



**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN
ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA
Diocese of Los Angeles and the West**

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF
THE REDEEMER
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**V. REV. FR. SAMER YOUSSEF, D. MIN
REV. FR. THEODORE SAKELLAR, MTS**



JANUARY 11, 2026

**SUNDAY AFTER THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST
THEODOSIOS THE GREAT, HEAD OF MONASTERIES
(CENOBIARCH)**

الأحد بعد عيد الظهور الالهي

THE FIRST ANTIPHON

When Israel went out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from among a barbarous people; Judah became His sanctuary; Israel His dominion. Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us. The sea beheld and fled: Jordan turned back. What aileth thee, O sea, that thou fleddest? And thou Jordan, that thou didst turn back? Glory... Both now...

الانتيفونا الأولى

عِنْدَ خُرُوجِ إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ مِصْرَ وَبَيْتِ يَعْقُوبَ مِنْ شَعْبٍ أَعْجَمِيٍّ، صَارَ يَهُودَا مَقْدِسًا لَهُ وَإِسْرَائِيلُ سُلْطَنَةً.

بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِ يَا مُخَلِّصُ خَلِّصْنَا.
أَبْصَرَ الْبَحْرُ هَذَا فَهَرَبَ وَالْأُرْدُنُّ رَجَعَ إِلَى الْوَرَاءِ. مَاذَا دَهَاكَ يَا بَحْرُ حَتَّى هَرَبْتَ؟ وَيَا أُرْدُنُّ حَتَّى رَجَعْتَ إِلَى الْوَرَاءِ؟
الْمَجْدُ ... الْآنَ

THE SECOND ANTIPHON

I am filled with love, for the Lord will hear the voice of my supplication. For He hath inclined His ear unto me, and in my days will I call upon Him. Save us, O Son of God, Who wast baptized by John in the Jordan; who sing to Thee. Alleluia. The pangs of death have encompassed me; the perils of hades have found me. Tribulation and sorrow have I found, and I called upon the name of the Lord. Merciful is the Lord, and righteous; and our God hath mercy. Glory... Both now... O, only begotten Son and Word of God...

الانتيفونا الثانية

فَرِحْتُ جِدًّا لِأَنَّ الرَّبَّ يَسْمَعُ صَوْتِ تَضَرُّعِي. إِنَّهُ أَمَالَ أُذُنَهُ إِلَيَّ فَأُنَادِيهِ مَا حَيْثُ.
خَلِّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ اللَّهِ يَا مَنْ اعْتَمَدَ مِنْ يوحَنَّا فِي الْأُرْدُنِّ، لِنُرْتَلَّ لَكَ. هَلْلُويَا.
عَمَرَاثُ الْمَوْتِ اكْتَنَفَتْنِي وَأَهْوَالُ الْجَحِيمِ أَدْرَكْتَنِي. لَقِيتُ الصِّيقَ وَالْأَسَى، فَدَعَوْتُ بِاسْمِ الرَّبِّ الرَّبِّ رَحِيمٍ وَصِدِّيقٍ، إِلَهُنَا رَوْوْفٌ.
الْمَجْدُ ... الْآنَ ... يَا كَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ الْإِبْنَ الْوَحِيدِ...

THE THIRD ANTIPHON

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. Let the house of Israel now confess that He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. Let the house of Aaron confess that He is good; for His mercy endureth forever. Let them now who fear the Lord confess that He is good; for His mercy endureth forever.

الأنتيفونا الثالثة

إِحْمَدُوا الرَّبَّ لِأَنَّهُ صَالِحٌ، لِأَنَّ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ رَحْمَتُهُ. لِيَقُلْ بَيْتُ إِسْرَائِيلَ إِنَّهُ صَالِحٌ، وَإِنَّ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ رَحْمَتُهُ. لِيَقُلْ بَيْتُ هَارُونَ إِنَّهُ صَالِحٌ، وَإِنَّ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ رَحْمَتُهُ. لِيَقُلْ خَائِفُو الرَّبِّ جَمِيعاً إِنَّهُ صَالِحٌ، وَإِنَّ إِلَى الْأَبَدِ رَحْمَتُهُ.

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SIX

When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

أبوليتيكيون القيامة بالحن السادس

إِنَّ الْقَوَاتِ الْمَلَائِكِيَّةَ ظَهَرُوا عَلَى قَبْرِكَ الْمُوقَّرِ، وَالْحُرَاسَ صَارُوا كَالْأَمْوَاتِ، وَمَرِيَمَ وَقَفَتْ عِنْدَ الْقَبْرِ طَالِبَةً جَسَدَكَ الطَّاهِرَ، فَسَبَّيْتَ الْجَحِيمَ وَلَمْ تُجَرَّبْ مِنْهَا، وَصَادَفْتَ الْبَتُولَ مَانِحاً الْحَيَاةَ. فَيَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، يَا رَبُّ الْمَجْدُ لَكَ.

APOLYTIKION OF THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST IN TONE ONE

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, worship of the Trinity wast made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the likeness of a dove confirmed the truth of His word. O Christ our God, Who hast appeared and enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

طُروباريَّة الظُّهور الإلهي بالحن الأول

باعتِمادِكَ يا رَبُّ في نَهْرِ الأَزْدَنْ، ظَهَرَ السُّجُودُ لِلثَّالُوثِ، فَإِنَّ صَوْتَ الآبِ أَتَاكَ
بِالشَّهَادَةِ، مُسَمِّياً إِيَّاكَ ابْناً مَحْبُوباً، وَالرُّوحَ بِهَيْئَةٍ حَمَامَةٍ يُؤَيِّدُ حَقِيقَةَ الْكَلِمَةِ، فَيَا مَنْ ظَهَرَ
وَأَنَارَ الْعَالَمَ، أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ الْمَجْدُ لَكَ.

APOLYTIKION FOR ST. THEODOSIOS IN TONE EIGHT

The barren wilderness thou didst make fertile with the streams of thy tears;
and by thy deep sighing thou hast given fruit through thy struggles a
hundredfold. Accordingly, thou hast become a star for the universe,
sparkling with miracles. Therefore, O righteous Father Theodosios, intercede
with Christ God to save our souls.

أبوليتيكيون للقديس ثيودوسيوس بالحن الثامن

لِلْبَرِّيَّةِ غَيْرِ الْمُثْمِرَةِ بِمَجَارِي دُمُوعِكَ أَمْرَعْتُ، وَبِالْتَّنَهَّدَاتِ الَّتِي مِنْ الأعْمَاقِ أَثْمَرْتُ بِأَتْعَابِكَ إِلَى مِئَةِ
ضِعْفٍ، فَصِرْتَ كَوْكَباً لِلْمَسْكُونَةِ مُتَلَأْلِئاً بِالْعَجَائِبِ، يَا أَبَانَا الْبَارَّ ثِيودُوسِيُوسَ، فَتَشَفَّعْ إِلَى الْمَسِيحِ الْإِلَهُ
أَنْ يُخَلِّصَ نَفُوسَنَا.

