



+St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Church

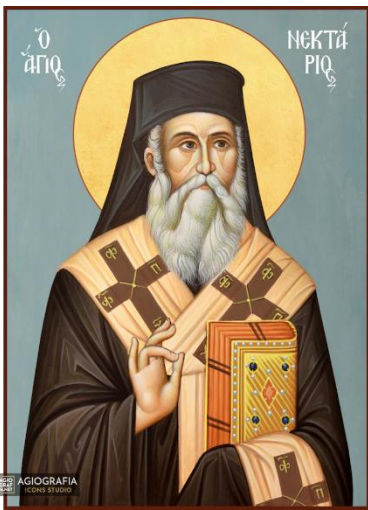
Antiochian Archdiocese of North America
Metropolitan Saba of New York and all North America
V. Rev. Fr. Nicholas Borzghol, Pastor
Dn. Nicholas Adranly

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 09, 2025

NEKTARIOS OF AEGINA AND PENTAPOLIS, THE WONDERWORKER & SEVENTH SUNDAY OF LUKE

MARTYRS ONESIPHOROS AND PORPHYRIOS OF EPHESUS; VENERABLE MATRONA OF CONSTANTINOPLE



On November 9 in the Holy Orthodox Church, we commemorate our father among the saints Nektarios of Aegina, Metropolitan of Pentapolis in Egypt, the wonderworker.

Nektarios was born in Selyvria of Thrace on October 1, 1846. Because of his brilliance and holiness, Nektarios ascended in the Church of Alexandria from monk to metropolitan of Pentapolis in eastern Libya. His flock loved him. Nektarios' swift ascent aroused the envy of lesser clergy and laity. In 1890, Patriarch Sophronios relieved the innocent Metropolitan Nektarios of his duties and commanded him to leave Egypt. He became a provincial preacher and teacher around Athens. Through his eloquent sermons his untiring labors to educate fitting men for the priesthood, his generous alms and deeds despite his own poverty, and the meekness and fatherly love that were manifest in him, Nektarios became a spiritual guide to many. In 1904, he began the building of Holy Trinity Convent on the island of Aegina. Nektarios spent the rest of his life there, and through his prayers delivered the island from drought, healed the sick, and cast out demons. The saint's relics continue to work miracles since his entry into eternal life on this day in 1920. He was canonized in 1961. In 1998, Patriarch Petros VII and the Holy Synod of Alexandria begged the saint to forgive them and their predecessors.

THE EPISTLE

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

What shall I render to the Lord for all that he has given me?

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians. (5:8-19)

Brethren, walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

كريم لدى الرب موت أبراره.

بماذا نكافئ الرب عن كل ما أعطانا.

فصل من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول إلى أهل أفسس. (8:5-19)

يا إخوة، اسلكوا كأولاد للنور (فإن ثمر الروح هو في كل صلاح وبرٍ وحقٍ) مختبرين ما هو مرضي لدى الرب ولا تشتركوا في أعمال الظلمة غير المثمرة، بل بالأحرى وبخوا عليها. فإن الأفعال التي يفعلونها سرّاً، يقبّح ذكرها أيضاً. لكن كل ما يوبّخ عليه، يعلن بالنور، فإن كل ما يعلن هو نور ولذلك يقول: استيقظ أيها النائم وقم من بين الأموات، فيضيء لك المسيح. فانظروا إذن أن تسلكوا بحدّر، لا كجهلاء، بل كحُكماء، مُقْتَدِينَ الْوَقْتَ فَإِنَّ الْأَيَّامَ شَرِيرَةٌ. فلدلك لا تكونوا أغبياء، بل افهموا ما مشيئة الرب. ولا تسكروا بالخمر التي فيها الدعارة، بل امتلئوا بالروح، مكلمين بعضكم بعضاً بمزامير وتسابيح وأغاني روحية مُرتَمِينَ ومُرتَلِينَ في قلوبكم للرب.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (8:41-56)

At that time, there came to Jesus a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at Jesus' feet he besought Him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. As Jesus went, the people pressed round Him. And a woman, who had had a flow of blood for twelve years, and had spent all her living upon physicians, and could not be healed by anyone, came up behind Him, and touched the fringe of His garment; and immediately her flow of blood ceased. And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the multitudes surround Thee and press upon Thee! And Thou sayest, 'Who touched Me?'" But Jesus said, "Someone touched Me; for I perceive that power has gone forth from Me." And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before Him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed. And Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace." While Jesus was still speaking, a man from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she shall be well." And when Jesus came to the house, He permitted no one to enter with Him, except Peter and James and John, and the father and mother of the child. And all were weeping and bewailing her; but Jesus said, "Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But taking her by the hand Jesus called, saying, "Child, arise." And her spirit returned, and she got up at once; and Jesus directed that something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed; but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.

