

2026 OPL MONTHLY WEBINAR SERIES

OCTOBER WEBINAR

Metropolis of San Francisco · Metropolis of Boston · Metropolis of Atlanta

MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2026

5:00 PM PT | 8:00 PM ET

SEEKER SERIES | SESSION 1 – TO SUPPORT: "WELCOMING & ENGAGING"

OUR PRESENTERS



FR. BARNABAS POWELL



GEORGE EKIZIAN

OUTREACH · EVANGELISM · PHILANTHROPY

Becoming a Welcoming, Outward Focused Parish

"The light of Christians cannot be hidden."

Fr. Barnabas Powell · Metropolis of Atlanta

“

There is nothing colder than a Christian who is not concerned about the salvation of others.

The light of Christians cannot be hidden, a lamp shining so brightly cannot be hidden.



ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

How we changed our mindset

1

First, our Greek Festival...

became an outreach event, not just a fundraiser.

2

Second, we...

opened the church for tours and answered every question.

How we changed our mindset

3

Third, we preached and taught that...

every Orthodox Christian is called to know and share the faith.

4

Fourth, we created a plan to help...

a Seeker become a Catechumen, and a Catechumen become Faithful.

How we changed our mindset

5

Fifth, we made...

Hospitality and catechesis a priority

6

Sixth, we focused on...

the guest's experience, from the parking lot to coffee hour.

How we changed our mindset

7

Seventh, we praised and encouraged...

every parishioner who took a step outward, publicly.

8

Eighth, we focused on...

faithfulness over the long haul, not quick results.

THREE MOVEMENTS, ONE LOVE

Outreach, evangelism, philanthropy

Outreach

Going out to where people already are, and meeting them there.

Evangelism

Inviting people to come and see the life of the Church.

Philanthropy

Love for mankind made concrete, as God is the Lover of mankind.

WELCOME IN PRACTICE

Walk the visitor's journey

1
Parking lot
Clear signs and visitor parking near the door.

→

2
Narthex
A trained greeter, a guide, and a warm hello.

→

3
Liturgy
Someone to sit with them and explain.

→

4
Coffee hour
Invited, introduced, and never left alone.

→

5
Follow-up
A call or note within the week.

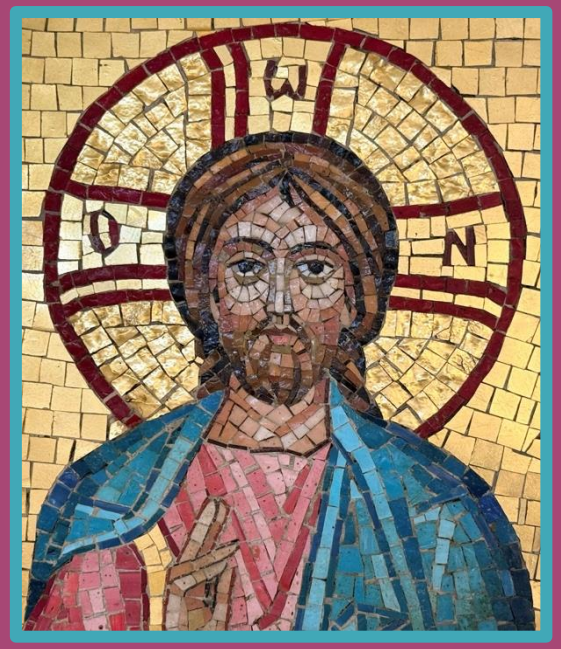
The visitor decides whether to return **before the Liturgy ever begins.**

