



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

**ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF  
THE REDEEMER**  
**380 MAGDALENA AVE, LOS ALTOS HILLS, CA 94024**  
**PHONE: (650) 941-1570**

[www.orthodoxredeemer.org](http://www.orthodoxredeemer.org)

**V. REV. FR. SAMER YOUSSEF, D. MIN**  
**REV. FR. THEODORE SAKELLAR, MTS**



**JANUARY 18, 2026**

**ATHANASIOS AND CYRIL, PATRIARCHS OF ALEXANDRIA  
& TWELFTH SUNDAY OF LUKE**

MARTYR THEODOULA OF ANAZARBUS AND HER COMPANIONS; MAXIMOS,  
SERBIAN RULER

القديسين أثناسيوس وكيرلس  
والأحد الثاني عشر من القديس لوقا الانجيلي

## **RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SEVEN**

Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world the Great Mercy.

### **أبوليتيكيون القيامة بالحن السابع**

حَطَمْتَ بِصَلِيلِكَ الْمَوْتَ، وَفَتَحْتَ لِلصَّ الْفِرْدَوْسَ، وَحَوَّلْتَ نَوَاحٍ حَامِلَاتِ الطَّيِّبِ، وَأَمَرْتَ رُسُلَكَ أَنْ يَكْرِزُوا، بِأَنَّكَ قَدْ قُمْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهَ، مَانِحاً الْعَالَمَ الرَّحْمَةَ الْعُظْمَى.

## **APOLYTIKION OF SS. ATHANASIUS & CYRIL IN TONE THREE**

Shining forth with works of Orthodoxy, ye quenched every false belief and teaching and became trophy-bearers and conquerors. And since ye made all things rich with true piety, greatly adorning the Church with magnificence, Athanasius and wise Cyril, ye justly found Christ God, Who through your prayers doth grant Great Mercy unto all.

### **أبوليتيكيون القديسين أثناسيوس وكيرلس بالحن الثالث**

تَلَأَلْنَا بِأَفْعَالِكُمَا فِي سَبِيلِ الْإِيمَانِ الْقَوِيمِ، وَدَحَضْنَا كُلَّ تَعْلِيمٍ فَاسِدٍ، فَغَدَوْنَا ظَافِرِينَ حَامِلِينَ الْغَنَائِمَ، وَأَغْنَيْنَا الْجَمِيعَ بِالنَّقْوَى، وَرَبَّيْنَا الْكَنِيسَةَ زِينَةً عَظِيمَةً، فَأُهْلَلْنَا أَنْ تَجِدَا الْمَسِيحَ الْإِلَهَ، الْوَاهِبَ الْجَمِيعَ عَظِيمَ الرَّحْمَةِ.

## **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.

### **طروبارية التجلي على الحن السابع**

لَمَا تَجَلَّيْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهَ فِي الْجَبَلِ، أَظْهَرْتَ مَجْدَكَ لِلتَّالِمِذٍ بِحَسْبِمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا. فَأَشْرَقَ لَنَا نَحْنُ الْخَطَاةَ نورك الأزلي، بشفاعته والدة الإله، يا مانح النور المجد لك.

# KONTAKION OF THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN TONE

## ONE

Thou, O Christ God, Who by Thy Birth, didst sanctify the Virgin's womb, and, as is meet, didst bless Simeon's arms, and didst also come to save us; preserve Thy fold in wars, and confirm them whom Thou didst love, for Thou alone art the Lover of mankind.

### قنْدَاقُ دُخُولِ السَّيِّدِ إِلَى الْهَيْكَلِ بِاللَّحْنِ الْأَوَّلِ

أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهُ، يَا مَنْ بِمَوْلِدِهِ قَدَّسَ الْمُسْتَوْدَعَ الْبَتُولِيَّ، وَبَارَكَ يَدَيَّ سِمْعَانَ كَمَا لَاقَ، وَأَدْرَكْنَا الْآنَ وَخَلَّصْنَا؛ إِحْفَظْ رَعِيَّتَكَ بِسَلَامٍ فِي الْحُرُوبِ، وَأَيِّدِ الْمُلُوكَ الَّذِينَ أَحَبَبْتَهُمْ، بِمَا أَنَّكَ وَحْدَكَ مُحِبٌّ لِلْبَشَرِ.

