

+St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Church

Antiochian Archdiocese of North America

Metropolitan Saba of New York and all North America

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SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 2026; TONE 7 / EOTHINON 10

ATHANASIUS AND CYRIL, PATRIARCHS OF ALEXANDRIA

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



On January 18 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate our Fathers among the Saints Athanasius and Cyril, Patriarchs of Alexandria.

These wise teachers of truth and defenders of Christ's Church share a joint Feast in recognition of their dogmatic writings which affirm the truth of the Orthodox Faith, correctly interpret the Holy Scripture, and censure the delusions of the heretics. Athanasius took part in the First Ecumenical Council when he was still a deacon. He surpassed everyone there in his zeal to uphold the teaching that Christ is consubstantial (homoousios) with the Father, and not merely a creature, as the Arians proclaimed. This radiant beacon of Orthodoxy spent most of his life in exile from his See, because of the plotting of his enemies. He returned to his flock as he was approaching the end of his life. Like an evening star, he illumined the Orthodox faithful with his words for a little while, and then reposed in 373. Cyril was the nephew of Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria, who educated him from his youth. He succeeded to his uncle's position in 412, but was deposed through the intrigues of the Nestorian heretics. He later resumed his See, however. Cyril presided at the Third Ecumenical Council in 431, which censured the Nestorian blasphemy against the Most Holy Theotokos. His wise words demonstrated the error of their false doctrine. Cyril departed to the Lord in 444.

On this day, we also commemorate the Martyr Theodoula of Anazarbus and her companions; and Maximos, the Serbian ruler.

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.

مُبَارَكٌ أَنْتَ يَا رَبُّ إِلَهَ آبَائَا.

لَأَنَّكَ عَذْلٌ فِي كُلِّ مَا صَنَعْتَ بِنَا.

فَصْلٌ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقِدِيسِ بُولُسَ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى الْعِبْرَانِيِّينَ. (16:7-13)

يَا إِخْوَةُ، اذْكُرُوا مُدَبِّرِيْكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَلَمُوكُمْ بِكَلِمَةِ اللهِ. تَأَمَّلُوا فِي عَاقِبَةِ تَصْرُّفِهِمْ وَاقْتُدوُا بِإِيمَانِهِمْ. إِنَّ يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحَ هُوَ هُوَ، أَمْسٌ وَالْيَوْمُ وَإِلَى مَدِيَ الدَّهْرِ. لَا تَنْقَادُوا لِتَعَالِيمَ مُنْتَوْعَةٍ غَرَبِيَّةٍ. فَإِنَّهُ يَحْسُنُ أَنْ يُثَبِّتَ الْقَلْبُ بِالنِّعْمَةِ لَا بِالْأَطْعَمَةِ الَّتِي لَمْ يَنْتَفِعُ الَّذِينَ تَعَاطَوْهَا. إِنَّ لَنَا مَذْبَحًا، لَا سُلْطَانًا لِلَّذِينَ يَخْدُمُونَ الْمَسِكِنَ أَنْ يَأْكُلُوا مِنْهُ. لَأَنَّ الْحَيَّانَاتِ الَّتِي يُدْخِلُ بِدَمِهَا عَنِ الْخَطِيَّةِ إِلَى الْأَقْدَاسِ بِيَدِ رَئِيسِ الْكَهْنَةِ، تُخْرَقُ أَجْسَامُهَا خارِجَ الْمَحَلَّةِ. فَلِذَلِكَ يَسُوعُ أَيْضًا تَالِمَ خارِجَ الْبَابِ لِيُقَدِّسَ الشَّعْبَ بِدَمِ نَفْسِهِ. فَلَنْخُرُجْ إِذْنُ إِلَيْهِ، إِلَى خارِجَ الْمَحَلَّةِ، حَامِلِينَ عَارَةً. لَأَنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَنَا هَهُنَا مَدِيَّةٌ بِاقِيَّةٌ، بَلْ نَطْلُبُ الْآتِيَّةَ. فَلَنُقَرِّبْ بِهِ إِذْنُ ذِيَّحَةِ التَّسْبِيْحِ كُلَّ حِينٍ، وَهِيَ ثَمَرُ شِفَاهٍ مُعْتَرِفَةٍ لِاسْمِهِ. لَا تَنْسُوا الإِحْسَانَ وَالْمَوْاسِيَّةَ، فَإِنَّ اللهَ يَرْتَضِي مِثْلَ هَذِهِ الدَّبَائِحِ.