فصل شريف من بشارة القديس لوقا الإنجيلي البشير والتلميذ الطاهر. (8:41-56)

في ذلك الزمان، دنا إلى يسوع إنسان اسمه يائرس، وهو رئيس للمجمع، وخرّ عند قدمي يسوع، وطلب إليه أن يدخل إلى بيته، لأن له ابنة وحيدة لها نحو اثنتي عشرة سنة قد أشرقت على الموت. وبينما هو منطلق، كان الجموع يزحمونه. وإن امرأة بها نزف دم منذ اثنتي عشرة سنة، وكانت قد أنفقت معيشتها كلها على

الْأَطِبَاءِ وَلَمْ يَسْتَطِيعَ أَحَدٌ أَنْ يَشْفِيَهَا. دَنَّتْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِ وَمَسَّتْ هُدْبَ ثَوْبِهِ، وَلِلْوَقْتِ وَقَفَ نَزْفُ دَمِهَا. فَقَالَ يَسُوعُ: "مَنْ لَمَسَنِي؟" وَإِذْ أَنْكَرَ جَمِيعُهُمْ، قَالَ بُطْرُسُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ: "يَا مُعَلِّمُ، إِنَّ الْجُمُوعَ يُضَايِقُونَكَ وَيَزَحْمُونَكَ، وَتَقُولُ، مَنْ لَمَسَنِي؟" فَقَالَ يَسُوعُ: إِنَّهُ قَدْ لَمَسَنِي وَاحِدٌ. لِأَنِّي عَلِمْتُ أَنَّ قُوَّةً قَدْ خَرَجَتْ مِنِّي. فَلَمَّا رَأَتْ الْمَرْأَةُ أَنَّهَا لَمْ تَخَفْ، جَاءَتْ مُرْتَعِدَةً وَخَرَّتْ لَهُ، وَأَخْبَرَتْ أَمَامَ كُلِّ الشَّعْبِ لَأَيَّةٍ عَلَّةٍ لَمَسَتْهُ، وَكَيْفَ بَرِنَتْ لِلْوَقْتِ. فَقَالَ لَهَا: "ثِقِي يَا ابْنَتُ. إِيْمَانُكَ أَبْرَأُكَ، فَادْهَبِي بِسَلَامٍ." وَفِيمَا هُوَ يَتَكَلَّمُ، جَاءَ وَاحِدٌ مِنْ ذَوِي رَئِيسِ الْمَجْمَعِ وَقَالَ لَهُ: "إِنَّ ابْنَتَكَ قَدْ مَاتَتْ، فَلَا تُتَعِبِ الْمُعَلِّمَ." فَسَمِعَ يَسُوعُ، فَأَجَابَهُ قَائِلًا: "لَا تَخَفْ. آمِنْ فَقَطْ فَتَبْرَأَ هِيَ." وَلَمَّا دَخَلَ الْبَيْتَ، لَمْ يَدْعُ أَحَدًا يَدْخُلُ إِلَّا بُطْرُسُ، وَيَعْقُوبُ، وَيُوحَنَّا وَأَبَا الصَّبِيَّةِ وَأُمَّهَا. وَكَانَ الْجَمِيعُ يَبْكُونَ وَيَلْطَمُونَ عَلَيْهَا. فَقَالَ لَهُمْ: "لَا تَبْكُوا. إِنَّهَا لَمْ تَمُتْ وَلَكِنَّهَا نَائِمَةٌ." فَضَحِكُوا عَلَيْهِ لِعِلْمِهِمْ بِأَنَّهَا قَدْ مَاتَتْ. فَأَمْسَكَ بِيَدِهَا وَنَادَى قَائِلًا: "يَا صَبِيَّةُ قُومِي." فَرَجَعَتْ رُوحُهَا وَقَامَتْ فِي الْحَالِ. فَأَمَرَ أَنْ تُعْطَى لِتَأْكُلَ. فَدَهَشَ أَبَوَاهَا، فَأَوْصَاهُمَا أَنْ لَا يَقُولَا لِأَحَدٍ مَا جَرَى.

Upcoming Events

Nov 9th	Ladies meeting after coffee hour. All are welcome to attend
November 16th	Prison Ministry Card Writing Workshop at coffee hour

Coffee Hour

Nov 9th	Guajardo Family
Nov 16th	Luis and Joan Henriquez
Nov 23rd	Nawal Khalil

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, Rocky Dudum** and **Norma Khalil**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Blanche Manneh**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Sam Nassab**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Sue Gideon**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Hala (Sandra) Mitry**. Many years!
- † Fady and Jumana Najjar and family in memory of **Michel Najjar** on the occasion of his 14-year memorial. May his memory be eternal!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Fairouz Freij**. Many years!
- † St. John Parish Family for the good health of **Elias Freij**. Many years!