## THE EPISTLE

*Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers.*

*For Thou are justified in all that Thou hast done for 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

مُبَارَكٌ أَنْتَ يَا رَبُّ إِلَهَ آبَائِنَا.

لَأَنَّكَ عَدَلْتَ فِي كُلِّ مَا صَنَعْتَ بِنَا.

**فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولُسِ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى الْعِبْرَانِيِّينَ. (7:13-16)**

يَا إِخْوَتِي، اذْكُرُوا مُدَبِّرِيكُمْ الَّذِينَ كَلَّمُوكُمْ بِكَلِمَةِ اللَّهِ. تَأَمَّلُوا فِي عَاقِبَةِ تَصَرُّفِهِمْ وَاقْتَدُوا بِإِيمَانِهِمْ. إِنَّ يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحَ هُوَ هُوَ، أَمْسِ وَالْيَوْمَ وَإِلَى مَدَى الدَّهْرِ. لَا تَتَّقَادُوا لِتَعَالِيمِ مُتَنَوِّعَةٍ غَرِيبَةٍ. فَإِنَّهُ يَحْسُنُ أَنْ يُثَبَّتَ الْقَلْبُ بِالنِّعْمَةِ لَا بِالْأَطْعِمَةِ الَّتِي لَمْ يَنْتَفِعِ الَّذِينَ تَعَاطَوْهَا. إِنَّ لَنَا مَذْبَحًا، لَا سُلْطَانَ لِلَّذِينَ يَخْدُمُونَ الْمَسْكِينَ أَنْ يَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ. لِأَنَّ الْحَيَوَانَاتِ الَّتِي يَدْخُلُ بِدَمِهَا عَنِ الْخَطِيئَةِ إِلَى الْأَقْدَاسِ بِيَدِ رَئِيسِ الْكَهَنَةِ، تُحْرَقُ أَجْسَامُهَا خَارِجَ الْمَحَلَّةِ. فَذَلِكَ يَسُوعُ أَيْضًا تَأَلَّمَ خَارِجَ الْبَابِ لِيُقَدِّسَ الشَّعْبَ بِدَمِ نَفْسِهِ. فَلْنُخْرِجْ إِذْنًا إِلَيْهِ، إِلَى خَارِجِ الْمَحَلَّةِ، حَامِلِينَ عَارَهُ. لِأَنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَنَا هَهُنَا مَدِينَةٌ بَاقِيَّةٌ، بَلْ نَطْلُبُ الْآتِيَّةِ. فَلْنُقَرِّبْ بِهِ إِذْنًا ذَبِيحَةَ التَّسْبِيحِ كُلِّ حِينٍ، وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ شِفَاهِ مُعْتَرِفَةٍ لاسْمِهِ. لَا تَنْسُوا الْإِحْسَانَ وَالْمُؤَاسَاةَ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْضِي مِثْلَ هَذِهِ الذَّبَائِحِ.

## THE GOSPEL

**The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (17:12-19)**

At that time, as Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” When He saw them He said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus said, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” And He said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

## الإنجيل

**فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ لُوقَا الْبَشِيرِ التِّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ. (17:12-19)**

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانِ، فِيمَا يَسُوعُ دَاخِلٌ إِلَى قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَقْبَلَهُ عَشْرَةُ رِجَالٍ بُرْصٍ وَوَقَفُوا مِنْ بَعِيدٍ، وَرَفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَهُمْ قَائِلِينَ: يَا يَسُوعُ الْمُعَلِّمُ ارْحَمْنَا. فَلَمَّا رَأَاهُمْ قَالَ لَهُمْ امْضُوا وَأَرَوْا الْكَهَنَةَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ. وَفِيمَا هُمْ