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."

فَصَلْ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بِشَارَةِ الْقِدِيسِ لَوْقَاتِ الْتَّلْمِيذِ الطَّاهِرِ. (19-12:17)

فِي ذَلِكَ الزَّمَانَ، فَيَسْوَعُ دَاخِلًا إِلَى قَرِيَّةٍ اسْتَقْبَلَهُ عَشَرَةُ رِجَالٍ بُرْصِ وَوَقَفُوا مِنْ بَعِيدٍ، وَرَفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَهُمْ قَائِلِينَ: يَا يَسْوَعُ الْمُعْلَمُ ارْحَمْنَا. فَلَمَّا رَأَهُمْ قَالَ لَهُمْ امْضُوا وَأَرَوَا الْكَهْنَةَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ. وَفِيمَا هُمْ مُنْطَلِقُونَ طَهَرُوا. وَإِنَّ وَاحِدًا مِنْهُمْ، لَمَّا رَأَى أَنَّهُ قَدْ بَرَى، رَجَعَ يُمَحِّدُ اللَّهَ بِصَوْتٍ عَظِيمٍ. وَخَرَّ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ عِنْدَ قَدْمَيْهِ شَاكِرًا لَهُ وَكَانَ سَامِرِيًّا، فَلَجَابَ يَسْوَعُ وَقَالَ، أَلَيْسَ الْعَشَرَةُ قَدْ طَهَرُوا فَلَيْنَ التِّسْعَةُ؟ أَلَمْ يُوجَدْ مَنْ يَرْجِعُ لِيُمَحِّدَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا هَذَا الْأَجْنَبَى؟ وَقَالَ لَهُ، قُمْ وَامْضِ، إِيمَانُكَ قَدْ خَلَصَكَ.

Upcoming Events

February 7th	Crab Feed: This year we are proud to have our 44th Annual Crab Feed at our NEW St. John Hall. Saturday February 7th, 2026. Please SAVE THE DATE, and let us celebrate together to make it as successful as possible!
February 15th	1 year memorial on February 15th in memory of George Wahbeh. May his memory be eternal!
February 15th	General parish meeting

Coffee Hour

January 18th	Yowakeem and Kashou Family for six-month memorial of Aida Yowakeem. May her memory be eternal!
January 25th	Jill Norgaard for 3-year memorial of Dwight Underhill. May his memory be eternal!
March 8 th	In memory of Mariam (3 years) and Khalil Ibrahim Munayer (15 years). May their memory be eternal!

Holy Oblations

This week, Holy Oblations are offered by:

† St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Nick Nicola, Sandy Dudum, George Messih, George Adranly, Fred Addas, Henriette Hilal, Souhad Halaka, George Cawog, Sam Nassab, Sue Gideon, Rocky Dudum and Norma Khalil**. Many years!

† Hala Yowakeem in memory of **Ibrahim Yowakeem** دَكْسِيَا Eudoxia Yowakeem يُواكِيم Antoinette Yowakeem Ibrahim Kashou مَا هَرْ سَلَامَه Maher Salameh Jeries Abu Lethal جَرِيسُ أَبُو الْعَظَم and for the good health of **Yowakeem and Kashou families** on the occasion of the six-month memorial for **Aidah Yowakeem**. May their memory be eternal!

† St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Nadia Frangieh** Many years!

† St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Bradley Youakim**. Many years!

† St. John Parish Family for the good health of all **musicians in our church**. Many years!

† 15-year memorial prayers are offered in memory of father, grandfather and father-in law, **Khalil Ibrahim Munayer** on behalf of Amal, Ibrahim, Joseph (Stephani) plus grandchildren, Charlie and Eden. May his memory be eternal!

† St. John Parish Family for the good health of **John Freij**. Many years!

† St. John parish family for the good health of **Tony Dudum, Anthony Jildeh, Tony Tobassy**,

Candles for the altar table and in front of the icons of Christ and the Theotokos offered by:

† Ibrahim Fasheh in memory of Hanada Fasheh for one full year. May her memory be eternal!



† Altar Servers: Nathan Sweis, Clayton Morgan, Elias Freij, Angelo Freij, Andrew Freij, Mazyn Haddadin, James Dudum, John Dudum, David Evans, Evan Kawar, Mason Kawar, Jonathan Juha, Maron Juha and Zaiden Karanikola

Antoinette Yowakeem and all who are named after
St. Anthony the Great (Jan. 17th). Many years!

