



ST. MARY & ST. VERENA

COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH



THE MISSION

May 2020

Volume 24 - Issue 271



5401 Fairmont Blvd.
Yorba Linda, Ca. 92886

www.saintverena.org

Diocese of Los Angeles,
Southern California &
Hawaii

THE MISSION

A monthly newsletter
published by

**St. Mary & St. Verena
Coptic Orthodox Church**
5401 Fairmont Blvd.
Yorba Linda, Ca 92886

Served by

Fr. Joseph Boules
Fr. Andrew Hanna
Archden. Jacob Abdelmalak

Mailing Address

PO Box 2035
Yorba Linda, CA 92885

This is a free newsletter
distributed through your
generous support and
contributions.

If you know anyone who
would like to receive this
newsletter, please e-mail
us the mailing address.

REGULAR WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Due to the outbreak of the
COVID-19 coronavirus, per
the direction and guidance
of His Eminence
Metropolitan Serapion, all
church activities, services,
and liturgies are
temporarily suspended.
The church will be open
from 7:30am to 5:30pm
daily for personal prayers.
Please be sure to check
our website regularly for
the latest schedule
updates.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Schedule & Contents	2
English Article	3-6
Announcements & Photos	7-12
Arabic Article	13-15

Schedule changes
are posted at
www.saintverena.org

St. Mary & St. Verena
Coptic Orthodox Church
(714) 777-8373 Fax
www.saintverena.org
frjoseph@saintverena.org
frandrew@saintverena.org

Please consider donating via
PayPal on our church website



ST. ATHANASIUS THE APOSTOLIC, THE 20TH POPE OF ALEXANDRIA

Born to pagan parents about the year 295 - 298 A.D. It happened that when he was in school, he saw some Christian children acting the Christian rituals some as priests, some as deacons and one of them as a bishop. He asked their permission to participate with them, but they refused saying: "You are pagan, and you are not allowed to mix with us." He answered them: "I am from now on a Christian." They rejoiced with him, they made him a patriarch over them in the play, they enthroned him on a high place, and they offered him honor and respect. At that time Pope Alexandros passed by, when he saw them, he said to those who were with him about Athanasius: "This child would be in a great position one day."

When Athanasius' father died, his mother brought him to Pope Alexandros, who taught them the principles of the Christian faith and baptized them. They gave their money to the poor, and stayed with the Pope, who taught Athanasius the church subjects, and ordained him deacon and made him a personal secretary. The gifts of the Holy spirit increased in him. He was chosen Patriarch on the 8th. of Bashans of the year 44 A.M. (May 5th., 328 A.D.) after the departure of Pope Alexandros.

Pope Alexandros had recommended Athanasius, his deacon, for the Papacy, who lived with St. Antonios the father of the monks and followed his example in asceticism. He manifested his brilliancy in exposing "Arius" in the universal council, when Arius said about Christ that he was "similar" in essence with the Father, St. Athanasius said: "One in essence with the Father." In this fashion he manifested his excellence. St. Athanasius hid himself in the mountains, after the departure of Pope Alexandros for he believed of his unworthiness to this serious and important position. The people sought him until they found him, and brought him to the bishops, and was ordained Pope in 328 A.D.

The historian Socrates testified about him saying: "Athanasius fluency in speech and his outspokenness in the council of Nicea brought over him all the hardships that he encountered in his life." After he became a Pope, he ordained for Ethiopia its first Metropolitan whose name was Anba "Salama". The church of Ethiopia have followed the church of Alexandria since that time. The spiritual and religious state in Ethiopia had established and settled since that time. St. Athanasius was exiled away from his Chair five times:!

The First Exile:

Arius, after he had been excommunicated, tried to return to Alexandria, by sending a misleading and flattering letter to Emperor Constantine, which touched him. The Emperor asked Pope Athanasius to take him back. Athanasius refused to accept him because that would be a contradiction to the decision of the Universal Council.

The Arians accused Pope Athanasius with these charges:

1. That he supported pope Philominus who rebelled against the government.
2. That he broke the communion cup of the priest Eskira, and destroyed his altar.
3. That he killed bishop Arsanius, and used his arms in sorcery.
4. That he also raped a nun.

The Pope cleared himself from the first charge. A council was assembled in Tyre, most of the attendants were Arians, were against Athanasius to look into these charges. In the second charge, the Lord moved the priest Eskira's heart, who had conspired with them to testify falsely against him, and he cleared the Pope from that charge.