مُنْطَلِقُونَ طَهَرُوا. وَإِنَّ وَاحِدًا مِنْهُمْ، لَمَّا رَأَى أَنَّهُ قَدْ بَرِيَ، رَجَعَ يُمَجِّدُ اللَّهَ بِصَوْتٍ عَظِيمٍ. وَخَرَّ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ عِنْدَ قَدَمَيْهِ شَاكِرًا لَهُ وَكَانَ سَامِرِيًّا، فَأَجَابَ يَسُوعُ وَقَالَ، أَلَيْسَ الْعَشْرَةُ قَدْ طَهَرُوا فَأَيْنَ التَّسْعَةُ؟ أَلَمْ يُوجَدَ مَنْ يَرْجِعُ لِيُمَجِّدَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا هَذَا الْأَجْنَبِيُّ؟ وَقَالَ لَهُ، قُمْ وَامْضِ، إِيْمَانُكَ قَدْ خَلَّصَكَ.

### **TRISAGION PRAYER**

3-9 Day Memorial service in memory of Hani Nijmeh, offered by his mother Zahie Nijmeh and family. Memory Eternal!

### **TRISAGION PRAYER**

40 Day Memorial Service in memory of Tancho Veizades, offered by her son Henry, his wife Sheila, their children Gregory and Michael, Marge Hanna and the Veizades family.



### **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:** Fr. Samer, the Clergy and the parishioners for the good health of the Antiochian Women Committee Leaders of 2026. Roula Haddad Dania Amireh, Wardeh Asfour, Ibtisam Kreitem, Rima Gannage, Diana Khoury and their families. Many Years!

**OFFERED BY:** Maher, Randa and Eli Hanani for the good health of Tatiana on the occasion of her Saint Name Day (Jan 12). Many Years!

**OFFERED BY:** Suzan Barghash for the good health of her husband Hadi on the occasion of his birthday (Jan 12) and the good health of their children, grandson Bruce and the Barghash family. Many Years!

**OFFERED BY:** George Omran for the good health of his wife Jeanette on the occasion of her birthday (Jan 12) and the good health of the Omran family. Many Years!



### **COFFEE HOUR**

Offered By: Nijmeh and Veizades Families

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

[office@orthodoxredeemer.org](mailto: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 7<sup>th</sup>, 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](mailto: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 25<sup>th</sup> 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 2026. Roula Haddad (Chairwoman), Dania Amireh (Vice- Chairwoman), Wardeh Asfour (Kitchen/Coffee Hour), Rima Gannage (Bookkeeping) and Diana Khoury (Myrrh Barrier).

**There will be installations of the new officers @ the church Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup> after Divine Liturgy.**

### **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**

This Sunday in our 101 class, we'll explore what we mean when the Church speaks of sacraments—also called mysteries. Together, we'll reflect on how the sacraments are not just ideas or rituals, but real ways we participate in our life with Christ. We'll also talk about Holy Water: what it is, how we use it in the Church, and how it can be part of our prayer life at home.

Next classes:

Jan 18 - Sacramental Life & The Blessing of the Waters

Jan 25 - No Class (Church Meeting)

Feb 1 - The Liturgy & The Eucharist

All are welcome! Registration is open for inquirers and catechumens via the QR code below.



**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.



## **Candle Decorating for the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord**

All Sunday School children are invited to a **candle decorating activity on Saturday, February 1st**, in celebration of the **Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple (February 2nd)**. Young adults are also encouraged to participate and help with the craft.

The candles will be **blessed in church on Sunday, February 9th**, and then returned to the children to use during **Palm Sunday and Holy Week services**.

This is a beautiful way for our children to participate in the life of the Church and prepare for the upcoming Lenten season.

We hope you'll join us!

## **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 21:** *All you can eat Crab & Seafood dinner*
- **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*

# Antiochian Orthodox Church of the Redeemer

380 Magdalena Avenue  
Los Altos Hills, CA 94024



Phone: 650 941 1570

[WWW.orthodoxredeemer.org](http://WWW.orthodoxredeemer.org)

*V. Rev. Fr. Samer Youssef, Pastor. DMin.*

Dear Beloved Parishioners,

January 2, 2026

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

As we begin this New Year with gratitude to God for His many blessings, we warmly invite you to attend our Annual Parish Meeting. This gathering is not only an opportunity to reflect on the past year but also to look forward together with faith and hope as we continue to serve Christ and build His Church.