FOR YOUR PARISH COUNCIL

Four honest questions

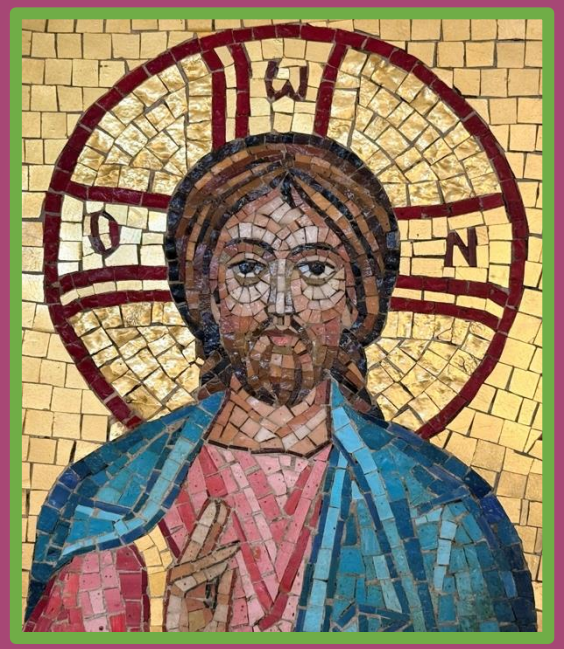
1. Who visited last month, and does anyone know their names?
2. What does our budget say we care about most?
3. Is there a clear path from Seeker to Catechumen?
4. Which one shift could we begin this year?

Topics for this Evening



- Greeting vs Welcoming
- Why We Welcome
- Who We Are
- What We Do (Coordinators / Members)
- When We Welcome
- Where We Welcome
- How We Welcome

Greeting vs Welcoming



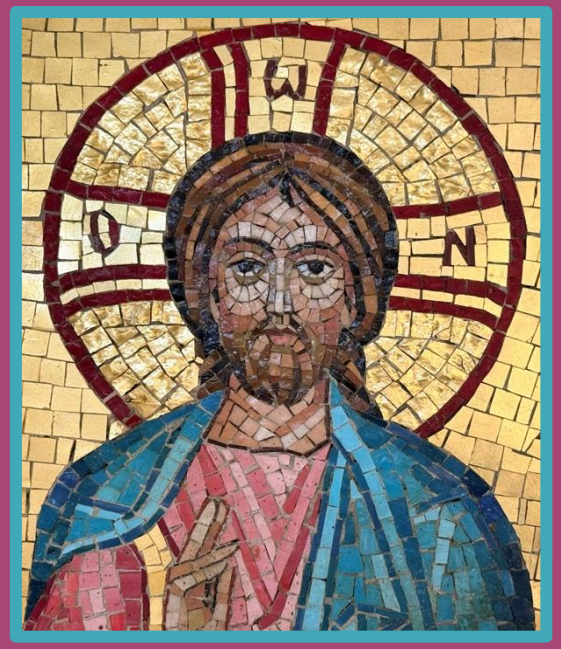
Greeting

- Brief engagement
- Momentary connection
- Hello / Goodbye
- Virtually no social investment in one another

Welcoming

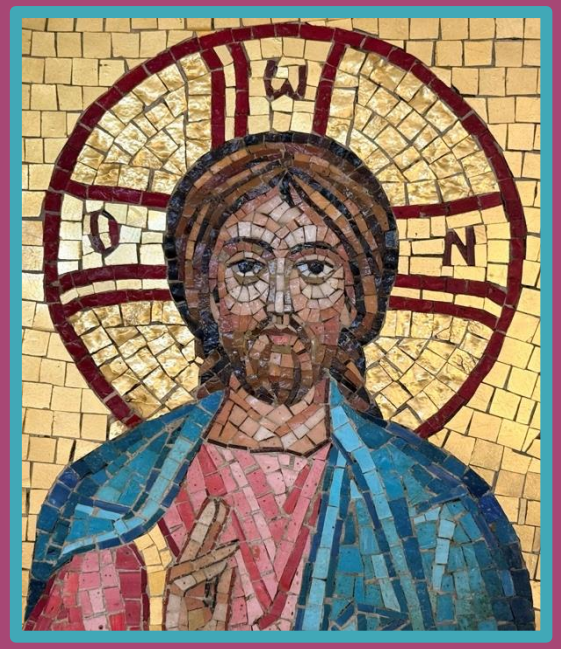
- Makes everyone feel special / immediate acceptance
- Lead with our hearts
- All about building relationship with everyone