With regard of the third charge, Arsanius the bishop, who had agreed with them to accuse the Pope falsely for his murder, came to the council. Pope Athanasius kept him in an adjacent room. The Arians brought two arms of a dead person and claimed that they were the arms of Arsanius. Then Arsanius was brought in, and showed his arms to the council and declared his regrets. The Arians said that Athanasius was a sorcerer and he was able to make arms for him. They became violent against Arsanius who left the council and went to the Emperor.

Then they looked in the matter of the rape, they brought a harlot who claimed that Athanasius raped her. One of the entourage of Pope Athanasius, a priest called Timothy said to her: "How dare you to say that I came to your house, and overpowered your will?" She thought that the priest was Athanasius for she did not know him, and she said: "You are". At once the false claim was exposed.

Athanasius could not meet the Emperor because of the interferences of the Arians, who accused him before the Emperor that he prevented the export of the wheat from Alexandria to the Emperor. The Emperor gave his order to exile Athanasius to Trefe (Treves) in France in February 5th., 335 A.D. where its bishop had met him with great honor.

Arius died a horrible death as Socrates said: "God made Arius to die in a public washroom, where his bowels poured out of his body, and the people regarded his death as a punishment from the Divine Justice." When the Emperor heard about the death of Arius, he recognized the innocence of Athanasius, and recommended while he was on his death bed, in the year 337 A.D. that Athanasius be returned to Alexandria. After the departure of Constantine, the Empire was divided, Constantine II over France, Egypt became under the rule of Constantius, and Constance over Italy. With the mediation of Constantine, the Pope returned in the year 338 A.D. The people of Alexandria received him with great joy.

The Second Exile:

The Arians did not stop at that, but assembled a council, where they excommunicated Athanasius. They appointed instead someone called Gregory, and they sent their

decision to Julius, Bishop of Rome. Pope Athanasius assembled a council in Alexandria in 340 A.D. where he protested against the Arians, then he wrote a letter to all the churches to declare his innocence. However, the Arians influenced Philogorius to help to install their appointed Patriarch Gregory to take over the churches of Alexandria, and they also influenced Emperor Constantius. The people of Alexandria were horrified, and decided to resist, but the Arians attacked the churches in Alexandria on Good Friday, raped and slain many worshipers.

Pope Athanasius sought the help of all the churches in the world, left his Chair, and traveled to Rome. A council was assembled in Sardica, where they declared:

- a. The innocence of Pope Athanasius
- b. Confirmed the canons and the Creed of faith of the Council of Nicea.
- c. They excommunicated the Arian bishops.
- d. Deposed Gregory from his office.

They delegated two bishops to meet Emperor Constans, the ruler of Italy, who agreed on what the council had decided, and threatened his brother Emperor Constantius with war if he did not return Athanasius to Alexandria. At the same time, some Egyptian radicals rose up and killed Gregory in 349 A.D. Athanasius returned for the second time to his Chair, and the people received him with joy. Gregory the Theologian, the writer of the liturgy, described this reception saying: "The people came as the flood of the Nile," and he also pointed out to the palm branches, the carpets, and the many clapping hands.

The Third Exile:

The Arians did not like the return of Athanasius to Alexandria, and waited unwillingly until the death of Emperor Constans. The Arians accused Athanasius before Constantius that he collaborated with Magneutius who was the enemy of the Emperor. Constantius obtained a condemnation of Athanasius and his exile from a council assembled at Arles and another one at Milan. The soldiers went to the church of St. Mary which was built by Pope Theonas (The 16th. Patriarch). Athanasius was praying the Vespers service. The soldiers rushed inside the church to arrest him, but God blinded them from recognizing him from the rest of the people and the lamps were extinguished. Athanasius escaped and went to the desert, and remained for sometime with the monks. The Arians appointed George of Cappadocia, bishop on Alexandria, but the Orthodox refused to accept him and anathematized him. He took over all the churches and its properties. Nevertheless, the pagans whom he persecuted, killed him and burned his body.

The Fourth Exile:

After the death of Constantius, Julian his cousin became Emperor. He wanted to rally the people of Alexandria so he returned Athanasius. Athanasius assembled a council

in 362 A.D., and provided conditions for the acceptance of the Arians that wish to return to the church. He also gave a special attention to the preaching among the pagans. This was not appreciated by Emperor Julian, who loved and supported the pagans. He ordered the arrest of Athanasius. Athanasius went out of Alexandria, and took a boat to Upper Egypt. The Governor followed him in another boat, and when he approached the boat of Athanasius, he asked about the boat of the Pope. They said to him that he was not too far away. The Governor went on his way in hurry but he did not find Athanasius, for he hid himself in another place.