TROPARION OF TRANSFIGURATION – TONE SEVEN

When Thou was Transfigured on the mountain top, O Christ our God. Thou
didst reveal thy glory to thy disciples as they could bear it. Enlighten us poor
sinners as well with thine everlasting light through the intercessions of the
Theotokos, O Thou Giver of light, glory to Thee.

طُروباريَّة التجلي على الحن السابع

لَمَا تَجَلَّيْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ فِي الْجَبَلِ، أَظْهَرْتَ مَجْدَكَ لِلتَّالَامِيذِ بِحَسْبِ مَا اسْتَطَاعُوا. فَأَشْرَقَ لَنَا نَحْنُ الْخَطَاةَ
نُورُكَ الْأَزَلِيِّ، بِشَفَاعَةِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهُ، يَا مَانِحَ النُّورِ الْمَجْدُ لَكَ.

KONTAKION OF THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST IN TONE FOUR

On this day Thou hast appeared unto the whole world, and Thy light, O
Sovereign Lord, is signed on us who sing Thy praise and chant with
knowledge: Thou hast now come, Thou hast appeared, O Thou Light
unapproachable.

قنداق الظهور الإلهي باللحن الرابع

قَدْ ظَهَرَتْ لِلدُّنْيَا، ذَا الْيَوْمِ يَا رَبُّ، وَضِيَائُكَ ارْتَسَمَ عَلَيْنَا نَحْنُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ لَكَ التَّسْبِيحُ عَنْ
مَعْرِفَةِ قَائِلِينَ: جِئْتُ وَبِنتُ يَا نُورًا لَا يُدْنَى مِنْهُ.

THE EPISTLE

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saint.

What shall we render to the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto us?

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (13:7-16)

Brethren, remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the Word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings; for it is well that the heart be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited their adherents. We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His own blood. Therefore, let us go forth to Him outside the camp and bear the abuse He endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city, which is to come. Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His Name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

الرسالة

كَرِيمٌ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ الرَّبِّ مَوْتُ أَبْرَارِهِ.

بِمَاذَا نَكْفِيُ الرَّبَّ عَنْ كُلِّ مَا أَعْطَانَا.

فَصَلُّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ بُولُسَ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى الْعِبْرَانِيِّينَ. (16-13:7)

يَا إِخْوَتِي، اذْكُرُوا مُدَبِّرِيكُمْ الَّذِينَ كَلَّمُوكُمْ بِكَلِمَةِ اللَّهِ. تَأَمَّلُوا فِي عَاقِبَةِ تَصَرُّفِهِمْ وَاقْتَدُوا بِإِيمَانِهِمْ. إِنَّ يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحَ هُوَ هُوَ، أَمْسٍ وَالْيَوْمَ وَإِلَى مَدَى الدَّهْرِ. لَا تَتَّقِدُوا لِتَعَالِيمٍ مُتَوَعَّعَةٍ غَرِيبَةٍ. فَإِنَّهُ يَحْسُنُ أَنْ يُثَبَّتَ الْقَلْبُ بِالْتَّعْمَةِ لَا بِالْأَطْعَمَةِ الَّتِي لَمْ يَنْتَفِعِ الَّذِينَ تَعَاطَوْهَا. إِنَّ لَنَا مَذْبَحًا، لَا سُلْطَانًا لِلَّذِينَ يَخْدُمُونَ

الْمَسْكِنَ أَنْ يَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ. لِأَنَّ الْحَيَوَانَاتِ الَّتِي يُدْخَلُ بِدَمِهَا عَنِ الْخَطِيئَةِ إِلَى الْأَقْدَاسِ بِيَدِ رَئِيسِ الْكَهَنَةِ، تُحْرَقُ أَجْسَامُهَا خَارِجَ الْمَحَلَّةِ. فَلِذَلِكَ يَسُوعُ أَيْضاً تَأَلَّمَ خَارِجَ الْبَابِ لِيُقَدِّسَ الشَّعْبَ بِدَمِ نَفْسِهِ. فَلْنُخْرِجْ إِذَنْ إِلَيْهِ، إِلَى خَارِجِ الْمَحَلَّةِ، حَامِلِينَ عَارَهُ. لِأَنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَنَا هَهُنَا مَدِينَةٌ بَاقِيَّةٌ، بَلْ نَطْلُبُ الْآتِيَّةِ. فَلْنَقْرَبْ بِهِ إِذَنْ ذَبِيحَةَ التَّسْبِيحِ كُلِّ حِينٍ، وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ شِفَاهِ مُعْتَرِفَةٍ لاسْمِهِ. لَا تَتَسَوُوا الْإِحْسَانَ وَالْمُؤَاسَاةَ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْتَضِي مِثْلَ هَذِهِ الذَّبَائِحِ.

THE GOSPEL

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (4:12-17)

At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulon and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”

الإنجيل

فصلٌ شريفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ مَتَّى الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ وَالتِّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ. (4:12-17)

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ، لَمَّا سَمِعَ يَسُوعُ أَنَّ يُوْحَنَّا قَدْ أُسْلِمَ، انْصَرَفَ إِلَى الْجَلِيلِ. وَتَرَكَ النَّاصِرَةَ، وَجَاءَ فَسَكَنَ فِي كَفَرْنَاحُومَ الَّتِي عَلَى شَاطِئِ الْبَحْرِ فِي تُخُومِ زَبُولُونَ وَنَفْثَالِيمَ. لِيَتِمَّ مَا قِيلَ بِأَشْعِيَاءَ النَّبِيِّ الْقَائِلِ: أَرْضُ زَبُولُونَ وَأَرْضُ نَفْثَالِيمَ، طَرِيقُ الْبَحْرِ، عَبْرَ الْأُرْدُنِّ، جَلِيلُ الْأُمَمِ. الشَّعْبُ الْجَالِسُ فِي الظُّلْمَةِ أَبْصَرَ نُورًا عَظِيمًا، وَالْجَالِسُونَ فِي بُقْعَةِ الْمَوْتِ وَظِلَالِهِ أَشْرَقَ عَلَيْهِمْ نُورٌ. وَمُنْذُنْذِ ابْتَدَأَ يَسُوعُ يَكْرُرُ وَيَقُولُ: تَوْبُوا، فَقَدْ اقْتَرَبَ مَلَكُوتُ السَّمَاوَاتِ.