Talent Night

After the holidays I'd like to put together a talent night for anyone who would like to participate. Pianists, instrumentalists, Singers, Dancers etc. I'd like to get an idea if we have any interest in "Putting on a show" in our new hall! Please call me and let me know what your talent is. It's important to share your talents in life, especially with our beloved St John family. All ages welcome. ❤️ Lynn Farradj 925-323-5746

Parish Council Sign Up

If you are interested in running on the parish council, or know someone you would like to nominate, please reach out to Father Nicholas Borzghol or Ron Nicola. Your service is appreciated!

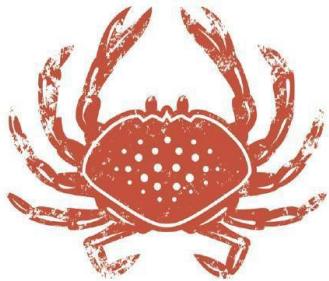
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501 Moraga Way
Orinda, CA 94563

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THE MEN'S FELLOWSHIP OF

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



- 47TH ANNUAL CRAB FEED -

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH, 2026
COCKTAILS 6:00 PM
DINNER 7:00 PM



SCAN QR CODE TO ORDER TICKETS

ST. JOHN ORTHODOX CHURCH HALL
501 MORAGA WAY, ORINDA



ALL ~ YOU ~ CAN ~ EAT

APPETIZERS, CHICKEN, PASTA, CRAB, SALAD, GARLIC BREAD AND
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FEATURING GREAT RAFFLE PRIZES

ADULTS: \$80

CHILDREN(UNDER 13): \$25

*For information, tickets, or to volunteer please call: Parish Office (925) 258-4255, Deacon
Nicholas (Najeeb) (510) 207-1796*

YOUR DONATIONS ARE A HUGE PART OF OUR SUCCESS!

Crab Feed Placement Donation for 2026: Feature Business Card Size ads for \$100, Medium Size \$200, Large Size \$300 & Premium for \$450

Please make your Checks payable to St. John Orthodox Church. Or contact Dn Nicholas

St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Church Men's Fellowship Report 2026

The Men's Fellowship continued in 2025 holding monthly ZOOM, and sometimes in person meetings on the 1st Tuesday of each month. We begin our meetings with a short Bible study followed by discussion. We are planning on more activities for Men, Ladies and Families outing like Wine Tasting Trips, Dinners, and Tailgating at Baseball Game. We've been blessed with about 12-15 members attending on any given month. All men in the parish are **encouraged** to join us, if you haven't done so in the past. It's time for a 2026 New Year resolution. And we welcome suggestions for future activities.

The Crab Feed remains our largest fundraiser and in 2025 we netted \$20,655.00. For 2025 Crabfeed, we are excited to hold our first Crabfeed in our New Hall on February 7th, 2016. If you haven't Purchased your tickets, I would encourage you to do so, **limited seatings available**. Thanks to the support of the parish and our community at large.

Respectfully Submitted,
Deacon Nicholas Adranly



**Diocese of Los Angeles and
the West 2026 Parish Life
Conference**

**Marriott Marquis San Diego
Marina (July 1st - 5th)**

**Host Parish: St. George
Church (San Diego, CA)**

Happy New Year PLC Family!

We are so excited to kick off our 2026 Parish Life Conference in beautiful San Diego, CA, during the 250th anniversary of our great Nation! Thanks to all the wonderful feedback you've shared over the years, the CPCC has heard you and has made some meaningful changes to make the PLC more affordable this year and for the years to come. Below are some of the major changes that will be implemented:

- Due to the positive feedback from the 2025 PLC, **one full day** has been removed from the 2026 PLC and will remain that way for all future PLCs. This will create significant cost savings for our Clergy and their Parishes.
- The standard public room rate at the Marriott Marquis during the 2026 PLC weekend is approximately **\$450 per night**. Through CPCC negotiations and donor support, attendees will receive a **\$199 per night rate (plus taxes)** during one of the most expensive weekends of the year. The CPCC is also working hard to secure room rates below **\$199 per night** for the 2027 and 2028 PLCs.
- Ticket prices on all events this year will be **~20% lower** than 2025 prices

We can't wait to be together in July for a weekend full of events, fellowship, and meaningful time together! Thanks to the incredible room rate secured, the prime PLC location, and the holiday weekend, rooms are filling up earlier and at a higher rate than usual. We highly recommend booking your rooms early using the link below.