Those around the Pope were greatly saddened because of the much tribulations that befell him. Athanasius told them, that in times of persecution, he felt great inner peace and that God took care of him and embraced him with His grace more than any other time in his life. He also said: "The persecution of Emperor Julian is like a summer cloud that will go away." While they were in these conversation, the news came to them that Julian was killed in his war with the Persians, and that he was killed by St. Mercurius (Abu Sefain), and that he said just before his death: "You have overcome me, O You son of Mary."

The Fifth Exile:

Jovian became Emperor after Julian had been killed, then Valens became Emperor and he was Arian. In 367 A.D. valens ordered the exile of Athanasius again. Athanasius was forced to leave Alexandria and hid in the tomb of his father. Meanwhile, the Emperor killed 30 bishops who were pro-Athanasius. The Emperor saw the determination of the Copts, and decided to lift the persecution, and to return Athanasius to his Chair in 368 A.D.

Although Athanasius reached the age of 72, he did not compromise in performing his duties. For his steadfastness and his firm stand for justice, the world described him by the saying: "Athanasius against the world." He wrote several books about the Arians, on the Incarnation, and other subjects. Abba Cosma (The 44th. Patriarch) praised these publications by saying: "I ask anyone who would find the books of Athanasius to write them on paper, and for those who could not find paper, to write them on their clothes."

Athanasius was the first Pope to wear the monastic tunic from the hand of St. Antonios. He made it the uniform for bishops and patriarchs. He was the one who ordained St. Antonios a priest, and then Archpriest. He departed in peace after he had been on the Apostolic Throne for forty five years.

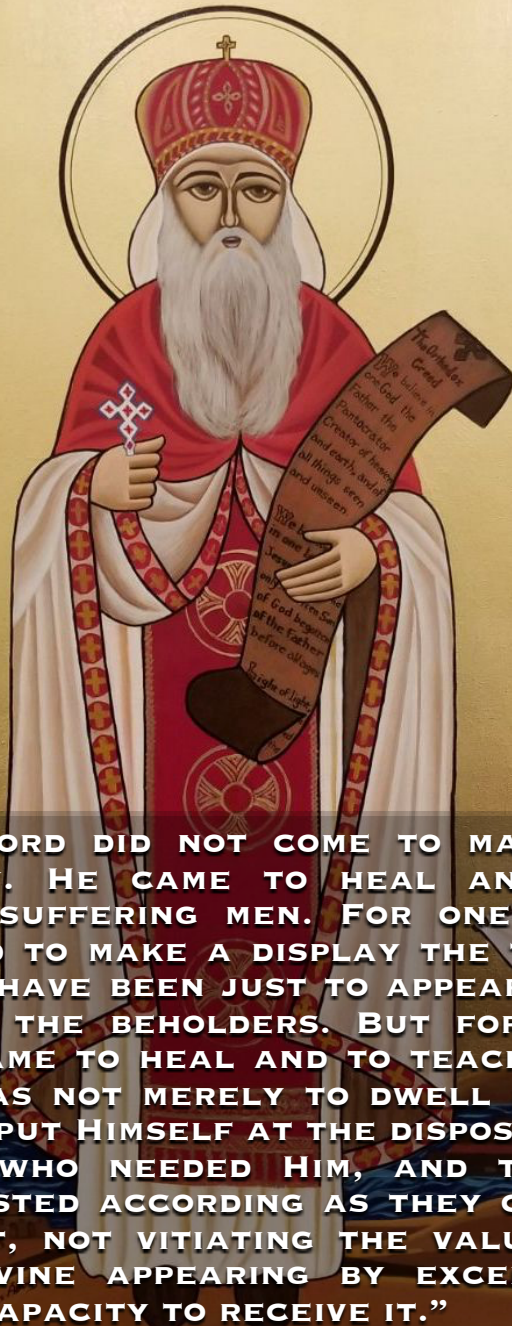
May his prayers be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.