HOLY BREAD OF OBLATION

OFFERED BY: Fr. Samer, the Clergy and the parishioners for the good of the parish council members, the building committee and the Ladies Auxiliary and their families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Fr. Samer, the Clergy and the parishioners for the good health of all the families in Gaza, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Ukraine and all the countries has the unrest in the world. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Nick and Sonia Azar for the good health of their children, grandchildren and the Azar family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Tony and Marianne Saba for the good health of their grandsons Connor Nicholas Knopf on the occasion his baptism and the good health of his parents Christopher and Jennifer Knopf and his Godparents Joseph Saba and Lody Burdick. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Nuha Nase for the good health of her daughters; Cynthia, Randa, Lora and their families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: George and Rowida Barghouth on the occasion of their wedding anniversary (Jan 3) and the good health of their children and grandchildren, and the Barghouth, Mansour and Jurac families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Nickitas and Narimane Panayotou for the good health of their son Troy on the occasion of his birthday (Jan 6) and the good health of their son Nino and the Panayotou family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Majida Salameh on the occasion of her birthday (Jan 6) and the good health of her children, grandchildren and the Salameh family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: David and Hala Aboujudom for the good health of their son Eddie on the occasion of his birthday (Jan 7) and the good health of his wife Marisa and their sons David and Luke and the Aboujudom family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Eyad and Sally Matar for the good health of their son Sebastyan on the occasion of his birthday (Jan 11), and the good health of their son Sandryan and the Matar family. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Osama and Hala Elmasu for the good health of their daughters Kristina Elmasu Zuniga on the occasion of her birthday (Jan 13) and Jamie Elmasu Kazaleh's birthdays (Jan 14) and the good health of their families. For the good health of the Elmasu, Zuniga and Kazaleh families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Ibtisam Kreitem for the good health of her son Samer, his wife Sara and their daughter Yasmine, on the occasion of Samer's birthday (Jan 13) and for the good health of Laila and Pierre. For the good health of the Kreitem and Halteh families. Many Years!

OFFERED BY: Majida Salameh and her children in memory of beloved husband and father, Basheer Salameh. Memory Eternal!

OFFERED BY: Nuha Naser and her children in memory of beloved husband and father, John Naser (10 years memorial). Memory Eternal!

OFFERED BY: Ibtisam Kreitem in memory of beloved father Michael Halteh (13 years memorial, Jan 7). Memory Eternal!

Churching

Churching baby Boy, Conner Nicholas Knopf. His parents Christopher and Jennifer Knopf. Congratulations.



COFFEE HOUR

Offered By: Sonia Azar (Zalabieh)

Special thank you to Sonia Azar for hosting the coffee hour and making Zalabieh for everyone on the occasion of the Theophany Feast.

(To host the Coffee Hour, please contact Wardeh Asfour @408-718-3339)

office@orthodoxredeemer.org

Online Link: <https://holytransfiguration.breezechms.com/form/26c422>

Services Schedule Every Week

Matins @ 9:00 AM

Divine Liturgy @ 10:00 AM

Vespers: Every Saturday @ 5:00 PM

(Please check your email in case of any cancellations for Vespers)



HOME BLESSING 2026

As a tradition in the Orthodox Church, the priest will take the Holy Water which was blessed at the church, and bless the homes of the parishioners. Fr. Samer will start the home visitations and blessings on January 7th, 2026. You will receive a phone call from the office or Fr. Samer the day before to schedule your home blessing. You will receive your 2026 Church Calendar at the home blessing. If you like to schedule your own home blessing, please contact the office by phone at 650-941-1570 or by email at office@orthodoxredeemer.org , or you can contact Fr. Samer Youssef at 408-375-5673.

General Parish Meeting Jan 25, 2026

The General Meeting of our Parish will be taking place on the third Sunday After the Feast of Theophany, January 25th after the Divine Liturgy.

The appointed nominating Committee; Salim Asfour and Osama Elmasu, Bassam Khoury, Linda Salah and Dania Baker, will prepare the Names to run on the Parish Council for 2026.

PARISH COUNCIL 2025

The Parish Council members' of 2025. Chair President; Bassam Khoury, Vice-Chair; Linda Salah, Treasurer; Dania Amireh Baker, Secretary; Maria Segal, Jad Bateh, Sana Eideh, Johnny Khamis, Didi Kreitem, Maher Fasheh and Rowida Barghouth. Sheila Veizades will represent the Antiochian Women Committee and Salem Aweiss will represent the Men Fellowship Committee.

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN 2025

The Antiochian Women Committee Leaders of 2025. Wardeh Asfour, Rowida Barghouth, Rima Gannage, Diana Khoury, Sheila Veizades and Hala Aboujudom (Sunshine).

There will be Ladies Meeting @ the church Sunday, January 11th after Divine Liturgy to elect the new officers.

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER YOUNG ADULTS

Young adults (college age and up to 39-1/2) meet on the first Sunday of the month and organize social, educational, and volunteer activities. For more information, please contact Fr. Theodor Sakellar @ 408-455-8145

SOYO (YOUTH GROUP 12-18 YEARS)

Our SOYO (Youth Group) is active through the leadership of the Advisors: Dominic Youssef and Caesar Haddad. The officers are: President; Riad Akery, Vice-President; Christina Alnweisser Secretary; Mila Haddad, Treasurer; Gabreilla Ajlouni, Social Media Coordinator; Adriana Ajlouni.

Orthodoxy 101 Class

Orthodoxy 101 begins January 18! Join us for 6 sessions exploring the Sacramental Life of the Orthodox Church. Please purchase the course book using the QR code below. We will meet briefly this Sunday, January 11 to review the spring session. All are welcome!





SUNDAY SCHOOL CORNER

Sunday School Registration is now open. Please register your children

ASAP. Registration forms are available at the church hall or on church

Website: <http://www.orthodoxredeemer.org/schoolregistration>

School Schedule:

Sunday school starts 9/14/25 and ends 5/17/26. Sunday school graduation Ceremony will be on 5/17/26. Sunday school classes begin after communion and ends at 12:30pm.

Teachers: Samuel Hage, Hussam Ibrahim, Dimitry Youssef, Heather Simonovich, Randa Hanani and Jocelyn Mikhael. Caitlin Timothy and Alia Nystrom as back-up/support.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE CHURCH

Please save the date

- **General Parish Meeting:** January 25, 2026
- **January 20:** Senior fellowship & luncheon
- **February 6:** All committees meeting and potluck on Friday night @6:30 at the church
- **February 15:** Judgement Sunday/ Meatfare.
- **February 22:** Forgiveness Sunday/ Cheesefare. Potluck luncheon.
- **February 23:** Great Lent begins.
- **March 1:** Sunday of Orthodoxy.
- **April 5:** Palm Sunday/ Bake sale.
- **April 10:** Good Friday.
- **April 11:** Holy Saturday/ midnight potluck.
- **April 12:** Easter/ Pascha. Egg Hunt.