Additionally, there is **limited seating for our Saturday night event**, offering a front-row view of the San Diego Marina and the famous San Diego 4th of July firework show. Be

sure to register and purchase your tickets as soon as possible to secure your spot.

On behalf of the CPCC, we wish you a very Happy New Year! May 2026 be filled with countless blessings for each of you. We look forward to seeing you in July!

On Religious Cinema

By His Eminence Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

With the ongoing rise and spread of movies and television series, the production of religious films follows this trend. The approach to depicting religious events on screen varies depending on the production entity behind them. As the “seventh art”¹ developed, the number of production houses multiplied, and cinematic technology reached levels close to the fantastic. Because religious matters are among the most significant fields of human concern, across religions and sects, it is natural that the dramatic arts would follow religious themes though for different reasons.

Like any art form, religious art is used for purposes of evangelization, education, documentation, and to promote the beliefs upheld by the producers. Neutrality is rare, especially in this field. In our times, both private and public institutions, even official bodies, compete to present this type of art because it attracts large audiences and stirs the emotions of the religiously inclined in general. Thus, it is now almost impossible to find a screen that does not occasionally present something that touches on religious themes, especially in these troubled days, when appealing to religious emotions has become widely popular.

Religion has always been cautious regarding the depiction of sacred scenes, especially those involving the founder of the faith or its principal figures. Depicting historical, intellectual, or artistic topics usually receives greater acceptance. Yet the dominance of imagery in modern culture, the ease of production brought about by technological advancement, the renewed tendency to look to religion as a solution for the sufferings of contemporary humanity, the freedom with which private companies approach religious topics, and the eagerness of people to consume visual productions as they are—without examination or discernment—have all combined to produce serious

¹ The term "seventh art" refers to cinema, which is considered an art form that synthesizes elements from the six previous arts: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dance, and poetry.

problems, emotional reactions, and impactful (sometimes dangerous) stances, especially in religious societies marked by diversity of faiths and sects.

Cinematic portrayal often diminishes the spirit of reverence and devotion to which believers attach great importance. When a believer sees holy figures, whom he venerates and elevates, embodied by an actor (or actress), carrying the actor's features and personality, no matter how skilled, disappointment is almost inevitable, at least initially. Not to mention that the actor's image may persist in the believer's imagination and influence the purity of his prayer.

It is beyond doubt that learning about the personality of any prophet or messenger—and his teaching—through dramatic art does not allow the viewer to enter deeply into the authenticity and precision of that personality. The difference between encountering a world-renowned story through a book or through a film is immense. Describing emotions, situations, psychological analysis, motives, and the inner workings of the human soul cannot be condensed into approximately two hours of film, nor can they be conveyed with the richness that the writer's pen offers.

Dramatic art also requires sets, costumes, music, movements, excitement, and other elements intended to attract the viewer. When these are applied to a religious film, they inevitably serve the perspective of the producer or director. They may be inappropriate, inaccurate, or even falsified or fabricated. Watching a film is not the same as reading a book; the image remains imprinted in the viewer's mind, confined to the limited time of the screening, and plays upon the imagination in ways that can harm faith and spiritual disposition. Likewise, a wrong image can spread a distorted understanding of the religious doctrine portrayed.

Wherever images appear, whether in cinema, television, or modern social media, they form a vast field for implanting ideas that the producer wishes to promote through his work. Not all viewers can follow, notice, or discern these ideas, nor recognize their falsehood. Such implants are etched into the minds of viewers, who then believe them to be true, while they may be the exact opposite.

For example, in one film about the life of Christ, Joseph the Betrothed is shown as a handsome young man, whereas Christian tradition considers him elderly. The same film depicts the Virgin Mary dancing with him at their engagement celebration!

Cinematic production has become a widely used means to spread biased or incorrect ideas, forming false impressions and shaping public opinion about any subject political, historical, moral, and especially religious. Consider *The Last Temptation of Christ* and the uproar it caused. It is a cinematic rendering of a novel of the same name, written by a famous twentieth-century author who spent his life wrestling with the conflict between the sensual human being and the spiritual human being—between body and spirit. He projected his personal struggles onto the person of Christ—portraying Him merely as a man—while hundreds of millions of believers confess Him as God incarnate.

Believers today, living in an age overwhelmed by propaganda, must remain awake, alert, and discerning in all they see, lest they fall under the domination of the cinematic image and its potentially harmful influence on their faith.