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 Kavar, Mason Kavar, Jonathan Juha, Maron Juha and Zaiden Karanikola

Christmas Volunteering

The joy of the season is upon us! ✨ Our church is preparing for the grand opening/ Christmas party, and we'd love your helping hands and hearts. Every bit of help makes a difference. If you would like to be part of this committee, please contact Rania Kashou or David Hanna. Let's come together in the spirit of fellowship and make this a joyful celebration of Christ's birth! ❤️🌲

November 23 Thanksgiving Basket

Raffle 6 tickets for \$12. Please start bringing your gourmet items in the following 3 Sundays to give us enough time to make the best of a beautiful basket and maybe more. Please give your items to Rima.

St. John Orthodox Church
501 Moraga Way
Orinda, CA 94563

You could use this QR code for your donation



Dear Parishioners,

Below is one of the sermonettes delivered by one of our youth, Mason Kavar, as part of the youth month in October:

As you all are probably aware, today is special Olympics awareness day in the Archdiocese and I wanted to make a connection with what we read.

In the epistle we read today, Paul speaks about a personal struggle. something that caused him pain and limitation. We don't know exactly what his "thorn" was, but we do know that it humbled him, reminded him of his dependence on God, and became a way through which Christ's strength was revealed.

That message lies at the very heart of the Special Olympics.

Each Special Olympian, each coach, and each teen volunteer shows us that God's power does not depend on human perfection — it shines through our weakness, our struggles, and our perseverance.

When we see our Special Olympians compete with joy, courage, and faith, we are witnessing exactly what Paul meant:

God's strength is made perfect in our weakness.

His grace is sufficient, and it's more than enough.

At the Antiochian Village Special Olympics Camp, we see this truth lived out every year.

Those who the world may overlook as "weak" reveal to us a deeper kind of strength, one rooted in the love of Christ, in resilience, and in unshakable joy.

Our Olympians don't just participate in games, they preach a sermon with their lives. They show

us what it means to trust God, to celebrate every gift, and to love one another without barriers.

So when we support this ministry, through our prayers, our donations, and our presence, we're not just helping fund a camp. We're helping to proclaim the Gospel truth that Christ's grace is sufficient, and that in Him, every weakness becomes a window for His power and glory.



The next sermonette letter will come from Tania.

Dear parishioners,

We ordered these items to continue beautifying our church. Your donations towards these items are greatly appreciated.

\$20, \$50, \$100 or more are accepted.

God bless you all!

	1	Orthodox Bishop's Chair – Hand-Carved Wood with Icon	\$1,350.00
	1	Hand-Carved Wood Chanter Psalter Stand with Cross Top	\$1,975.00
Subtotal			\$3,325.00
Shipping			\$122.62
Total			USD \$3,447.62

The Bishiop's chair has been donated by Raif and Sonia Rihani and family

All Night Vigil

"With fiery lips the Cherubim
sing Thy praise, O Christ God; and
with incorporeal mouths the
Choir of the Archangels never
falleth silent from glorifying
Thee. "

November
7th
Friday, 7pm



Synaxis of the Holy Archangels

4593 Central Way,
Fairfield, CA 94534

St. Timothy
Antiochian
Orthodox Church

VESPERS, LITY, ORTHROS
AND LITURGY

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30TH 2025, 3 PM ET

Media contact: Shahd Khaled shahd@arabfilm.us or (415) 564.1100
This is not the public information number. Please do not publish it.



Five Oscar Submissions and a 4K Remastered Classic Lead this Year's Arab Film Festival Program in San Francisco

2025 Arab Film Festival

November 6 - November 15, 2025

*North America's Oldest and Largest Festival Celebrating
Arab Cinema returns for its 29th annual edition*

The Arab Film and Media Institute (AFMI) is pleased to announce the full program for the 2025 Arab Film Festival, running November 6 - November 15, 2025 with a hybrid program of in-person and virtual events.

The 29th edition of the Arab Film Festival includes 5 movies chosen by their countries to represent them at the 98th Oscars: *Palestine 36* (Palestine), *The Voice of Hind Rajab* (Tunisia), *All That's Left of You* (Jordan), *Happy Birthday* (Egypt), and *Calle Málaga* (Morocco).

This year Palestine, Tunisia, and Jordan chose all movies directed by women and telling the stories of Palestinian people to represent them at the 98th Oscars.

The Voice of Hind Rajab is being hailed as the defining movie of the decade. It won the Grand Jury Prize and received a 23 minutes and 50 second standing ovation at the Venice Film Festival, the longest in the history of the festival. It also shattered records at the San Sebastián Film Festival where it won the Audience Award with the festival's highest score.

Palestine 36 premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) where it received a 15-minute standing ovation.

"The world is finally catching up to what our community has always known: Arab filmmakers are reshaping global cinema. From powerful Oscar contenders to timeless classics like *Cairo Station*, this year's festival reflects the full breadth of our storytelling as we honor both the future and the foundations of Arab cinema. We are honored to screen so many powerful and moving films at the 2025 Arab Film Festival: each is an act of cultural resilience and a bridge across borders."