In Suffering

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

After Pascha of 2025, I went to St. Nektarios Greek Orthodox Monastery in New York for a few days of spiritual retreat, accompanied by Elder Ephraim of Arizona's book "*Counsels from the Holy Mountain.*" At the monastery, I met a pious family from one of our parishes.

During our conversation, the topic of *pain* came up, and they told me that one of our priests, in stressing that we must “rejoice in suffering,” had unintentionally alienated some young people from him and from the Church.

I corrected the phrase, saying: “I believe the priest meant that as Christians, pain does not prevent us from rejoicing, or we rejoice in spite of the sufferings we endure, not because of them.” One of the young men present responded immediately: “I accept that—and I understand it.”

From that exchange I wish to reflect briefly on the importance of precision in expression when presenting the Christian message. Often, we intend to convey true teaching, yet through our human, linguistic, or cultural limitations we end up saying something that contradicts our own intent.

The Christian faith affirms that God is not the cause of evil, yet much of our spiritual literature emphasizes accepting trials and pains as sent from God. How can these teachings be reconciled?

First, I must say that there is much confusion about what we mean by the “Fathers of the Church.” Not all whom we call “Fathers” are of the same kind. Some are called *Teachers* of the Church — such as St. Basil the Great and St. Athanasius — whose writings are doctrinal, written to explain or defend the faith. Others are *spiritual guides*, such as St. Paisios of Athos, St. Joseph the Hesychast, and others, whose words are pastoral, directed to the healing of souls.

We therefore need discernment when reading their works. When a holy father writes about doctrine or dogma—clarifying or defending the faith—his teaching is universal and objective. But when he offers *spiritual counsel*, it is personal, intended to comfort or strengthen a particular struggler to help that person endure a trial, whether spiritual or material.

For this reason, we cannot extract isolated sentences from any spiritual father’s counsel and use them to build doctrinal positions. Much of today’s confusion arises from mixing *personal spiritual guidance* with *dogmatic teaching*.

Orthodox spiritual life is characterized by dealing with each person according to his or her need, capacity, and spiritual maturity. The general rule is applied with wisdom and discretion, according to what the spiritual father perceives to be beneficial for that person. Thus, the great spiritual elders show flexibility in applying general principles. But those who attempt to become “spiritual fathers through books” often fall — and cause others to fall — into serious errors.

We believe that the source of evil and suffering lies in the fallen state of humanity. Christ came and accomplished our salvation so that we might return to the paradisaical condition for which we were created. Therefore, God is not the sender of suffering, disasters, or misfortunes; these are the consequences of sin that dominate our world.

Yet we also believe that when we entrust our lives completely to God, we accept all that happens to us as His *permission* for our own good. The word “permission” implies that God is able to prevent evil if He wants to intervene. As St. Paul writes, “*All things work together for good for those who love God*” (Romans 8:28). In this way, we live in peace despite

tribulation, drawing spiritual strength to face, overcome, and even benefit from our trials. Such an attitude requires great faith and near-total surrender — but it is the best path for confronting every kind of distress.

The Book of Proverbs says, “My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline or be weary of His reproof, for the Lord reproves the one He loves, as a father the son in whom he delights” (3:11-12). The word translated as “*discipline*” in Greek (*paideia*) literally means education or training — the upbringing of a child through command, advice, reproof, and sometimes punishment. For this reason, some modern translations render it as “*corrects*” or “*reproves*.” In Arabic, *ta’dīb* carries the same sense—refinement or correction, a gentle form of blame or chastisement intended for improvement.

These two verses present divine discipline as an expression of paternal love, not hard punishment. In the Christian understanding, suffering accepted with trust in God becomes a form of divine pedagogy, by which means He guides His children toward wisdom and righteousness.

In this positive context, Christians see the trials that befall them—and that they accept in surrender to God—as occasions to draw strength and inner peace. This is also what spiritual fathers do when they comfort and strengthen their spiritual children.

In the same spirit, Elder Ephraim offers words of personal consolation to his own disciples. Let us read some of his comforting counsels, remembering that each must be understood within the broader pastoral context in which he and other holy elders speak.

“How much a person loses when he suffers and forgets his sonship, failing to realize that he is being disciplined as a child of God.” (p. 13)

“Trials come to teach us to become bearers of hardship, trained fighters, followers of Christ who was crucified for us, brothers of all the saints who walked the thorny path of the Cross... the faithful, through keeping the holy commandments and enduring the trials brought by the world, the devil, and the flesh.” (p. 19)

“Trials come to bring us closer to God, for tribulations sadden and darken the heart, making it soft, smooth, and humble.” (p. 20)

“He who bears his sorrows with joy and understanding is freed from his sins and their punishments. A spiritual mark is created within him; he becomes compassionate, humble, meek... But the one who lacks true understanding of his trials falls into sadness and depression when he should rejoice—for he walks the road of Golgotha with the saints.” (p. 20)

“Trials of every kind purify the person who accepts them with wisdom and understanding. Every trial that befalls a Christian is a divine visitation for his salvation, sent by the sweet right hand of our heavenly Father, even though our nature does not like such things— just as a sick man does not enjoy bitter medicine.” (p. 23)

“A doctor causes pain to a sick person—through surgery, bitter medicine, even amputation—not out of malice, but for healing. Likewise, God, the Physician of our souls and bodies, heals us through every kind of remedy, trial, and pain, to grant us spiritual health in the highest possible degree.” (p. 33)

في الألم

بقلم المتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

لجأت إلى دير القديس نكتاريوس في نيويورك لبضعة أيام في خلوة روحية، بعد عيد الفصح الماضي ٢٠٢٥، برفقة كتاب الشيخ أفرام الأريزوني "نصائح من الجبل المقدس". التقيت في الدير بعائلة تقيّة من إحدى رعايانا، وورد في حديثنا ذكر الألم، فأخبروني أن أحد كهنتنا، في تشديده على **وجوب** أن نفرح في الألم، نفرّ بعض الشبيبة منه ومن الكنيسة.

فأصلحت العبارة قائلاً: أعتقد أنّ قصد الكاهن هو أنّنا كمسيحيين لا يعيقنا الألم عن الفرح، لا بل نفرح **بـ الرغم من الآلام** التي قد نعانيها، ولا يقصد أنّنا نفرح بالألم بحدّ ذاته. أجاب أحد الشباب الحاضرين بعفوية سريعة: "أقبلُ هذه العبارة وأفهمها."