The annual parish meeting will be held after the Divine Liturgy on **Sunday, January 25, 2026 @ 12:30 pm.**

We invite each family to attend in person if you wish or to log onto this Zoom link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88037247195?pwd=ybCHbu40D2W9W1DC5oiEDLrPyKFQto.1>

The following individuals are the current nominees for election to the Parish Council. Four will be elected for a term of two years:

**Bassam Khoury**  
**Henry Veizades**

**Johnny Khamis**  
**Rima Gannage**

**Jake Timothy**  
**Salem Aweiss**

**Edmund Khinno**

The following Parish Council Members will continue their last year of their two-year terms:

**Jad Bateh**

**Sana Eideh**

**Maher Fasheh**

**Linda Salah**

The voting this year will be by mail. The ballot is included in this envelope. Please vote for only four (4) members from the nominees above. Place the ballot in the return envelope and send it to the church office. Please return all ballots no **later than 20<sup>th</sup> of January in order to be counted on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

The agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1-Call to Order, 2-Opening Prayer, 3-Priest's Report, 4-Parish Council Chairman's Report, 5- Auxiliary Reports, 6 - Treasurer's Report 7 - Build Committee Report, 8- Election results, and 9-Adjournment.

Your presence is truly valued as we gather to reflect on the life of our parish, share important updates, and make key decisions for the year ahead. Let us come together in unity, prayer, and love, strengthening our bond as a church family.

May our Lord Jesus Christ continue to bless the ministry of the Church of the Redeemer. Wishing you all a joyful and blessed New Year!

Yours in Christ,

V. Rev. Fr. Samer Youssef, DMin  
Pastor

Bassam Khoury  
Parish Council Chairman

ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE

## **“Bethany Houses” for Our Time**

*By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)*

I was compelled to travel earlier than planned, before the meeting of the Holy Antiochian Synod in October of last year (2025), to Lebanon in order to attend to several personal matters. During that time, I was given the opportunity to stay for a period in a retreat house belonging to one of our monasteries there. From it, I would go out to attend to the matters that had brought me, and then return.

That period granted me something I deeply needed: inner calm, through intensified prayer, reading, and walking in nature. I have long emphasized the importance of spiritual retreats. Although my retreat was in a sense forced and mixed with necessary obligations, I nonetheless experienced its benefit, both spiritually and physically.

The Orthodox tradition is well acquainted with frequenting monasteries. Traditionally, spiritual retreats in the Orthodox world consist of spending a few days in a monastery, during which the believer follows the monastery’s daily cycle of prayers. In addition, the elder or abbess assigns a personal rule that includes spiritual reading, a prayer rule, and work.

Since monasteries are unable to receive all the faithful, many parishes in recent years have turned to organizing group spiritual retreats—whether in monasteries, parishes, or nearby suitable locations—where participants spend one or more days in an atmosphere of prayer, reading, spiritual conversation, and shared life. These retreats help people recover something of a return to themselves, granting inner peace and allowing them to taste the joy of Christian fellowship within the family of Christ.

The contemporary human being lives under mounting tension caused by the accelerating pace of daily life and its pressures. Long working hours, economic strain, exhausting commutes, consumerist lifestyles, and constant preoccupation with livelihood concerns—along with many other factors—have led to exhaustion, frayed nerves, loss of inner balance, mental confusion, and depression that has become one of the most widespread illnesses of our age. Medical statistics indicate that sedatives are among the most commonly sold medications.

All of this requires that the Church not limit herself to preaching and teaching alone, but that she accompany them with renewed pastoral ministry and care for the human person, both collectively and individually. This need is one of the reasons behind my call to revive the ministry of the diaconate in our Archdiocese. At the Archdiocese Convention in 2023, I also called for the revival of prayer groups in parishes and spoke briefly about retreat houses.