Why We Welcome



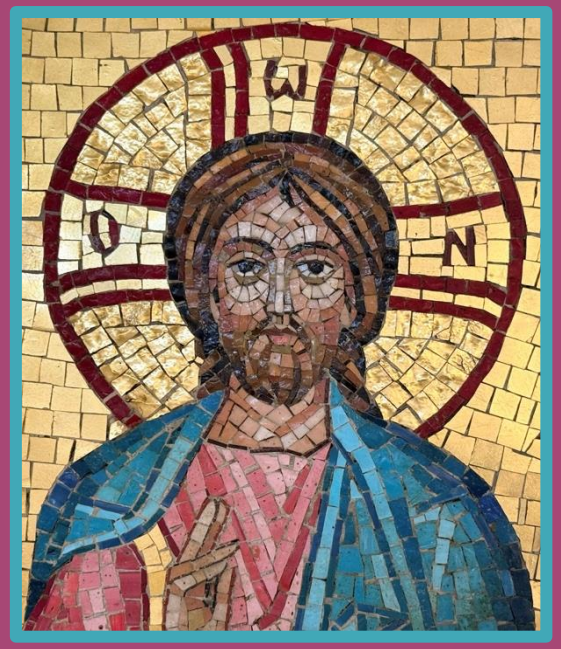
- To treat attendees like family, giving them a reason to return
- To set a welcoming tone to enhance entire church experience
- To create a warm, Christ centered first impression
- To introduce Orthodoxy to non-Orthodox visitors
- To encourage non-Orthodox visitors to sign up for Orthodoxy 101

Who We Are



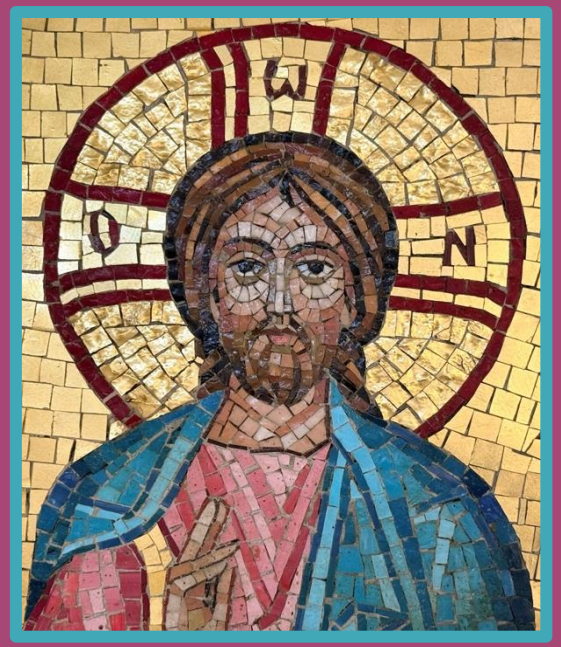
- Two Welcome Team Coordinators
- 3-5 team members serving each Sunday
- 4-5 Teams serving monthly
- Engaging, accommodating, kind, outgoing, and reliable
- Church members, regular attendees, and of Orthodox faith

What We Do (Coordinators)



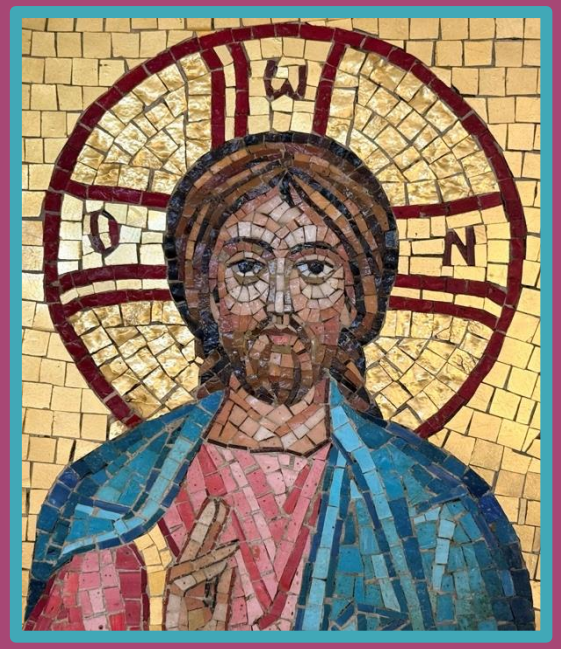
- Recruit Welcome Team members
- Hold annual planning meeting/training sessions
- Create annual greeter schedule
- Set-up welcome podium and registration kiosk
- Make up name badges
- Place bulletins on podium and in narthex
- Manage kiosk iPad and assist with inputting information