S
A
I
N
T

A
T
H
A
N
A
S
I
U
S

Π
Ι
Δ
Υ
Ι
Ο
C

Δ
Ε
Δ
Ν
Δ
Ι
Ο
C



“THE LORD DID NOT COME TO MAKE A DISPLAY. HE CAME TO HEAL AND TO TEACH SUFFERING MEN. FOR ONE WHO WANTED TO MAKE A DISPLAY THE THING WOULD HAVE BEEN JUST TO APPEAR AND DAZZLE THE BEHOLDERS. BUT FOR HIM WHO CAME TO HEAL AND TO TEACH THE WAY WAS NOT MERELY TO DWELL HERE, BUT TO PUT HIMSELF AT THE DISPOSAL OF THOSE WHO NEEDED HIM, AND TO BE MANIFESTED ACCORDING AS THEY COULD BEAR IT, NOT VITIATING THE VALUE OF THE DIVINE APPEARING BY EXCEEDING THEIR CAPACITY TO RECEIVE IT.”



PRAYERS OF PROTECTION FROM THE CORONAVIRUS

This prayer may be prayed daily by the faithful at home

Lord Jesus Christ our God, the True Physician of our souls and bodies, Who became man to mankind of the disease of sin and death; Who did not reject the ten lepers who suffered from an incurable disease, but purified them by Your salvific grace; Who, being Incarnate, passed Your days on this earth serving and healing all who were sick; Who served and restored to health the paralytics, the blind, those who had committed grave sins, the demon-possessed, as well as those who suffered both in body and soul; now accept our supplication, and by Your power, expel this deadly virus that bears the shape of a crown, which has brought fear and death to Your creation.

O merciful Savior, through Your grace, grant endurance and healing to those who have been infected by this illness and raise them from their bed of suffering so that they might glorify You. Preserve the health of those who have not been infected. Bless and strengthen all those who, out of love and sacrifice, care for the sick and elderly.

Grant us, O Lord, Your peace and fill our hearts with faith and trust in Your protection, hope in Your help, and love for You and our neighbor, for You are merciful and to You do we ascribe glory, honor, dominion, and worship with Your good Father and the Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life Who is of one essence with You, now and at all times and unto the age of all ages. Amen.





PRAYER FOR GOD'S GUIDANCE BEFORE MAKING A DECISION

LORD, YOU KNOW THAT I DO NOT KNOW WHAT IS GOOD FOR ME, AND NOW THAT I AM ABOUT TO START DOING (.....), HOW CAN I KNOW IF IT IS RIGHT UNLESS YOU GUIDE ME WITH YOUR GRACE. O LORD, I BESEECH YOUR GUIDANCE IN THIS MATTER, DO NOT LET ME FOLLOW MY TENDENCIES, LEST I WILL BE CONFUSED AND FALL. KEEP ME FROM SLIPPING, HELP ME, LET IT BE ACCORDING TO YOUR WILL. IF YOU SEE IT FIT, GRANT ME YOUR BLESSING TO COMPLETE IT, IF NOT, REMOVE THIS DESIRE FROM MY HEART. YOU KNOW ALL THINGS, NOTHING IS CONCEALED FROM YOU.

LORD, I AM YOUR SERVANT, DEAL WITH ME AS YOU SEE FIT AS I REALIZE THAT I WILL HAVE NEITHER SUCCESS NOR PEACE UNLESS I SUBMIT MYSELF TO THE GRACE OF YOUR WILL, TEACH ME TO SAY IN EVERY OCCASION, "FATHER, NOT WHAT I WANT, BUT WHAT YOU WILL." FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER AND GLORY FOREVERMORE. AMEN.

Family Fellowship Days

St. Verena Coptic Orthodox Church, Yorba Linda



**Blankets & Care Packages
made by our St. Verena
Church Families**

for cancer patients





coptic cafe *Live*

— a live podcast by the —
coptic orthodox diocese of los angeles



brought you to by anaphora radio

FRIDAY EVENINGS AT 7:00PM, THE CED (CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT) WILL HOLD SPECIAL LIVE PODCASTS WITH VARIOUS PRIESTS OF OUR DIOCESE WILL DISCUSS MANY CHALLENGES FACING US IN THIS DAY AND AGE.

St. Mary & St. Verena Church

offers her condolences to the families of the reposed:

Mr. Nagat Gad

mother of Mrs. Nevine Bishara, wife of Mr. Hani Bishara

May the Lord repose their souls and comfort the families through the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

CEF & Coptic Outreach presents



Merit Achievement Scholarship

*For High School Seniors & Community College
Transfers*

- Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Scholastic tests scores such as SAT /ACT
- Extra-curricular activities & community service
- Personal Statements detailing educational aspirations & career goals

DEADLINE

MAY 31, 2020

A maximum of 20 applicants will be awarded a one-time \$1,000 scholarship applicable toward educational expenses of 4-year schools