People today need the Church’s help in organizing short or extended spiritual retreats, taking into account small groups—no more than twenty participants—in quiet, natural settings close to the parish, both to reduce costs and to encourage those with limited means to participate. Participants spend the day in common, quiet prayer. The program

should include times for silence, spiritual reading, shared Gospel reflection, discussion around spiritual texts or sayings, as well as silent walks in nature accompanied by the Jesus Prayer.

Such a retreat should not be spiritually burdensome, financially costly, nor merely a recreational activity. The modern person, worn down by nervous strain, needs a period of rest—a kind of spiritual, psychological, and even physical convalescence. Secular spiritual organizations are already offering such programs and workshops. This is all the more reason, then, for the Church to make this ministry one of her top priorities—if we truly desire, and we must desire, to seek the salvation of humanity, for whose sake God became incarnate. Is not salvation the very mission of the Church?

We must not content ourselves with offices for administrative and spiritual appointments alone. I say repeatedly to our priests: I do not want you to be managers of religious enterprises; I want you to be spiritual fathers and shepherds of souls. We must nourish the contemporary human person and help him deepen his life and personal relationship with God. In Christ alone does one find the meaning and purpose of life, and through Him discover the true joy for which the heart longs. A Church whose members do not taste the joy of Christ, purity of life, lived love, and mutual support remains nothing more than a religious association. Christ did not come to establish an association—even a religious one. He did not found a religion; He offered a way of life. The Church is His Body, and His Body is always alive. The Church is a living, vibrant organism, overflowing with life.

When I was Metropolitan of the Archdiocese of Hauran, by God's grace I was able to acquire a house in one of the most beautiful regions of Syria and transform it into a retreat house, which I named "Bethany House." Did not Christ Himself go to Bethany to His friends, Lazarus and his sisters, to find rest with them? I intended it to be a place of spiritual, psychological, and restorative renewal for the sons and daughters of that archdiocese who were exhausted by the ongoing war. Very quickly, however, it became a destination sought by believers from various archdioceses. How I wish that some capable and generous faithful would take the initiative to establish retreat houses—"Bethany Houses"—for the people of our Archdiocese here in North America.

I dream that in the near future we will have retreat houses in many areas of the Archdiocese, places our faithful can visit to spend days of joy in the presence of God and one another. In this way, we encourage one another to choose the "good portion" that will not be taken away from us. Encourage one another to provide the Archdiocese with retreat houses—for yourselves and for your children after you.

## "بيوت عنيا" المعاصرة بقلم المتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

اضطرت إلى السفر مبكراً، قبل انعقاد المجمع الأنطاكي المقدس في تشرين الأول من العام الماضي (٢٠٢٥)، إلى لبنان لمتابعة بعض الأمور الشخصية. وهكذا تسنّت لي الفرصة لأن أقضي فترة في منسك يتبع لأحد أديرتنا هناك. كنت أنطلق منه لمتابعة ما أتيت من أجله وأعود إليه تالياً. منحتني تلك الفترة بعضاً مما كنت أحتاجه من هدوء داخلي بسبب تكثيف الصلاة والمطالعة والسير في الطبيعة.

كنت ولا أزال أشدد على أهمية الخلوات الروحية. وعلى الرغم من أن خلوتي كانت قسرية ومشوبة بمتابعة ما اضطرت إلى المجيء من أجله، إلا أنني لمست فائدتها حتى على صعيد نشاطي الروحي والجسدي.

يعرف التراث الأرثوذكسي التردد على الأديرة. والخلوات الروحية تقليدياً، كما تُمارس في العالم الأرثوذكسي، هي قضاء بضعة أيام في الدير. يتبع المؤمن خلالها برنامج الدير من حيث دورة الصلوات اليومية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك يعطيه الشيخ (رئيس) أو الشيخة (رئيسة الدير) برنامجاً شخصياً يتضمن قراءة روحية وقانون صلاة شخصية وعمل.