أنطلق من هذا الحديث لأتكلّم قليلاً في أهمية الدقّة في التعبير أثناء تقديم البشارة المسيحية. كثيراً ما نقصد تعليمًا صحيحاً، لكننا، بسبب قصورنا البشري واللغوي والثقافي، نتكلّم بما يضادّ ما نريد إيصاله.

يؤكد الإيمان المسيحي على أنّ الله ليس سبب الشرور، بينما نجد الأدب الروحي الكنسي يشدّد على قبول المحن والآلام، باعتبارها رسالة من الله. فكيف نوفق بين التعليمين؟

أقول بدءاً: ثمة لغطّ وتشويش في فهم الكثيرين لمصطلح آباء الكنيسة. فليس جميع من نسّمهم آباء الكنيسة من نوع واحد؛ فثمة آباء كنيسة ندعوهم "معلّمين"، كالقديسين: باسيليوس الكبير وأثناسيوس الإسكندري وغيرهما. وثمة آباء كنيسة مرشدون روحيون كالقديسين سلوان وبايسيسوس الآثوسيين ويوسف الهدوي وغيرهم.

نحتاج إلى التمييز عند قراءة كتاباتهم. فعندما يعلمُ أبُّ ما بخصوص العقيدة والإيمان، لتثبيت الإيمان أو شرحه أو الدفاع عنه أمام هرطقة ما، يكون سياق تعليمه عاماً وشاملاً. بينما يكون الإرشاد الروحي **شخصياً**، يهدف إلى تعزية المعترف أو المتألم وتقويته ومساعدته على اجتياز محنته، أكانت روحية أم مادية.

من هنا لا يمكننا اقتطاع كلمات من تعليم هذا الأب أو ذاك والاكتفاء بها لبناء موقف عقائدي إيماني من الأمر الذي نناقشه. اللغط السائد اليوم هو نتيجة الخلط ما بين الإرشاد الروحي الشخصي، وبين التعليم الإيماني أو العقائدي.

تتميز الحياة الروحية الأرثوذكسية بالتعامل مع كلِّ شخص بحسب حاجته وإمكاناته وقدراته الروحية والجسدية. فالقانون العام يُطبَّق بحكمة وتدبير على كلِّ إنسان، بحسب ما يرى الأب الروحي فيه منفعة ذلك الإنسان. من هنا، ثمة مرونة في تطبيق التوجيه الروحي العام عند الآباء الروحيين الكبار. أمّا الذين يصبحون آباءً روحيين عن طريق الكتب فيقعون ويوقعون أبناءهم الروحيين في أخطاء كثيرة.

نؤمن أنّ سبب الشرور هي حالة السقوط التي نحن فيها. كما نؤمن بأنّ المسيح أتى وأتم خلاصنا كي نعود ثانية إلى الحالة الفردوسية التي خُلِق الإنسان لينمو فيها. إذن، باختصار، ليس الله مرسل الآلام والمصائب والكوارث، بل حالة الخطيئة التي تسود عالمنا.

نؤمن أيضاً بأننا عندما نسلّم حياتنا لله كلياً، نقبل كلَّ ما يحدث معنا على أنّه سماح من الله من أجل خيرنا. كلمة "سماح" تعني بأنّ الله قادر، إن أراد التدخل، على أن يمنعه. بهذا المعنى جاء في الرسالة إلى روما "كلّ شئ يؤول للخير بالنسبة للذين يحبّون الله" (رومية ٨: ٢٨). وبهذه

الطريقة نعيش في سلام بالرغم من المحن، وهكذا نستمد القوة الروحية لمواجهتها والتغلب عليها والاستفادة منها. بالطبع، يحتاج هذا الموقف إلى إيمان عظيم وتسليم شبه تام؛ لكنّه أيضاً الطريق الأمثل لمواجهة الضيقات على أنواعها.

جاء في سفر الأمثال: "الذي يحبّه الربّ يؤدبه، وكأبٍ بابنٍ يُسرّ به" (٣: ١١-١٢). كلمة "يؤدبه" كما وردت في الأصل اليوناني "paideia"، تفيد معنى تربية وتدريب الولد عن طريق استعمال الوصية والنصح أو التوبيخ والعقوبة. لذلك جاء في بعض الترجمات الحديثة "يؤبّخه" بدلاً من "يؤدبه". وقد جاء في معجم المعاني الجامع بالعربية أنّ "التأديب" يعني التهذيب، نوع مُخَفَّف من اللوم والعقوبة يُراد به الإصلاح.

هاتان الآيتان تتحدثان عن تأديب الله كجزء من محبّته الأبوية. الفكرة الأساسية هي أنّ التأديب ليس عقاباً، بل وسيلة لتوجيه الإنسان نحو الطريق الصحيح. في السياق الديني، يُنظر إلى التأديب الإلهي على أنّه تعبير عن محبة الله، حيث يقوم بتقويم من يحبّهم كما يفعل الأب مع ابنه ليجعله أكثر حكمة واستقامة.

في هذا السياق الإيجابي يرى المسيحيون أنّ الشدائد التي تحصل لهم، ويواجهونها بتسليم كامل لله، تساعد على استمداد القوة والسلام الداخلي لمواجهتها. وهذا ما يفعله الآباء الروحيون في سبيل تشديد وتعزية أولادهم الروحيين.

في هذا السياق أيضاً يوجه الشيخ أفرام، على سبيل المثال لا الحصر، أولاده ويعزيهم شخصياً. فلنقرأ بعضاً من إرشاداته المعزية هذه، ولا نبني موقفاً إيمانياً من واحدة منها بمعزل عن السياق العام الذي يرشد ويوجه فيه هو والكثير من الشيوخ القديسين.

"كم يخسر الإنسان عندما يتألم وينسى بنوته ولا يعي أنه يُؤدّب باعتباره ابن الله" (١٣)¹.

"تأتي المحن كي تعلّمنا أن نصير حَمَلَةً مَشَقَات، مقاتلين مَدْرَبِينَ، أتباع المسيح الذي صُلب من أجلنا، إخوة لكلّ القديسين الذين ساروا على طريق الصليب الشائك... والمؤمنون بحفظ الوصايا المقدسة، وبواسطة المحن التي يسببها العالم والشيطان والجسد" (١٩).

"تأتي المحن كي تقربنا من الله، لأنّ البلايا تُحزن القلب وتُظلمه فتجعله ناعماً أملساً ومتواضعاً" (٢٠).