[HTTP://WWW.COPTICEDU.ORG/SCHOLARSHIPS-AWARDS/](http://www.copticedu.org/scholarships-awards/)

**For questions,
contact info@copticedu.org**

بركة القيامة في حياتنا

لمثلث الرحمات

قداسة البابا شنودة الثالث

1- البركة الأولى هي أنه لا مستحيل:

يبذل الناس جهودهم في كل مجال. فإن وقفوا أمام الله، كفوا تمامًا عن العمل والجهد، لأنه لا فائدة. وكان هذا هو شعور مريم ومرثا بعد موت لعازر، الذي مضى علي موته أربعة أيام، وقيل (و قد أنتن). فلما أقامه السيد المسيح من الموت، عرفوا أنه لا مستحيل. ولكن لعازر -بعد أن أقامه المسيح- عاد فمات مرة أخرى، ولم يبق بعد.. أما السيد المسيح - في قيامته- فقد حطم الموت نهائيًا. بقيامة أبدية لا موت بعدها، حتى نظر بولس الرسول إلي قوة هذه القيامة. وقال "أين شوكتك يا موت؟" لقد تحطم الموت، وأصبح لا مستحيل.. ولم الناس فقط، بأن كل شيء مستطاع عند الله (متى 19: 26) القادر علي كل شيء، بل أن الرسول يقول "استطيع كل شيء في المسيح الذي يقويني" (في 4: 13). قال هذا بعد قوله "لأعرفه وقوة قيامته" (في 3: 10).

بل إن الكتاب في اللامستحيل، يعطينا قاعدة عامة هي:
"كل شيء مستطاع للمؤمن" (مر 9: 23).

إن القيامة أعطت الناس قوة جبارة. وإذ تحطم الموت أمامهم، تحطمت أيضًا كل العقبات، وأصبح لا مستحيل. وماذا قدمته القيامة أيضًا؟ وما هي بركتها الثانية؟

2- البركة الثانية هي الشوق إلي الحياة الأبدية:

"لي اشتهاه أن أنطلق وأكون مع المسيح، فذال أفضل جدًا، هكذا قال الرسول.. أكون مع المسيح، الذي قام، وصعد إلي السماء، وجلس عن يمين الله. وقال "إن ارتفعت، اجذب إلي الجميع". وقال "أنا ماض لأعد لكم مكانًا. وإن أعددت لكم مكانًا آتي أيضًا وأخذكم إلي. حتى حيث أكون أنا، تكونوا أنتم أيضًا" (يو 14: 2، 3). وحب الأبدية جعل الناس يشناقون إلي شيء أكبر من العالم، وأرقى من المادة، وأعرق من كل رغبة أو شهوة يمكن أن تنال علي الأرض. ونظر القديسون إلي الأرض كمكان غريبة، واعتبروا أنفسهم غرباء ههنا، يشناقون إلي وطن سماوي، وإلي حياة أخرى، من نوع آخر، وروحاني، وخالد ومضيء.. اشتاق الناس إلي العالم الآخر، الموضع الذي هرب منه الحزن والكآبة والتنهيد، الموضع الذي لا خطية فيه، ولا كراهية بين الناس، ولا صراع، بل يسوده المحبة والفرح والسلام والطهارة، حيث الخير فقط، وينتهي الشر نهائيًا. وهذا يقودنا إلي البركة الثالثة للقيامة وهي:

3- البركة الثالثة للقيامة، هي تجلي الطبيعة البشرية:

في القيامة تجلي الطبيعة البشرية، جسداً وروحاً.

فمن جهة الجسد، تقوم أجساد نورانية روحانية، لا فساد فيها، لا تتعب، ولا تجوع، ولا تعطش، ولا تمرض ولا تتحل، وقد تحدثنا عن هذا الموضوع هنا في موقع الأنبا تكلاهيمنوت في أقسام أخرى. تكون كملائكة الله في السماء، بل تقوم علي "شبه جسد مجده". ما أروع هذا التجلي، الذي تمجد فيه الطبيعة البشرية، ويعيد إلينا صورة جبل طابور. أما الروح فتدخل في التجلي أيضاً، وترجع كما كانت في البدء "صورة الله ومثاله، في نقاوة لا يعبر عنها.

القيامة معجزة متعددة الجوانب

1- أنها معجزة ممكنة:

هنا قدرة الله العجيبة! كيف يجمع الأجساد مرة أخرى بعد أن تحولت إلي تراب؟! أليس هو الذي خلقها من قبل من تراب، بل من عدم، فالتراب كان عدماً قبل أن يكون تراباً. والذي يتأمل القيامة من هذه الناحية، إنما يتأمل القدرة غير المحدودة التي لإلهنا الخالق، الذي يكفي أن يريد، فيكون كل ما يريد، حتى بدون أن يلفظ كلمة واحدة. إنها إرادته التي هي في جوهرها أمر فعال قادر علي كل شيء..