ولأن الأديرة غير قادرة على استقبال جميع المؤمنين، لجأت كثرة من الرعايا في السنوات الأخيرة إلى تنظيم خلوات روحية جماعية، في الأديرة أو الرعايا أو منطقة قريبة مناسبة، حيث يقضي المشتركون نهراً أو أكثر في جو من الصلاة والقراءة والأحاديث الروحية واختبار الحياة المشتركة. تساعد هذه الخلوات في استعادة شيئاً من العودة إلى الذات، مما يمنحهم هدوءاً داخلياً، ويذيقهم فرح الشركة المسيحية في عائلة المسيح.

يعيش الإنسان المعاصر توتراً تزداد حدته من جراء تسارع إيقاع الحياة اليومية وضغوطها. إلى ذلك العمل الطويل والضغط الاقتصادي والمواصلات المرهقة ونمط الحياة الاستهلاكي والانشغال بهوموم معاشية متكاثرة، بالإضافة إلى عوامل أخرى كثيرة، أدى إلى إرهاق الإنسان المعاصر وتلف أعصابه وخروجه من ذاته وتشويش ذهنه وإصابته بالكآبة، التي غدت أكثر أمراض العصر انتشاراً. تفيد الإحصاءات الطبية أن الأدوية المهدئة هي الأكثر مبيعاً!!



هذا كله يَختَم على الكنيسة ألا تكتفي بالوعظ والتعليم، وأن ترفقهما بتنشيط الخدمة الرعوية والاهتمام بالإنسان على الصعيد العام والشخصي في آن. تُعد هذه الحاجة أحد أسباب دعوتي إلى إحياء خدمة الشموسية في الأبرشية. وكنت قد دعوت في مؤتمر الأبرشية في العام ٢٠٢٣ إلى إحياء جماعات صلاة في الرعايا، وذكرت شيئاً عن بيوت الخلوات الروحية.

يحتاج إنسان اليوم إلى مساعدة الكنيسة في تنظيم خلوات روحية قصيرة أو طويلة تأخذ بعين الاعتبار اشتراك عدد لا يتجاوز العشرين، في منطقة طبيعية هادئة وقريبة من الرعية، تخفيفاً للنفقات وتشجيعاً لذوي الدخل المحدود على الاشتراك فيها. يقضي المشاركون اليوم في صلاة هادئة يشترك الجميع فيها، وينظم البرنامج بحيث يعطي المشاركين أوقاتاً للصمت والقراءة الروحية، وتأمل إنجيلي مشترك وحوار حول نصوص أو أقوال روحية بالإضافة إلى مسير في الطبيعة صامت برفقه صلاة يسوع.

لا تكون هذه الخلوة ضاغطة روحياً، ولا مكلفة مادياً، ولا نشاطاً مجرد ترفيهي. فإنسان العصر المرهق عصبياً بحاجة إلى قضاء فترة نقاهة أو استجمام روحي عصبي نفسي وحتى جسدي. باتت هينات روحانية لا دينية تنظم هكذا حلقات او دورات. لذلك فالأولى بالكنيسة أن تجعل هذه الخدمة من أولى أولوياتها، إن شئنا، ويجب أن نشاء، أن نسعى إلى خلاص البشر الذي تجسد الله من أجلهم. أليس الخلاص رسالة الكنيسة أساساً؟

يجب ألا نكتفي بمكاتب للمراجعات الروحية والإدارية. أقول لكهننتنا دوماً لا أريدكم رجال أعمال دينية، نريد آباءً روحيين، ورعاة نفوس. علينا تغذية الإنسان المعاصر ومساعدته على تعميق حياته وعلاقته الشخصية بالله. بالمسيح فقط يجد معنى حياته وغايتها، وبه يكتشف الفرح الحقيقي الذي يصبو إليه. الكنيسة التي لا يذوق أعضاؤها فرح المسيح ونقاء السيرة واختبار المحبة والتعاقد تبقى جمعية دينية لا غير، والمسيح لم يأت إلى أرضنا ليؤسس جمعية ولو دينية. هو لم يؤسس ديناً، بل طريقة حياة. الكنيسة جسده، وجسده حي على الدوام. الكنيسة كيان حي وحيوي يَمُور بالحياة.