"من يحمل أحزانه بفرح ومعرفة يتحرر من خطاياه وعقوباته. تُخلَق فيه سِمَةٌ روحية، فيصير إنساناً رحيماً، متواضعاً، وديعاً، إلخ. من لا يملك معرفة حقّة لمحنه يكتأب ويحزن، في الوقت الذي يجب أن يفرح فيه لأنّه يسير في طريق الجلجلة والقديسين" (٢٠).

"تنقي المحن بأنواعها المختلفة الإنسان الذي يقبلها بحكمة ومعرفة. أي، كلّ محنة تصيب المسيحي هي زيارة إلهية من أجل خلاصه أرسلتها يمين أبينا السماوي الحلوة، ولو أنّ طبيعتنا لا تحبّ هذه الأشياء، كما أنّ المريض لا يستسيغ الأدوية المرّة" (٢٣).

"يسبب الطبيب ألماً للإنسان المريض، وذلك بالعمليات والأدوية المرّة والبتّر أحياناً ... إلخ، بهدف شفائه، لا بدافع شرّير. هكذا الله أيضاً، باعتباره طبيب نفوسنا وأجسادنا، يشفيننا بكلّ أنواع الأدوية والمحن والآلام، كي يعطينا صحة روحية بأحسن وأعظم درجة موجودة ممكنة" (٣٣).

THE THEOPHANY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

THE SERVICE FOR THE GREAT SANCTIFICATION OF WATER

IDIOMELA IN TONE EIGHT

The voice of the Lord upon the waters crieth aloud, saying: Come ye all, and receive the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of understanding, the Spirit of the fear of God, from Christ Who is made manifest.

Today the nature of the waters is sanctified, and the Jordan is parted in two; it holds back the stream of its own waters, seeing the Master wash Himself.

O Christ the King, thou hast come unto the river as a man, and in thy goodness thou dost make haste to receive the baptism of a servant at the hands of the Forerunner, for the sake of our sins, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

At the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord," thou hast come, O Lord, taking the form of a servant, and thou who knowest not sin dost ask for baptism. The waters saw thee and were afraid; the Forerunner was seized with trembling and cried aloud, saying, "How shall the lamp illuminate the Light? How shall the servant set his hand upon the Master? O Savior Who takest away the sin of the world, sanctify both me and the waters."

- *NOTE: Either during the reading of the Old Testament passages, or the intonation of the Augmented Great Litany by the Deacon, the Priest says QUIETLY the first prayer: "O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son..." on Page 5.*

THE OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

The First Reading

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the prophecy of Isaiah. (35:1-10)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: Thus saith the Lord: Be glad, thou thirsty desert; let the wilderness exult, and flower as the lily. And the desert places of Jordan shall blossom, and be exuberant, and shall be exceedingly glad; and the glory of Lebanon hath been given to it, and the honor of Carmel; and my people shall see the glory of the Lord, and the majesty of God. Be strong, ye slackened hands and palsied knees. Comfort one another, and say unto the fainthearted in understanding: Be strong, fear not; behold, our God rendereth judgment, and He will render it; He Himself will come and save us. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall hear. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the stammerers shall speak plainly; for water hath burst forth in the desert, and a channel of water in a thirsty land. And the dry land shall become pools, and a fountain of water shall be poured into the thirsty land; there shall be a joy of birds, habitations of song-birds, and reeds and

marshes. There shall be there a pure way, and it shall be called a holy way; and there shall not pass by there any unclean person, neither shall there be an unclean way; but the dispersed shall walk on it, and they shall not go astray. And there shall be no lion there, neither shall any evil beast go up upon it, nor at all be found there; but the redeemed and gathered on the Lord's behalf, shall walk in it, and shall return, and come to Sion with joy and exceeding gladness, and everlasting joy shall be over their head; for on their head shall be praise and exultation, and joy shall take possession of them: sorrow, and pain, and sighing are fled away.

The Second Reading

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the prophecy of Isaiah. (55:1-13)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: Thus saith the Lord: Ye that thirst, go to the water, and all that have no money, go and buy; and eat and drink wine and fat without money or price. Wherefore do ye value at the price of money that which is not bread, and give your labor for that which satisfieth not? Harken to Me, and ye shall eat that which is good, and your soul shall delight itself on good things. Give heed with your ears, and follow My ways; hearken to Me, and your soul shall live amid good things; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have made him a testimony among the nations, a prince and commander among the nations. Behold, nations which know thee not, shall call upon thee, and peoples which are not acquainted with thee, shall flee to thee for refuge, for the sake of the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee. Seek ye the Lord, and when ye find Him, call upon Him; and when He shall draw nigh to you, let the ungodly leave his ways, and the lawless man his counsels; return to the Lord, and ye shall find mercy; and cry out, for He shall abundantly pardon your sins. For My counsels are not as your counsels, nor are My ways as your ways, saith the Lord. But as the heaven is distant from the earth, so is My way distant from your ways, and your thoughts from My mind. For as rain shall come down, or snow, from heaven, and shall not return until it have saturated the earth, and it bring forth, and bud, and give seed to the sower, and bread for food; so shall My word be, whatever shall proceed out of My mouth, it shall by no means turn back void, until all the things which I willed shall have been accomplished; and I will make My ways and My commandments to prosper. For ye shall go forth with joy, and shall be taught with gladness; for the mountains and the hills shall leap for joy, welcoming you in gladness, and all the trees of the field shall clap with their branches. And instead of the bramble shall come up the cypress, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle; and the Lord shall be for a Name, and for an everlasting sign, and shall not fail.

The Third Reading

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the prophecy of Isaiah. (12:3-6)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: Thus saith the Lord: Draw ye forth water with joy out of the well-springs of salvation. And in that day thou shalt say: Sing to the Lord, call aloud upon His Name, proclaim His glorious deeds among the nations; make mention that His Name is exalted. Sing praise to the Name of the Lord; for He hath done exalted things; declare this in all the earth. Exult and rejoice, ye that dwell in Zion; for the Holy One of Israel is exalted in the midst of her.

THE EPISTLE

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: The Lord is my Light and My salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Protector of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading from the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. (10:1-4)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: Brethren, I would not have you to be ignorant, that all our ancestors were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized to Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual meat; and all drank from the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

Priest: Peace be to thee that readest!

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

THE GOSPEL

Deacon: Wisdom! Stand upright! Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be to all.

Choir: And to thy spirit.

Priest: The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (1:9-11)

Choir: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when He came up out of the water, immediately He saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove; and a voice came from Heaven: "Thou art My beloved Son; with Thee I am well pleased."

Choir: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

THE AUGMENTED GREAT LITANY (FOR THE BLESSING)

Priest: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

The choir responds "Lord, have mercy" to each petition until noted.