The 2025 Arab Film Festival will run throughout the San Francisco Bay Area at the AMC Kabuki 8 (San Francisco), Roxie Theater (San Francisco), Alamo Drafthouse Valley Fair (San Jose) and the New Parkway Theater (Oakland). The program spans 10 days, presenting over 58 films from 28 countries, 27 directed by women.

The Arab Film and Media Institute (AFMI), the organization behind the Arab Film Festival, has also partnered with The Criterion Collection and The Roxie Theatre in San Francisco for **a special remastered, 4K screening of the Arab film classic *Cairo Station*.**

The Arab Film Festival has become an annual must-go event for those looking to see the best of Arab Cinema. The 2025 program also includes other award winning films such as *The Little Sister* (winner of the Queer Palm and Best Actress Awards at Cannes), and *Once Upon a Time in Gaza* (winner of the Best Director Award at Cannes - Un Certain Regard).

The 29th edition of the Arab Film Festival (AFF2025) will open on Thursday November 6th in San Francisco with Annemarie Jacir's PALESTINE 36, Palestine's entry to the 2026 Oscars.

Opening Night special guests: Dina Shihabi, Nicholas Monsour, JC Kalache and Adam Habib

Acclaimed Irish director Jim Sheridan leads this year's Festival Jury, which also includes Khalid Abdalla, Hussain Amarshi, Karim Amer, Yareli Arizmendi, Aida Begić, Adam Habib, J.C Kalache, Nicholas Monsour, Amara Rizk, Nadim Safieddine, David Shafei, Dina Shihabi, and Ramin Zahed.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Official Entries to the Oscars at AFF2025

OPENING NIGHT FILM: *Palestine 36* - Palestine's Submission to the 98th Academy Awards

Directed by Annemarie Jacir, 2025, 115 mins

Palestine, France, Qatar, KSA, UK, Denmark, Jordan, Norway, US, Sweden, Australia

In 1936, as the British Empire tightens its grip on Palestine, Yusuf is caught between his village home and his work in Jerusalem. Amidst an anti-colonial revolt, and Jewish refugees fleeing persecution from Europe, all sides converge in a decisive moment for the entire region.

***The Voice of Hind Rajab* - Tunisia's Submission to the 98th Academy Awards**

Directed by Kaouther Ben Hania, 2025, 81 mins

Tunisia, France

Executive Producers: Brad Pitt, Joaquin Phoenix, Rooney Mara, Alfonso Cuarón

January 29, 2024. Red Crescent volunteers receive an emergency call. A 6-year old girl is trapped in a car under fire in Gaza, pleading for rescue. While trying to keep her on the line, they do everything they can to get an ambulance to her. Her name was Hind Rajab.

***All That's Left of You* - Jordan's Submission to the 98th Academy Awards**

Directed by Cherien Dabis, 2025, 145 mins

Jordan, Palestine, State of, Germany, Cyprus, Greece, Qatar, Saudi Arabia

Executive Producers: Javier Bardem, Mark Ruffalo

All That's Left of You won Best film + Audience Award at the San Francisco Film Festival and the Audience Award at the Sydney Film Festival. Javier Barden and Mark Ruffalo are Executive Producers.

After a Palestinian teen gets swept up into a West Bank protest, his mother recounts the family story of hope, courage and relentless struggle that led to this fateful moment.

***Happy Birthday* - Egypt's Submission to the 98th Academy Awards**

Directed by Sarah Goher, 2025, 91 mins

Egypt

Winner: TRIBECA Best International Narrative Feature, Best International Script, and Nora Ephron Award

Eight-year-old maid Toha goes to great lengths to ensure that her best friend Nelly, the daughter of her wealthy employer, has a successful birthday party in this poignant debut feature exploring classism in modern-day Cairo.

***Calle Málaga* - Morocco's Submission to the 98th Academy Awards**

Directed by Maryam Touzani, 2025, 116 mins

Morocco, Spain

Calle Málaga won the Armani Beauty Audience Award (Venezia Spotlight) at the Venice Film Festival, and it stars Carmen Maura, one of Spain's most famous actresses.

Maria Angeles, a 79 year-old Spanish woman, lives alone in Tangier, Morocco, and enjoys her daily routine. However, her life is turned upside down when her daughter arrives from Madrid to sell the apartment in which she has always lived. Determined to stay, she does everything she can to get her home and her belongings back and, unexpectedly, rediscovers love and sensuality.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: Cairo Station (Remastered. 4K)

***Cairo Station* - Morocco's Submission to the 98th Academy Awards**

Directed by Youssef Chahine, 1958, 77 mins

Egypt

Qinawi, a physically challenged peddler who makes his living selling newspapers in the central Cairo train station, is obsessed with Hanuma, an attractive young woman who sells drinks. While she jokes with him about a possible relationship, she is actually in love with Abu Siri, a strong and respected porter at the station who is struggling to unionize his fellow workers to combat their boss' exploitative and abusive treatment.