عندما كنت مطراناً لأبرشية حوران، استطعت بنعمة الله أن أقنتني بيتاً في أحد أجمل مناطق سوريا، وحولته إلى بيت للخلوة، وسميته "بيت عنيا". ألم يكن المسيح يذهب

إلى بيت عنيا، إلى صديقه لعازر وأختيه ليرتاح عندهم؟ أردته مكان استجمام روحي عصبي ترفيهي لأبناء الأبرشية المتعبين من جراء الحرب الدائرة في البلد. لكنه سرعان ما صار مطلباً لكل المؤمنين من مختلف الأبرشيات. كم أتمنى لو يبادر بعض المؤمنين المقتدرين إلى إحياء بيوت خلوة (بيوت عنيا) لأبناء أبرشتنا هنا في أميركا الشمالية.

أحلم بأن يكون لنا في المستقبل القريب بيوت خلوة في أماكن كثيرة من الأبرشية، يعودها مؤمنونا ليقضوا أيام فرح بصحبة الله وبعضهم. بذلك نشجع بعضنا على اختيار النصيب الصالح الذي لا يُنزع منا. شجعوا بعضكم على اقتناء الأبرشية بيوت خلوة لكم ولأولادكم من بعدكم.

## Camp Three Holy Youths - Summer 2026

Camp Three Holy Youths is an Orthodox Christian summer camp serving youth ages 7–17 from Northern California and beyond.

Our mission is to transform the lives of our youth through prayer, worship, fellowship, outdoor adventure, and a Christ-centered camp experience.

Camp Three Holy Youths was officially accredited by the American Camp Association in 2025 and is formally recognized as part of the Antiochian Archdiocese Camping Ministry.

### Camp Dates:

Thursday, July 23rd – Monday, July 27th, 2026

### Location:

Daybreak Camp – Felton, California

Transportation Route provided by St. Nicholas Church to/from at no additional cost.

*Note, this transportation shuttle only departs from St. Nicholas Church at the beginning of camp and only arrives at Daybreak Camp in Felton. This shuttle also only departs from Daybreak Camp at the conclusion of camp and arrives at St. Nicholas Church.*

### Contact:

ilyanbaalbaki@campthy.com  
claudinebatarse@campthy.com

Further information will be available at:

[www.campthy.com](http://www.campthy.com)

***Church of the Redeemer will welcome  
Mother Agapia Stephanopoulos for a presentation on  
Christians in Palestine.***

***On Thursday, February 5, at 6:30 PM.***

***All are invited. More details to follow.***



## Orthodox Church of the Redeemer

Invites you to join us for:

### Christians in Palestine

an in-person conversation with Mother Agapia Stephanopoulos

Mother Agapia's connection to the Holy Land spans over many years. Her voice carries the weight of lived experience, the intimate truths that never make headlines, and the moral clarity that only emerges from proximity. She reminds us that the Palestinian people's struggle is spiritual, cultural, and profoundly human.



Thursday, Feb 5th at 6:30 p.m.  
380 Magdalena Ave, Los Altos, CA 94024

Stories and conversation  
followed by refreshments



RSVP (Free Event)



# 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](mailto:office@orthodoxredeemer.org)



**Ibtisam Kreitem**  
(408) 594-3000

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

# ★ ALL YOU CAN EAT ★ **CRAB & SEAFOOD**

*Join Us for Our Annual*

## **CRAB FEED DINNER**

**FEBRUARY 21ST • 6:00PM**

**CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER HALL**

380 Magdalena Ave.,  
Los Altos Hills, CA 94024



**ALL YOU CAN EAT CRAB, SEAFOOD, SALAD, DESSERT, APPETIZERS  
WINE & SOFT DRINKS INCLUDED!**

**ADULTS: \$100 PER PERSON**

**CHILDREN 10 & UNDER: \$40**

*For Tickets, Please Contact:*

**Ibtisam Kreitem @ 408-594-3000**

**[office@orthodoxredeemer.org](mailto:office@orthodoxredeemer.org)**





## 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>