What We Do (Coordinators)



- Give non-Orthodox visitors orientation
- Escort visitors into church and seat with “Pew Pals”
- Assign attendance (use counter)
- Confirm visitor “Welcome” emails sent by office staff

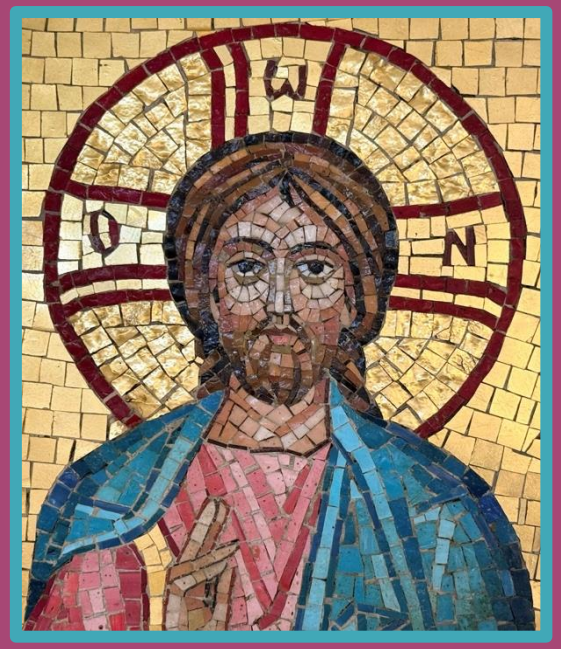
What We Do (Team Members)



- Faithful in attendance on scheduled Sundays
- Contact guard or coordinator if security or first aid concerns
- Notify coordinator in advance of absence
- Welcome with a smile and welcoming words
- Remember names, if possible
- Hand out weekly church bulletins

What We Do (Team Members)

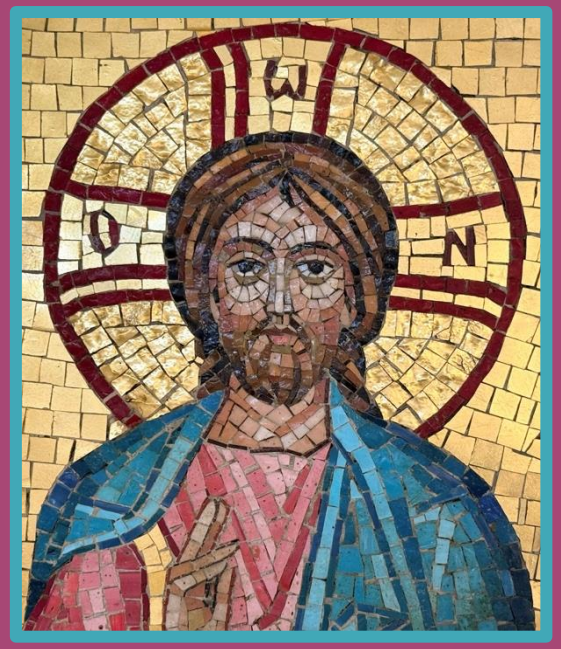
Welcoming New Visitors



- Encourage visitors to fill our visitor information on registration kiosk or complete for them
- Offer Welcome Packet to visitors
- If new to Orthodoxy, refer to coordinator to give orientation
- Keeps attendance counts and give attendee form to coordinator
- Invite to Coffee Hour and introduce to church members