Widely regarded as one of the greatest works in Arab and world cinema, *Cairo Station* premiered at the 1958 Berlin International Film Festival and remains a cornerstone of Egyptian neorealism. Restored in 4K by Janus Films/The Criterion Collection, this special screening offers audiences a rare chance to experience Chahine's masterpiece as it was meant to be seen—on the big screen, in all its emotional and visual intensity.

AFF2025 opens at the AMC Kabuki 8 in San Francisco with *Palestine 36*, Palestine's entry to the 2026 Oscars. **For the full schedule please visit arabfilmfestival.org**

TICKET & PASS INFORMATION

General admission tickets for virtual screenings, Q&A's and panels range from complementary to \$8. In-person admission is \$20, \$18 for students, seniors or low income people. Special presentations, such as opening night, range from \$28 - \$100. Virtual-only passes are \$60, Festival passes are \$180 and VIP passes are \$250. For more information, visit the ticketing page at arabfilmfestival.org

About the Arab Film Festival (AFF)

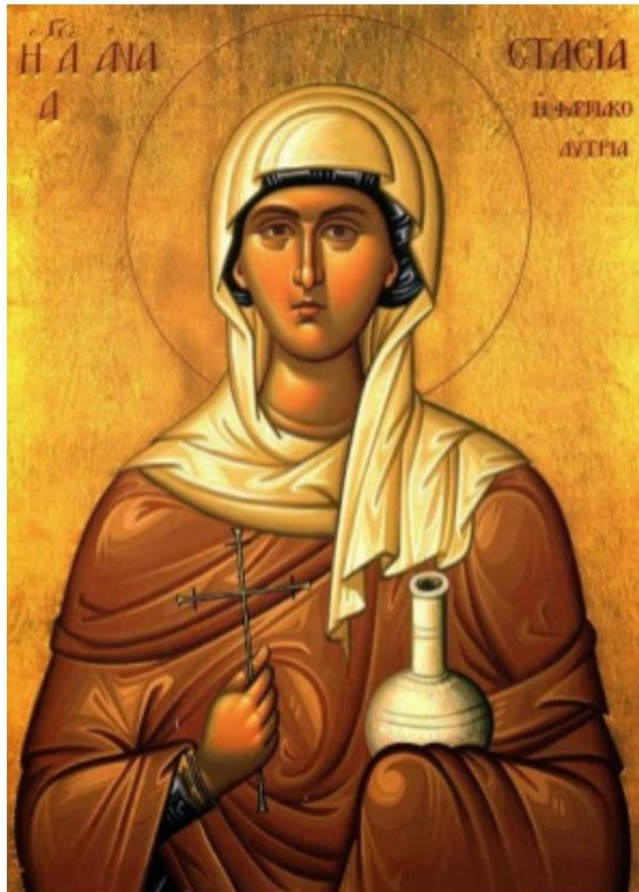
The flagship event of the Arab Film and Media Institute, the Arab Film Festival is the largest and longest running independent festival of its kind in North America. Launched in 1996, the festival's mission is to present the best of contemporary films that illuminate the richness of Arab culture through authentic narratives and images, providing insight into the beauty and complexity of the Arab world. The 29th edition takes place November 6 - 15, 2025. Check arabfilmfestival.org for the latest updates.

About the Arab Film and Media Institute (AFMI)

The Arab Film and Media Institute (AFMI) is the first organization of its kind outside the Arab world, a unique ecosystem to find, nurture and develop Arab film and media projects. It was rebranded from the Arab Film Festival in 2017 to fulfill its broader mandate to empower local Arab talent to tell their communities' stories in their own voices. AFMI is built upon four programming pillars: Exhibitions, Education, Creators and Industry. For more information about AFMI, please visit arabfilmminstitute.org

St. Anastasia's Fellowship

A Support Group For Those Struggling With Or Affected By
Substance Abuse



**1st and 3rd Sunday:
6pm meeting; 7pm Readers Paraklesis**

**St. John the Evangelist Orthodox Church
501 Moraga Way
Orinda, CA 94563**

**Please Contact:
John: (925) 383-0222
Joseph: (310) 227-9848**

SUNDAY FUNDAY

DAVE & BUSTER'S

AFTER
LITURGY

NOVEMBER 9TH

2075 Diamond Blvd Ste.
H180, Concord, CA 94520



USE OUR
ST. JOHN LINK

Get ready to jingle and mingle!