نسمي القيامة إذن معجزة ليس لأنها صعبة وإنما لأن عقلنا يعجز عن إدراكها كيف تكون وإن كان العقل يعجز عن الفهم، فالإيمان يستطيع بسهولة أن يفهم..

لذلك فالقيامة هي عقيدة للمؤمنين:

الذي يؤمن بالله وقدرته، يستطيع أن يؤمن بالقيامة. والذي يؤمن بالله كخالق، يؤمن به أيضاً مقيماً للموتى. أما الملحدون، فلا يصل إدراكهم إلي هذا المستوى. إنهم لا يؤمنون بالقيامة، كما لا يؤمنون بالروح وخلودها، كما لا يؤمنون بالله نفسه..

2- القيامة معجزة ممكنة. وأيضاً هي معجزة لازمة، لأجل العدل ولأجل التوازن:

إنها لازمة من أجل العدل. من أجل محاسبة كل إنسان عن أفعاله التي عملها خلال حياته علي الأرض، خيراً كانت أم شراً، فيثاب علي الخير، ويعاقب علي الشر. ولو لم تكن قيامة، لتهالك الناس علي الحياة الدنيا، وعاشوا في ملاذها وفسادها، غير عابئين بما يحدث فيما بعد. أما الإيمان بالقيامة، وما يعقبها من دينونة وجزاء، فإنه رادع للناس، إذ يشعرون أن العدل لا بُد أن يأخذ مجراه في العالم الآخر.

وهذا الجزاء لا بد أن يكون بعد القيامة واتحاد الأرواح بالأجساد: لأنه ليس من العدل أن تجازي الروح وحدها، ويترك الجسد بلا جزاء علي كل ما فعله في عصيان الروح أو في طاعتها. إذن لا يُد أن يقوم الجسد، وتتحد به الروح، ويقف الاثنان معاً أمام الله. لأن كل أعمالهما علي الأرض كانت معاً كشريكين ملتزمين.. والقيامة لازمة أيضاً من أجل التوازن.

ففي الأرض لم يكن هناك توازن بين البشر، ففيها الغني والفقير، السعيد والتعيس، والمنعم والمعذب، وقد تحدثنا عن هذا الموضوع هنا في موقع الأنبا تكلاهيمانوت في أقسام أخرى. فإن لم تكن هناك مساواة علي الأرض، فمن اللائق أن يوجد توازن في السماء. ومن لم ينل حقه علي الأرض، يمكنه أن يناله بعد ذلك في السماء، ويعوضه الرب ما قد فاته في هذه الدنيا، إن كانت أعماله مرضية الرب. وقصة الغني ولعازر في الإنجيل المقدس (لو 16) تقدم لنا الدليل الأكيد عن التوازن بين الحياة علي الأرض والحياة في السماء.

3- القيامة أيضاً هي معجزة جميلة رائعة:

لأنها تقدم للعالم الآخر الحياة التالية. فالإنسان المثالي الذي تحدث عنه الفلاسفة، والذي بحث عنه ديوجين ولم يجده، والذي فكر العلماء كيف يكون.. هذا الإنسان المثالي تقدمه لنا القيامة في العالم الآخر، في عالم ليست فيه خطيئة علي الإطلاق، وليس فيه حزن ولا بكاء، ولا فساد ولا ظلم، ولا نقص ولا عيب. إنها معجزة تقدمها القيامة، أو هي شهوة في حياة البر تتحقق بالقيامة.

4- ولذلك فالقيامة معجزة مفرحة:

مفرحة لأن بها تكمل الحياة، وينتصر الإنسان علي الموت، ويحيا إلي الأبد. إن الحياة الأبدية هي حلم البشرية التي يهددها الموت بين لحظة وأخرى، والتي تحيا حياة قصيرة علي الأرض، وعلي قصرها مملوءة بالمتاعب والضيقات، لذلك يكون فرح عظيم للإنسان أن يتخلص من التعب ومن الموت، ويحيا سعيداً في النعيم البدي. إنه حلم يتحقق بالقيامة..



St. Mary & St. Verena Church
5401 Fairmont Blvd.
Yorba Linda, Ca. 92886
www.saintverena.org