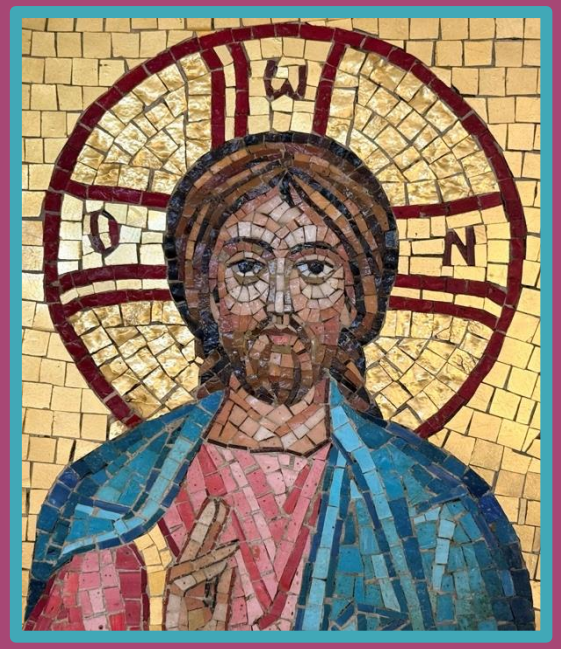
What We Do (Team Members)

Welcoming New Visitors



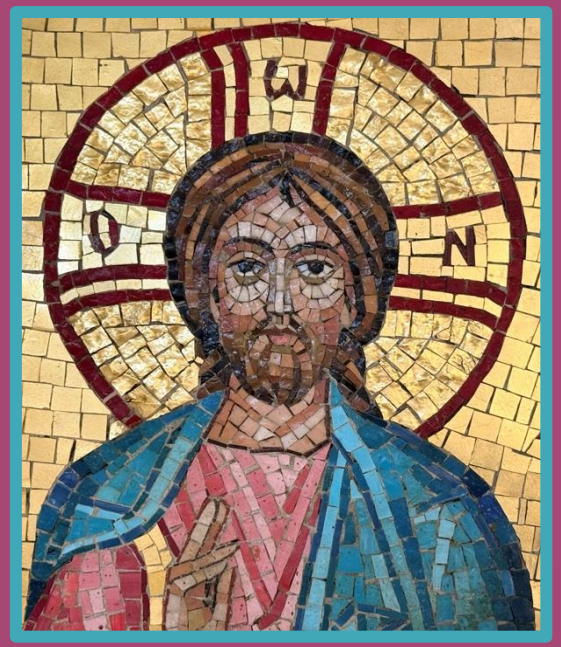
- Offer Helpful Information
  - If families: tell about Church School (give booklet) / upcoming children activities / youth groups
  - If infants: inform of nursery facilities
  - If young adults: tell about young adult ministries
  - If seniors: share about Ambassadors Ministry / accessibility within church premises

When We Welcome



- Coordinator(s) from 9:00-10:45
- Team members from 9:15-10:30
- Assigned at least one Sunday each month
- Festival and other church events