Christmas

FORMAL

Enjoy a live performance by Waseem and his band,
a delicious dinner, and celebration of Christmas and
the hall grand opening

6TH DECEMBER, 2025

at 4:45pm Ribbon cutting and prayer

5 o'clock for cocktails

6 o'clock for dinner

Followed by dancing

ST. JOHN BANQUET HALL

501 Moraga Way, Orinda

Tickets \$110 per adult
\$40 per child(13 or younger)

Purchase by Nov.21
Rania Kashou 415.722.0774





Christmas Event

DECORATE THE TRUNK OF
YOUR CAR FOR ALL TO ENJOY

30

SUNDAY

NOVEMBER

AFTER LITURGY

BRING A TREAT TO PASS TO
ALL THE KIDS
(IF IT RAINS THIS EVENT
WILL BE MOVED INSIDE)

TO PARTICIPATE PLEASE
CONTACT: RANIA KASHOU





Krispy Kreme Digital Dozens to Support St. John Church



grouprai.se/krispykreme60225o



\$15
per order



50%
donated back

On Artificial Living

By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

A couple once came to see me. They were constantly quarreling and blaming each other. As we spoke, it became clear that their problem was financial. Their spending far exceeded their income, forcing them to borrow money even though their income was not small compared to the average in our society.

I suggested a very simple solution: each of them should keep a small notebook and write down, every day, all their expenses. At the end of the month, they should sit together and categorize their spending—food, healthcare, communication, and so on. “After several months, you’ll know how much you truly need for each area of your life,” I told them. “You’ll also be able to distinguish between what is necessary and what is extra. Then you can set a fixed amount for each category. And if one month you must exceed a limit in one area, compensate by spending less in another, so you never fall into debt.”

They left relieved—but after the first month, they stopped. “We were shocked,” they told me later, “by how much we were spending, and we became afraid to continue budgeting.”

There are many couples like them. The strange thing in our society is that people are rarely taught, as children, the virtues of prudence and moderation in spending—and they seldom learn them as adults. So they end up being led by others, by the culture, and by the consumerist climate around them. Few truly lead themselves—living in a way that suits them, not others; choosing what benefits their soul, not what impresses their peers; and shaping their life according to what they see as good, not what others dictate.

Economically speaking, as inflation continues to weigh on most people, we see that rising prices seldom push them to reorganize their lives wisely and peacefully. They do not begin with simple steps like conserving energy in their homes. Instead, they live under constant tension, striving to appear wealthier than they are—even if it means borrowing and weighing themselves down with more debt. The result is more anxiety, more complaints, and more exhaustion.

Because the spiritual dimension of their lives is shallow, they find no true relief from their worries. So they throw themselves deeper into the same whirlwind of endless activity—believing that entertainment and distraction will free them from their stress and emptiness. But once the diversion ends, they return to the same anxiety and fatigue. And so the cycle repeats, grinding them down until their life is spent.

Faced with the relentless grind of consumer society, which crushes people and drains their physical, spiritual, and material resources, we are in dire need, first and foremost, of courage and faith in God and in ourselves. Following that, we need to learn the art of moderation and managing our daily affairs in the best way possible, not merely the easy way.

Within every human being lies a desire to appear admirable before others. This desire may vary in intensity from one person to another, yet the need to exist in the eyes of others, rather than in our own, remains strong.

Do we notice how fashion constantly changes? Or how the images of celebrities shape our behavior? How much do these things push us toward a life of pretense—toward extravagant celebrations and “luxurious” weddings that exhaust us?

A wise woman once said to me, describing her family: “They don’t live for themselves—they live for others. They are enslaved by their desire to look good in others’ eyes, even falsely, and they pay for it with their happiness and health.”

Today’s world leaves no room for our carelessness. Life has become profoundly consumerist, built on the illusion that happiness comes from shopping and spending. In truth, happiness is born from contentment with what is essential. Luxuries have never been a source of lasting joy; they are only brief moments of pleasure that fade quickly.

True happiness wells up from within—from the peace that comes through God’s presence in our lives; from a soul that knows the meaning of its existence; from one who has learned to distinguish between what is necessary and what is superfluous;

from one who wishes to live according to what truly suits him and not what others expect.

Such a person has the courage to live by their spiritual convictions rather than by social trends. In short, happiness belongs to the one who is secure enough to seek what is right and pleasing to God and conscience, even when it contradicts the customs of society.

The wise seek approval in the eyes of God, and then in their own—not in the opinions of others. They do not care if others look down on them for living simply, because their sense of worth comes not from human praise but from the joy of God's approval and the integrity of their soul.

We still resist the first step in the ladder of priorities—the call to simplicity—even though deep down everyone longs for it. The Gospel invites us again and again:

- “Give us this day our daily (essential) bread...” (Matt. 6:11)
- “Do not be anxious about what you will eat or drink...” (Matt. 6:25)
- “One thing is needful... Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her...” (Luke 10:42)
- “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you...” (Matt. 6:33)
- “Flee from the love of money, from the love of power, and from the pride of life...” (see 1 Tim. 6:10, 2 Tim. 2:22, 1 John 2:16)

Do we ever ask ourselves, when we act extravagantly or live beyond our means, whether we are contradicting the Gospel? Or are we simply unaware, misusing the popular saying, “Everything has its time,” as our excuse?

How much careful discernment we need to gain that blessed spiritual sensitivity that helps us tell what is necessary from what is not, what benefits from what harms, what is essential from what is excessive!