Cinematic production in the West, in particular, has become extremely free, driven by various forces, and at times controlled by producers who are atheists, hostile to a particular religion, or intent on promoting a certain ideology. They insert into the film whatever images, words, music, or elements suit their aims. They may not hesitate to use deceptive methods to spread their ideas.

If we recognize the power that imagery has attained today, especially through modern propaganda, and acknowledge how difficult it has become to distinguish truth from falsehood, particularly in news media, then the necessary awareness becomes an urgent need.

In conclusion, dramatic portrayals of religious matters are often marred by inaccuracies—sometimes intentional, sometimes not. They must be approached with serious critical discernment, not watched naively or casually. You cannot protect yourself from falsehood by silencing the voice of others, but by growing in knowledge and continually seeking the truth.

حول السينما الدينية

بقلم المتروبوليت سابا (اسبر)

مع انطلاق السينما، وانتشار المسلسلات التلفزيونية، راجت ظاهرة إنتاج الأفلام الدينية، واختلفت طريقة مقاربة الحدث الديني المصور بحسب جهة الإنتاج، التي تقف وراءه، وتعددت جهات الإنتاج، مع تطور الفن السابع¹، وبلغ فن التصوير السينمائي تطوراً تقنياً وصل إلى حد الخيال. ولأن الأمور الدينية تشكل أحد الميادين الهامة عند البشر، على اختلاف أديانهم ومذاهبهم، فمن الطبيعي أن يلحق الفن التمثيلي بالمواضيع الدينية ، لدفافع مختلفة.

كلّ فن، يُستخدم الفن الديني لأغراض التبشير، والتعليم، والتوثيق، وترويج الاعتقاد الذي تنادي به الجهة التي تقف وراء إنتاجه. الحيادي نادر، خاصة في هذا الميدان. وقد وصل الأمر، في زمننا الحالي، حدّاً بات فيه هيئات، خاصة، وعامة، ورسمية، تتبارى في تقديم هذا النوع من الفن، لأنه يجذب عدداً وافراً من المشاهدين، ويدفع مشاعر المتدينين عموماً. فبّلا تكاد ترى شاشة تخلو، من حين إلى آخر، من هذا النوع من ملامسة قضايا دينية، خاصة في هذه الأيام المشوّشة، التي باتت مخاطبة المشاعر الدينية رائجة فيها على نطاق واسع.

لطالما كان الدين حذراً تجاه تصوير المشاهد الدينية، خاصة، تلك التي تصور مؤسس الدين والشخصيات الرئيسية فيه. في حين يلقى تصوير المواضيع التاريخية والفكريّة والفنية قبولاً أفضل. لكن هيمنة الصورة، عموماً، على الثقافة الحديثة، وسهولة الإنتاج، بسبب التقدّم التقني، الذي لحق بهذا الفن، وعودة طرح الدين حلّاً للكثير مما يعانيه إنسان اليوم، وتناول الشركات الفنية الخاصة للمواضيع الدينية، وحرية تناولها، حسبما يرى أيّ إنسان، وتلقّف الناس للنتاج التصويري، كما هو، دونما فحص أو تدقيق، بات أمراً يستجلب إشكالات وانفعالات وموافق مؤثرة، وخطيرة في بعض الأحيان، خاصة في المجتمعات المتميّزة المتعدّدة الأديان والمذاهب.

يخفّف التصوير كثيراً من روح التقوى والتخشّع الذي يوليه المؤمنون أهمية كبرى. فحين يرى المؤمن الشخصيات التي يبجلها ويسمو بها إلى العلا، متجسدة في شخص ممثّل (أو ممثّلة)، وتحمل ملامحه ونفسيته، مهما كان بارعاً في أداء دوره، فإنه لا بدّ من أن يصاب بخيبة، ولو للوهلة الأولى. ناهيك عن مرافقة صورة الممثّل لمخيّلته، وتأثيرها على صفاء صلاته.

¹ مصطلح الفن السابع يطلق على السينما التي تعتبر شكلًا من أشكال الفن الذي يجمع عناصر من ستة فنون: العمارة، النحت، الرسم، الموسيقى، الرقص، والشعر.

لا شك في أن التعرّف إلى شخصية أيّ نبيّ أو رسول، وإلى تعليمه، بواسطة الفن التمثيلي، لا يسمح للمشاهد بالدخول إلى عمق هذه الشخصية ومعرفتها بدقة. الفارق شاسع بين التعرّف على رواية عالمية من الكتاب أو من السينما. فوصف المشاعر، والموافق، والتحليل النفسي، ووصف الدوافع وما يعتمل في النفس البشرية، لا يمكن أن يوجز في ساعتين مصوريتين أو أكثر، ولا يمكن أن يُنقل بالغنى ذاته، الذي ينقله قلم الكاتب أو المؤلّف.