Where We Welcome



- Outdoors (not in narthex, if possible)
- About 15-20’ from entrance of church

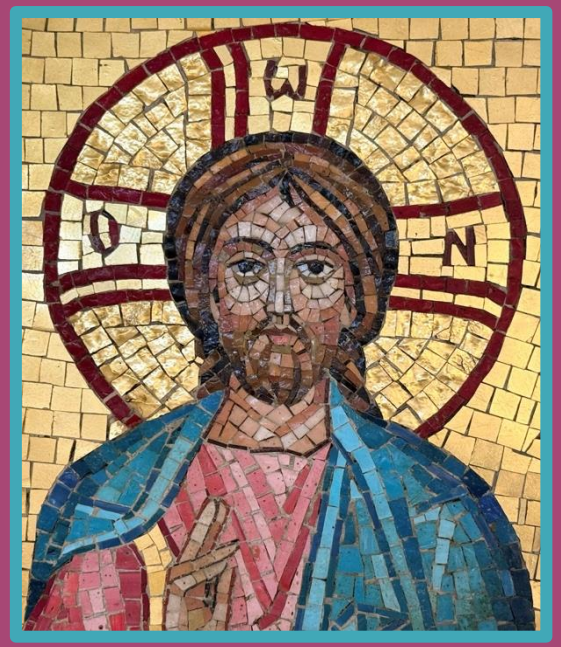






How We Welcome

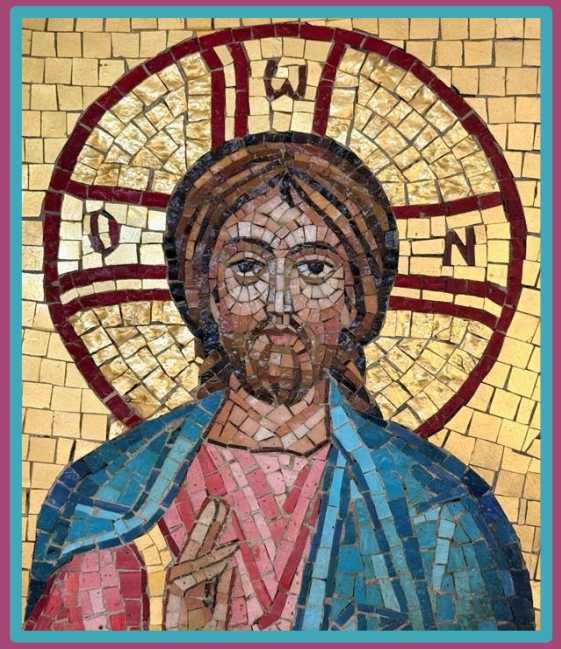
Before Liturgy



- Good morning
- It’s great to see you!
- I don’t think we’ve met. My name is _____
- How did you find out about our parish?
- We’ve missed seeing you (if haven’t attended recently)

How We Welcome

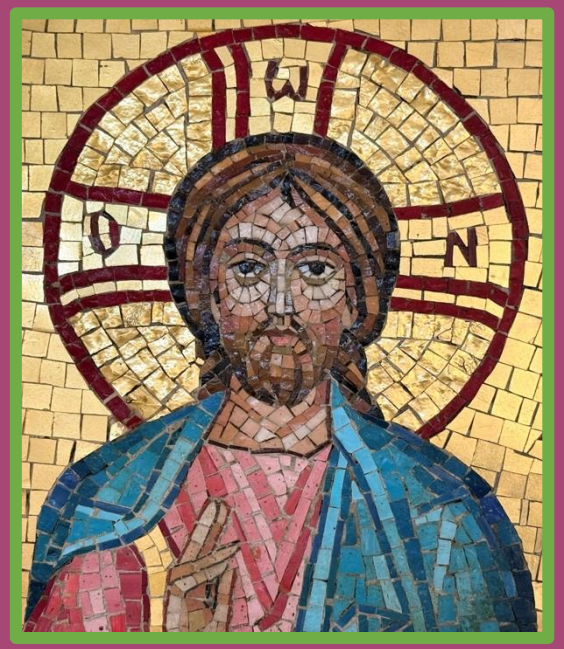
After Liturgy



- It’s great to see you (or great to see you again!)
- It was nice to have you join us today
- Have a great week!
- Do you have any questions?
- God Bless you!
- I hope to see you next Sunday!

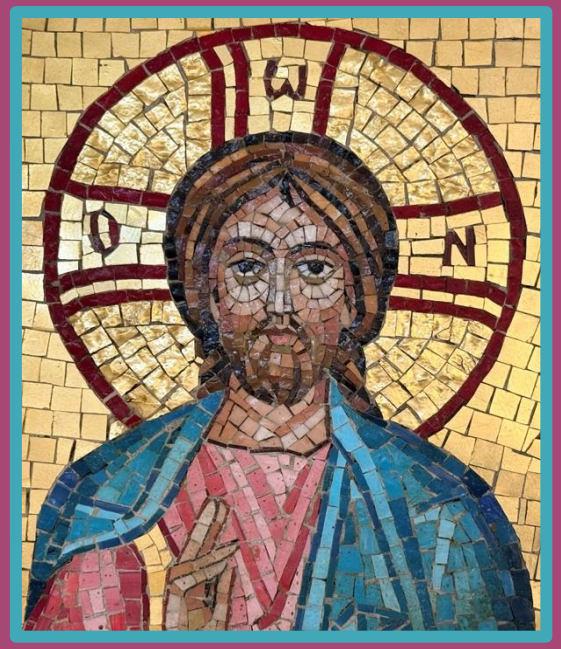
How We Welcome

During Coffee Hour



- Did you come with someone?
- Do you know someone here?
- Are you from this area?
- Are you visiting?
- Have you visited our church before?
- Have you been to an Orthodox Church before?