For the peace from above and the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

For the peace of the whole world, the good estate of the holy churches of God and the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

For this holy house and those who with faith, reverence and fear of God enter therein, let us pray to the Lord.

For our father and metropolitan, N., (our bishop, N.,) the honorable presbytery, the diaconate in Christ, all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

For our country, its president (or appropriate head of state), civil authorities and armed forces, let us pray to the Lord.

For this city and every city and countryside and the faithful who dwell therein, let us pray to the Lord.

For healthful seasons, abundance of the fruits of the earth and peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

For travelers by sea, by land and by air, the sick, the suffering, the captive, and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

That this water may be sanctified by the power and operation and descent of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That upon this water there may descend the cleansing operation of the super-substantial Trinity, let us pray to the Lord.

That it may be given the grace of redemption and the blessing of the Jordan, let us pray to the Lord.

That we may be enlightened by the light of knowledge and piety, through the descent of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That this water may become a gift of sanctification, a deliverance from sins, unto healing of soul and body and unto every expedient purpose, let us pray to the Lord.

That this water may spring up unto life everlasting, let us pray to the Lord.

That it may serve to the averting of every plot of the enemies, both visible and invisible, let us pray to the Lord.

For those who draw of it and take of it unto the sanctification of their homes, let us pray to the Lord.

That it may become a cleansing of the souls and bodies of all those who in faith draw and partake of it, let us pray to the Lord.

That we may be made worthy to be filled with sanctification through the partaking of this water, by the invisible manifestation of the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

That the Lord God may hearken unto the voice of supplication of us sinners and have mercy on us, let us pray to the Lord.

For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Help us; save us; have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and each other and all our life unto Christ our God.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: (*QUIETLY*) O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son, Who art in the bosom of the Father, true God, the Fountain of life and of immortality, Light of Light, Who camest into the world to enlighten it: Illumine our minds by thy Holy Spirit, and receive us who offer unto Thee magnification and thanksgiving for Thy wondrous, mighty works, which are from all ages, and for Thy saving dispensation in these latter ages, in which Thou hast clothed Thyself in our weak and poor nature and hast condescended to the stature of a servant, Thou who art King of all, and yet didst deign to be baptized in the Jordan at the hands of a servant, that having sanctified the nature of water, O sinless One, Thou mightest lead us unto a new birth through water and the Spirit and restore us again to our first freedom. Celebrating the memory of this divine mystery, we pray Thee, O Lord Who lovest mankind, sprinkle upon us, thine unworthy servants, according to Thy divine promise, cleansing water, the gift of thy tenderness. And may the supplications of us sinners over this water be well pleasing unto Thy goodness, and may Thy blessing through it be bestowed upon us and upon all Thy faithful people, to the glory of Thy holy and adorable Name.

(*ALOUD*) For unto Thee, together with Thine unoriginate Father and Thine all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, belong all glory, honor and worship, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

THE GREAT PRAYER OF THE BLESSING OF THE WATER

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: O Trinity, transcendent in essence, in goodness and in divinity, the Almighty Who watcheth over all, invisible and incomprehensible; O Creator of intelligent essences, rational natures, the goodness of the utter and unapproachable Light, that enlighteneth every man that

cometh into the world: Enlighten me also, Thine unworthy servant. Illuminate the eyes of my understanding that I may venture to praise Thy countless benevolences and Thy might. Let my beseeching on behalf of this people be wholly acceptable, so that my transgressions may not prevent the descent here of Thy Holy Spirit; that I may be allowed to cry to Thee without condemnation and say, O most good One: We glorify Thee, O Master, Lover of mankind, the Almighty King before eternity. We glorify Thee, O Creator and Fashioner of all. We glorify Thee, O only-begotten Son of God, Who art without father from Thy Mother, and without mother from Thy Father; for in the previous feast we beheld Thee a babe, and in this feast we behold Thee perfect, O our perfect God, appearing from the Perfect; for today we have reached the time of the feast, and the rank of saints gathereth with us, and angels celebrate with men.

Today the grace of the Holy Spirit hath descended on the waters in the likeness of a dove. Today hath shone the Sun that setteth not, and the world is lighted by the light of the Lord. Today the moon shineth with the world in its radiating beams. Today the shining stars adorn the universe with the splendor of their radiance. Today the clouds from heaven moisten mankind with showers of justice. Today the Uncreated accepteth of His own will the laying on of hands by His own creation. Today the Prophet and Forerunner draweth nigh to the Master but halteth with trembling when he witnesseth the condescension of our God toward us. Today the waters of the Jordan are changed to healing by the presence of the Lord. Today the whole creation is watered by mystical streams. Today the stumblings of mankind are blotted out by the waters of the Jordan. Today hath paradise been opened to mankind, and the Sun of righteousness hath shone for us. Today the bitter water is changed by Moses to sweetness for the people at the presence of the Lord. Today are we delivered from the ancient mourning, and like a new Israel we have been saved. Today we have escaped from darkness and, by the light of the knowledge of God, we have been illuminated. Today the darkness of the world vanisheth with the appearance of our God. Today the whole creation is lighted from on high. Today is error annulled, and the coming of the Master prepareth for us a way of salvation. Today the celestials celebrate with the terrestrials, and the terrestrials commune with the celestials. Today the assembly of noble and great-voiced Orthodox rejoiceth. Today the Master cometh to baptism to elevate mankind above. Today the Unbowable boweth to his servant to deliver us from slavery. Today we have bought the kingdom of heaven, for the kingdom of heaven hath no end. Today the land and the sea have divided between them the joy of the world, and the world hath been filled with rejoicing.

The waters saw Thee, O God; the waters saw Thee and were afraid. Jordan turned back when it beheld the fire of the Godhead coming down and descending into it bodily. Jordan turned back at beholding the Holy Spirit descending in the likeness of a dove and hovering over Thee. Jordan turned back when it saw the Invisible visible, the Creator incarnate and the Master in the form of a servant. Jordan turned back, and the mountains leaped with joy at beholding God in the flesh. And the clouds, beholding in the Jordan the Lord's festal assembly, gave voice, wondering at Him that cometh, Who is Light of Light, true God of true

God, drowning in the Jordan the death of disobedience, the sting of error and bond of hades, granting the world the baptism of salvation. So also, I, Thine unworthy and sinful servant, as I proclaim the greatness of Thy wonders, am encompassed by fear, crying with compunction unto Thee and saying:

- *The following is done THRICE.*

•

Priest: Great art Thou, O Lord, and wondrous are Thy works, and no word sufficeth to hymn Thy wonders.

