماً ودعا كثيرين، وأرسلَ عبدهُ في ساعةِ العشاءِ يقولُ للمدعوين: هلمُّوا فإنَّ كلَّ شيءٍ قد أُعدَّ. فطَفِقوا كلُّهمُ واحداً فواحداً يَعتذرون. فقال له الأول: قد اشتريتُ حقلاً، ولا بدَّ لي أن أخرجَ وأنظره، فأسألكَ أن تَعذِرني. وقال الآخر: قد اشتريتُ خمسةَ فدادينِ بقر، وأنا ماضٍ لأجرِها، فأسألكَ أن تَعذِرني. وقال الآخر: قد تزوجتُ امرأة، ولذلك لا أستطيعُ أن أجيء. فرجعَ ذلك العبدُ وأخبرَ سيدهُ بذلك. حينئذٍ غَضِبَ ربُّ البيتِ وقال لَعَبدهُ: أخرجُ سريعاً الى شوارعِ المدينةِ وأرقتِها، وأدخلِ المساكينَ والجُدَعَ والعُميانَ والعُرَجَ الى ههنا. فقال العبدُ: يا سيِّد، قد قُضِيَ ما أَمَرْتَ به وبقيَ أيضاً محلٌّ. فقال السيِّدُ للعبدِ أخرجُ الى الطُّرُقِ والأسيجةِ واضطَرِّرهمُ الى الدُخُولِ حتَّى يمتلئَ بيتي. فإني أقولُ لكم: إنَّه لا يذوقُ عشاءِي أحدٌ من أولئك الرجالِ المدعوينَ. فإنَّ المدعوينَ كثيرينَ والمُختارينَ قليلينَ.