St. Paul's Welcome Team





IN CONCLUSION

Anyone telling you changing the mindset of a community is easy is trying to sell you something.

Don't believe them.

KEEP GOING

Recommended resources

Resource	Where to find it
Dept. of Outreach & Evangelism, Metropolis of San Francisco	groworthodoxy.org
“Bringing Orthodoxy to America” conference, 2016	https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWopa4I5g3xBRf0oi_WjSvIXfxb0tH9Xk
Festival Outreach with Fr. Barnabas	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i14VnDpTVNY
Start With Why, Simon Sinek	Portfolio Press, 2009
Journey To Fullness, 16-part video series and workbook	https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIIDM9VSRE-g & Ancient Faith Store

Fr. Barnabas Powell

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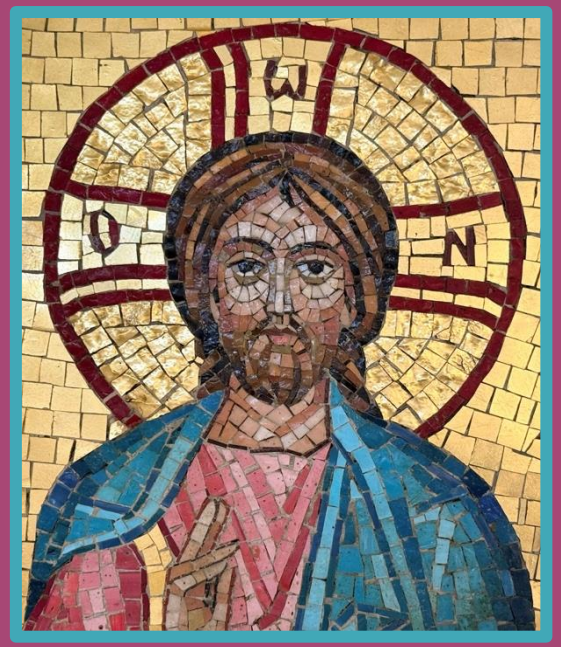
WEBSITE

www.FaithEncouraged.org

WEEKLY VIDEO HOMILIES

www.youtube.com/@FaithEncouragedTV

Support Materials



St. Paul's Welcome Ministry Guidebook

Welcome Ministry Guidebook

https://sfparishleader.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/St-Pauls-Welcome-Ministry-Guidebook1.pdf

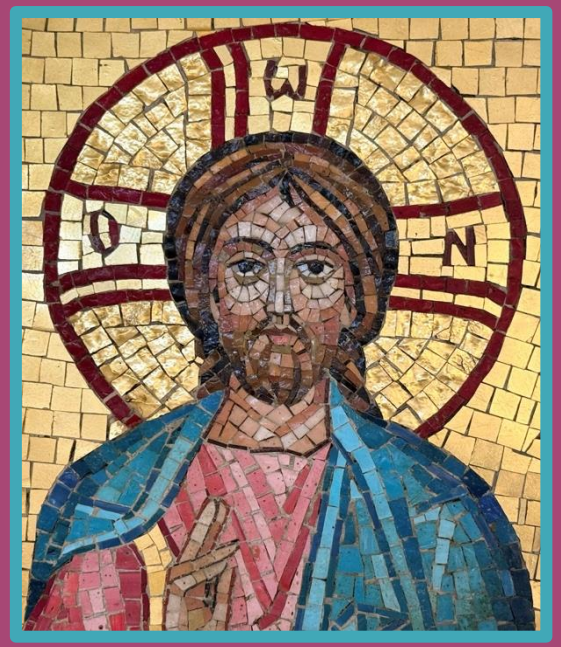
St. Paul's Guest Packet

Guest Packet

https://sfparishleader.net/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/St-Pauls-Welcome-Ministry-Guest-Packet1.pdf

Contact Information

Welcome Team Ministry



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Questions?