How much courage and confidence we need to show our true selves, to live according to our convictions without shame, and to despise what contradicts our principles instead of feeling ashamed by them!

How much trust in ourselves and in our beliefs we need, so that we do not rush to imitate others out of fear of seeming lesser than they!

When will we realize that we grow in stature when we resist the tide of consumerism and rejoice in simple living, content with God's presence in our lives—and that we shrink when we chase after artificial living, which gives fleeting excitement but steals our lasting joy?

"Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful" (Luke 10:41–42).

في العيش المتكلف بقلم المتربوليت سابا (اسبر)

قصدني زوجان يتخاصمان، باستمرار، ويشكوان بعضهما بعضاً. فاتضح، من حديثهما، أنّ المشكلة اقتصادية. فمصرفهما يفوق دخلهما بكثير، ما يضطرهما إلى الاستدانة؛ مع العلم أنّ دخلهما ليس بقليل، قياساً إلى الدخل العام السائد.

اقترحت عليهما حلاً بسيطاً جداً، يقوم على أن يقتني كلٌّ منهما دفترًا صغيراً، يسجل فيه، يوميّاً، كلّ مصاريفه. ويقومان، في نهاية الشهر، بعملٍ مشتركٍ، يصنّفان فيه ما صرفاه، ويؤبّانه في حقول مخصّصة لكلّ نوع منه: طعام، طبابة، اتصالات، إلخ. قلت لهما: هكذا ستعرفان، بعد عدّة أشهر، مقدار ما تحتاجانه، شهريّاً، لأيّ حقل من حقول معيشتكما. وكذلك ستستطيعان تمييز اللازم من النافل. ومن ثمّ تُلزمان أنفسكما بمبلغ محدّد لكلّ حقل. وإذا ما اضطررتما، مرّة، إلى اجتياز الحدّ المخصّص لأحد الحقول، تقتصدان المبلغ من حقل آخر، حتّى لا تقعا في العجز.

غادرتني مرتاحين، لكنّهما لم يتابعا تنفيذ الاقتراح، بعد الشهر الأول، وذلك، على حدّ قولهما، لأنّهما دُهِشا بكثرة المصاريف، فخافا المتابعة.

كم هم كثيرون أمثال هذين الزوجين! الغريب في أمر الناس، في مجتمعنا، أنّهم، في طفولتهم، لم ينشأوا على ثقافة التدبير والاقتصاد في النفقات، ولم يهتمّوا بتربية أنفسهم عليها، عندما كبّروا! لذا تراهم مَسوقين، في مجتمع الاستهلاك بخاصّة، من الآخرين والمجتمع والمناخ العامّ باستمرار. وقلّما تجد من يسوق نفسه حقّاً، فيعيش كما يناسبه هو لا الآخرين، ويتصرّف بما يُفيدة هو لا رفاقه، ويبني ذاته كما يرى الصالح له هو، لا كما يراه غيره.

فإذا أخذنا الناحية الاقتصادية، وقد بدأت تضغط على الكثيرين، نرى أنّ الغلاء المتزايد لا يقوّد الغالبية العظمى من الناس إلى تدبّر أمور معيشتهم، بالتي هي أحسن، وهم مرتاحون نفسياً. لا يبدؤون بترشيد استهلاك الطاقة انطلاقاً من بيوتهم حتّى. تراهم متوتّرين يسعون إلى الظهور بمظهرٍ معاكسٍ لإمكاناتهم الاقتصادية، ولو استدانوا، وراكموا على أنفسهم أثقالاً إضافية. فيحصدون المزيد من القلق والتذمّر والتشكي.

ولأنَّ البُعْدَ الروحيَّ لحياتهم ضحلٌّ، لا يجدون متنقِّساً لهم، من الهموم المعيشية، إلا المزيد من رعي أنفسهم في دوامة الحياة الطاحنة، التي يعانون منها، في ما يعتقدونه سبيلاً للترفيه والخروج من الروتين وضيق الروح، وهذا ما يعيدهم، بعد الانتهاء منه، إلى المزيد من القلق والهم والتذمر. وهكذا دواليك، يدخلون في دوامةٍ لا تنتهي، تطحنهم حتَّى يحينَّ أجلُّهم.

أمام طاحون المجتمع الاستهلاكيّ، الذي يطحن البشر، ويمتصّ مقدّراتهم، الجسديّة والروحيّة والماديّة، كم نحن بحاجة، وقبل كلّ شيء، إلى الشجاعة والثقة بالله وبالذات. وتالياً تعلّم فن الترشيد وتدير شؤوننا اليومية بالطريقة الفضلى لا السائدة.

ثمّة توقُّ، في داخل كلّ إنسان، إلى الظهور أمام الآخرين بمظهرٍ يسترعي الإعجاب. قد يتفاوت هذا التوق في شدّته من إنسان إلى آخر، لكن هاجس أن نوجَد في عيون الآخرين، لا في عيوننا يبقى حاضراً.