Choir: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

- *The priest continues:*

For Thou, by Thine own will, from nothingness hast brought all things into being, by Thy might Thou dost uphold creation, and by Thy providence Thou dost direct the world. Thou hast fitly framed the creation out of four elements; Thou didst crown the circle of the year with four seasons. All the reason-endowed powers tremble before Thee. The sun praiseth Thee, and the moon glorifieth Thee; the stars intercede with Thee. The light obeyeth Thee. The deeps shudder before Thee; the water-springs serve Thee. Thou hast spread out the heavens like a curtain. Thou hast established the earth upon the waters. With sand hast Thou walled in the sea. Thou hast poured forth the air for breathing. The angelic powers serve Thee. The choirs of the archangels worship Thee. The many-eyed cherubim and the six-winged seraphim, as they stand round about and fly, cover themselves in fear before Thine unapproachable glory. For thou, the God Who is uncircumscribed, without beginning and ineffable, didst come down upon earth, taking on the form of a servant and being made in the likeness of man. For Thou couldst not endure, O Master, because of Thy tender mercy, to behold the race of men beneath the tyranny of the devil, but Thou didst come and didst save us. We confess Thy grace. We proclaim Thy mercy. We conceal not Thy beneficence. Thou hast set free the offspring of our nature; by Thy birth thou hast sanctified a virgin's womb. All creation singeth praises unto Thee, Who didst reveal Thyself. For Thou, our God, didst appear upon earth and didst dwell among men. Thou didst sanctify the streams of Jordan, in that Thou didst send down from heaven Thine all-holy Spirit and didst crush the heads of the serpents that lurked there.

- *The priest makes the sign of the cross over the water THRICE, saying each time:*

Priest: Therefore, O King Who lovest mankind, do Thou Thyself be present even now, through the descent of Thy Holy Spirit, and sanctify this water.

Choir: Amen.

- *The priest continues:*

And give it the grace of redemption, the blessing of Jordan. Make it a fountain of incorruption, a gift of sanctification, a remission of sins, a protection against disease, a

destruction of demons, inaccessible to hostile powers, filled with angelic might. And may it be to all those who draw of it and partake of it unto the cleansing of souls and bodies, unto the healing of passions, unto the sanctification of homes and unto every expedient purpose. For Thou art our God Who, through water and the Spirit, hast renewed our nature, grown old through sin. Thou art our God Who with water didst drown sin in the days of Noah. Thou art our God Who by the sea, through Moses, didst set free from slavery to Pharaoh the Hebrew race. Thou art our God Who didst cleave the rock in the wilderness, so that water gushed forth and streams overflowed and didst satisfy Thy thirsty people. Thou art our God Who by water and fire, through Elias, didst bring Israel back from the deception of Baal.

- *The following is done THRICE.*

Priest: Do Thou thyself, O Master, sanctify even now this water by Thy Holy Spirit.

Choir: Amen.

- *The priest continues:*

Grant unto all who touch it, anoint themselves therewith and partake thereof, sanctification, blessing, cleansing and health.

Save, O Lord, Thy servants, our faithful civil authorities. Keep them under Thy shadow in peace. Subdue under their feet every enemy and adversary. Grant to them the means of salvation and eternal life.

Be mindful, O Lord, of our father and metropolitan, N., (our bishop, N.,) all the presbytery, the diaconate in Christ and every priestly order and all thy people here present, together with our brethren who are absent for just cause, and have mercy on them and on us according to Thy Great Mercy. That by the elements, by the angels and by men, by things visible and invisible, Thine all-holy Name may be glorified, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

THE PEACE

Priest: Peace be to all.

Choir: And to thy spirit.

Deacon: Let us bow our heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

- *All bow their heads as the priest says the following prayer:*

Priest: Incline thine ear, and hearken unto us, O Lord Who didst deign to be baptized in the Jordan and didst sanctify the waters. Bless us all who, by the bowing of our necks, signify our servitude; and make us worthy to be filled with Thy sanctification through partaking of this

water and being sprinkled therewith. And may it be unto us, O Lord, for health of soul and body.

For Thou art the Sanctification of our souls and bodies, and unto Thee do we ascribe glory, thanksgiving and worship, together with thine unoriginate Father and Thine all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

- *The priest blesses the water in the form of a cross, and immerses the hand cross up and down, holding it straight, into the water.*

APOLYTIKION OF THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST IN TONE ONE

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, worship of the Trinity wast made manifest; for the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son. And the Spirit in the likeness of a dove confirmed the truth of His word. O Christ our God, Who hast appeared and enlightened the world, glory to Thee. (*thrice*)

- *As the priest sprinkles the Holy Water on all the people, the choir sings the following hymns.*

KONTAKION OF THE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST IN TONE FOUR

(***The original melody***)

On this day Thou hast appeared * unto the whole world, * and Thy light, O Sovereign Lord, * is signed on us who sing Thy praise * and chant with knowledge: Thou hast now come, * Thou hast appeared, O Thou Light unapproachable.

- *At the first Great Sanctification (on the paramon) the following idiomelon is chanted:*

IDIOMELON IN TONE SIX

Ye faithful, let us praise the greatness of God's dispensation toward us. For, becoming man on account of our transgressions, he who alone is clean and undefiled was cleansed in Jordan that we might be made clean, sanctifying us and the waters and breaking the heads of the dragons in the water. Let us then draw water in gladness, O brethren; for upon those who draw with faith, the grace of the Spirit is invisibly bestowed by Christ, the God and Savior of our souls.

- *At the second Great Sanctification (on January 6) the following idiomelon is chanted:*

IDIOMELON IN TONE TWO

The Trinity was made manifest in the Jordan. For, supreme in Godhead, the Father proclaimed, saying, "He Who is here baptized is My beloved Son," and the Spirit rested upon His Equal in Godhead, whom the peoples bless and exalt above all forever.

- *The Sanctified Water may be distributed amongst the clergy and faithful after The Great Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy.*

SENIOR FELLOWSHIP & LUNCH

Join us for a joyful afternoon of fellowship, Bingo, and lunch as we gather in community. All seniors 70 or older are welcome and encouraged to attend.



Date: January 20th, 2026



Time: 11:00am - 2pm



Activity: Bingo & Prizes



Location:

Our Church Hall

RSVP: office@orthodoxredeemer.org



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(408) 594-3000

Orthodox Church of the Redeemer
380 Magdalena Ave. Los Altos Hills, CA 94024



BUILDING OUR FUTURE TOGETHER

End-of-Year Campaign Update



- Raised: \$3.5M for the new hall & learning center
- County requirements nearly complete
- Promising discussions with school operators
- Goal: Break ground by mid-2026
- Remaining need: **\$750,000** for loan approval



If you are able, please consider an end-of-year tax-deductible gift to support our parish's future.

GIVE TO ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER



<https://www.orthodoxredeemer.org/funds>