كذلك، يلزم الفن التمثيلي الديكور، والأزياء، والموسيقى، والحركات، والإثارة وما إليها من تشویقات تجذب المشاهد. هذه عندما توضع في خدمة فيلم ديني، فإنها تُستعمل بما يخدم وجهة نظر المنتج أو المخرج، وقد لا تكون مناسبة، ولا صحيحة، لا بل قد تكون مزورة ومزيفة مرات كثيرة. كما أن مشاهدة الفيلم ليست كقراءة الكتاب؛ فتبقي الصورة منطبعة في ذهن المشاهد، المحصور بوقت العرض المحدود، وتلعب في مخيّلته، بما قد يؤذى إيمانه و موقفه الروحي أحياناً. كذلك تنشر الصورة الخاطئة مفهوماً مغلوطاً عن العقيدة التي يمسّها الفيلم.

يشغل الصورة، إنما وجدت سواء في السينما أو التلفزيون أو وسائل التواصل الحديثة، حقلأً واسعاً لإدخال الأفكار، التي يريد المنتج ترويجها، من خلال إنتاجه. ولا يسع جميع المشاهدين متابعتها أو التنبه إليها، أو معرفة زيفها. تنطبع هذه الإدخالات في ذهن المشاهدين، فيصدقونها، معتبرينها حقيقة، بينما قد تكون عكس ذلك تماماً.

كمثال نجد في أحد الأفلام التي تروي سيرة المسيح يوسف الخطيب شاباً وسيماً، بينما يعتبره التراث المسيحي متقدّماً في السنّ. كذلك يصوّر الفيلم السيدة العذراء، وهي ترقص معه في حفل خطوبتها!

يُعتبر الإنتاج السينمائي وسيلةً واسعة الانتشار لبث الأفكار الخاصة والخاطئة، وتشكيل الانطباعات المزيفة، وتوجيه الرأي العام بشأن أيّ موضوع، في السياسة والتاريخ والأخلاق وغيرها، وخاصة وكذلك في الموضوع الديني. لنذكر فيلم تجربة المسيح الأخيرة، والضجة التي أثارها. إنه تصوير سينمائي لكتاب يحمل العنوان ذاته، كتبه أديب مشهور، في القرن العشرين، قضى حياته يتساءل حول الصراع بين الإنسان الشهوانى والإنسان الروحاني، وبين الجسد والروح. أسقط مفاهيمه الخاصة، الناجمة عن نزاعه الرئيس هذا، على شخص المسيح باعتباره إنساناً فقط. بينما مئات الملايين من البشر يؤمنون به إلهًا متجرّداً.

يحتاج المؤمنون في زمن الدعاية الطاغي هذا، الذي نحيا فيه، إلى أن يكونوا صاحين، ومتيقظين، وناقدين لكلّ ما يرون، حتى يكونوا أحراراً من هيمنة الصورة السينمائية، ومن تأثيرها، سلباً، على معتقداتهم.

بات الإنتاج السينمائي في الغرب وخاصة، حرّاً جداً، وتحكّم فيه أمور مختلفة، وأحياناً، منتجون ملحدون، أو يريدون محاربة دين ما، أو التبشير بمذهب ما، فيدخلون، في سياق الفيلم، ما يناسب أهدافهم، من صور وكلام وموسيقى، إلخ. وقد لا يتزدرون عن اتباع أساليب غير حقيقية، في سبيل نشر أفكارهم.

إذا ما عرفنا ما بلغه دور الصورة، التي تولّها الدعاية، اليوم، أهمية عظمى، واعترفنا بصعوبة تمييز الصحيح فيها من الكاذب، وعلى الأخص في مجال الدعاية الإخبارية، سيصير الوعي المطلوب حاجة عظمى.

خلاصة الكلام، إن التصوير التمثيلي للقضايا الدينية غالباً ما يكون مشوباً بمعالطات، مقصودة أو غير مقصودة، يجب إعمال النقد الجدي فيها، لا مشاهدتها ببساطة وسذاجة. لا يمكنك حماية نفسك من المغالطات بإسكات صوت غيرك، وإنما بتنمية معرفتك، وبالبحث الدائم عن الحقيقة.