هل ننتبه إلى تغيير الموضة المستمر، وإلى تأثير صور نجوم المجتمع علينا؟ وإلى أيّ حد يدفعنا هذا إلى حبّ العيش المتكّلف، والمناسبات الباذخة، والأعراس القاتلة؟

وصفت سيدة فاضلة أفراد عائلتها قائلة: إنهم لا يعيشون لأنفسهم، بل للآخرين. يقتلهم حبّ الظهور في عيون الآخرين، ولو كان ظهوراً كاذباً مخالفاً لحقيقتهم، ويدفعون ثمنه من سعادتهم وصحتهم!

لم يعد الزمن يسمح لنا بترك أنفسنا على عفويّتها، واستبعاد تنظيم أمور الحياة عنّا. فالحياة المعاصرة استهلاكيّة بامتياز، وتقوم على ترسيخ القناعة بأنّ السعادة تكمن في ثقافة الصرف shopping، بينما هي تنشأ، في الحقيقة، من ثقافة الاكتفاء بما هو ضروري. لم تكن النوافل، مرّة، مصدراً للسعادة، بل بهجةً وقتيّةً، تزول بزوالها.

السعادة شعور ينبع من الداخل، من الطمأنينة الناجمة من حضور الله في حياتنا، ومن النفس التي وجدت معنى حياتها، والتي عرفت كيف تميز بين الضروريات والكماليات، والتي تعي بأنّها ترغب بالعيش كما يناسبها، لا كما يريد الآخرون لها.

والتي تمتلك الشجاعة الكافية، لكي تسلك في أمور معيشتها وفق قناعتها الروحية، لا وفق الدارج في أعراف الآخرين. باختصار، السعادة يعيشها من كان واثقاً بنفسه، إلى درجة الشجاعة، التي تجعله يطلب ما يراه مفيداً له، ومريضاً لضميره وقناعاته، وفق تعليم إنجيله؛ ولو خالف، في ذلك، المألوف في مجتمعه.

الإنسان الحكيم، هو الذي يرى صحّة سلوكه في عيون الله، وذاته تالياً، لا في عيون الآخرين. لا يهتمّ ما يقولون عنه كونه لا يجاريهم في أسلوب معيشتهم. هو لا يستمدّ وجوده من رضاهم عليه، بل من رضى ربّه وذاته.

ما زلنا نرفض الدرجة الأولى في سلم الأولويات؛ أعني العيش ببساطة. ولو كان الجميع يتوق في داخله إليها. وعلى الرغم من أن الإنجيل يدعو إليها مراراً:

- "خبزنا الجوهري أعطنا اليوم ... " (متى ١١: ٦)
- "لا تهتمّوا بما تأكلون وبما تشربون ... " (متى ٢٥: ٦)
- "إنّما الحاجة إلى واحد... مريم اختارت النصيب الصالح، الذي لن يُنزع منها ... " (لوقا ١٠: ٤٢)
- "اطلبوا أولاً ملكوت الله وبرّه، والباقي يُزاد لكم ... " (متى ٣٣: ٦)
- "اهربوا من حبّ المال وحبّ السلطة وتعظّم المعيشة..." (انظر ١ تيموثاوس ٦: ١٠ ، ٢ تيموثاوس ٢: ٢٢ ، ١ يوحنا ٢: ١٦)

أُترانا نسأل أنفسنا، أمام تصرّفٍ باذخ ومتكلّف وفي غير محلّه، إن كنّا نخالف الإنجيل، ونسير سيرة مناقضة له، أم أنّنا لا نعي هذا الأمر، متبنّين المبدأ السائد، والمناقض للإنجيل: "كلُّ شيء له وقته"؟

كم يلزمنا من التدقيق والفحص الصادق لضميرنا المؤمن، حتّى نقتني حسّ التمييز المبارك، الذي يجعلنا واعين لما يلزم ولما لا يلزم، لما يفيد ولما يؤذي، لما هو ضروري ولما هو كمالي!

كم يلزمنا من الشجاعة والثقة، لكي نُظهر أنفسنا على حقيقتها، وقناعاتنا دونما خجل، ونحتقر ونستخفّ بما يخالف مبادئنا، بدلاً من الخجل منها!

كم يلزمنا من الثقة بالذات وبالمبادئ التي نتبنّاها، بدلاً من المسارعة إلى تقليد الغير، لنلا نظهر دونهم!

متى نعي أنّنا نكبرُ عندما لا ننساق مع التيار الاستهلاكي، ونفرحُ بالعيش البسيط، مكتفين بحضور الله في حياتنا؛ وأنّنا نصغرُ عندما نركض وراء العيش المتكلّف، الذي يمنحنا شعوراً وقتيّاً بالبهجة، ليسرق منّا الفرح الحقيقي الدائم؟

"مرتا مرتا إنّك مهتمة ومضطربة بأمور كثيرة، وإنّما الحاجة إلى واحد" (لوقا ١٠ : ٤١-٤٢).