



Saint Catherine: Egypt's Global Destination for Spiritual, Cultural and Sustainable Tourism

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BRIEF OVERVIEW

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2. Objectives
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SAINT CATHERINE

- The only place on Earth where, according to tradition, God revealed Himself to Moses. When Moses was in doubt, the mountain witnessed the great manifestation of God's presence and collapsed under the magnitude of the divine revelation.
- Located in the heart of the South Sinai governorate, 500 Km from Cairo and 200 Km from Sharm el-Sheikh at the outskirts of El Tor Mountains.
- Extended over an area of 5.130 Km it is the largest nature protectorate.
- Saint Catherine's Area is a World Heritage Site by UNESCO since 2002. The Monastery, founded in the 6th century, is the oldest Christian monastery still in use for its initial function.
- The area is sacred to three world religions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.

THE VISION

To create a holistic tourism strategy that generates opportunities for development by benefiting and empowering of the Bedouin local communities while supporting the conservation and promotion of cultural and natural resources in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.



OBJECTIVES

- Increase the number of visitors, length of stay and spend per visit.
- Empower the local (Bedouin) community, in particular women, through tourism awareness, skills development and integration in the tourism value chain
- Enhance the tourism value chain in its linkages with local products, gastronomy and handicrafts
- Advance the conservation and promotion of natural and cultural resources through tourism
- Diversify touristic activities capitalizing on the natural potential of the area
- Promote local architecture and building material while still preserving the unique character of the area

OPPORTUNITIES

- Global increase in market demand for experiences connected to local culture, nature, wellbeing, spirituality, and cultural.
- The Egyptian Government has launched a mega project aimed at developing Saint Catherine and surrounding areas.
- Diversified potential for nature, adventure, spiritual and rural tourism as well as for the integration of handicrafts and agriculture in the tourism value chain.
- UNESCO Heritage Site positioning.





CHALLENGES

- How to prepare / engage / empower the local community
- Women empowerment and youth engagement
- Gap in housing supply to satisfy local demand meeting the needs of different stakeholders (lack of accommodation) / quality of the services
- Shortfalls in accessibility
- Skills development for MSMEs
- Diversification of economic activities and services
- Deployment of AI, digitalization and innovation in the management of the community



NATIONAL PARTNERS

- Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (lead)
- Ministry of Local Development
- Governorate of Sinai
- Ministry of Social Solidarity
- Ministry of Housing, utilities and urban communities
- Ministry of Economic Planning
- Ministry of Renewable Energy
- Ministry of Water Resources
- Ministry of Environment
- Telecom Egypt
- National Council of Women
- Egyptian Tourism Federation
- Local organizations representing the local community

OTHER PARTNERS

In a market-driven community focused approach we also proposed to engage in consultations with relevant international partners such as:

- Adventure Travel and Tourism Association (ATTA)
- Google
- Expedia
- Tripadvisor
- Planeterra
- ABTA / AITO



AL TAJALLI AL AAZAM (GREAT TRANSFIGURATION PROJECT)

TODAY - 2026

- The project aims to position Saint Catherine as a world-class spiritual, cultural and eco-tourism destination.
- Government investment exceeds EGP 25 billion.
- Project is in its final implementation phase, with full completion expected during the first half of 2026.
- Development covers 14 integrated tourism, infrastructure, environmental and cultural components.
- Enhancement of airport capacity
- New visitor facilities include:
 - ✓ Visitor & Interpretation Centre
 - ✓ Eco-lodges and environmentally sensitive accommodation
 - ✓ Al Zaytouna residential tourism district
 - ✓ Heritage market and commercial areas
 - ✓ Public plazas and pedestrian spaces
 - ✓ Improved roads, utilities and airport connectivity
- Development follows sustainability principles while preserving the natural and spiritual character of Saint Catherine.



ACHIEVED RESULTS

TOURISM GROWTH

- Increased international visibility for Saint Catherine.
- Stronger positioning in spiritual, religious and pilgrimage tourism.
- Expansion of eco-tourism, wellness tourism and mountain tourism experiences.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

- New employment opportunities for local Bedouin communities.
- Increased demand for local guides, handicrafts, gastronomy and cultural experiences.
- Greater participation of women and youth in tourism value chains.

INVESTMENT & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

- New accommodation and hospitality developments.
- Growth in adventure tourism and wellness retreats.
- Opportunities for tour operators to create multi-day itineraries and experiential products.

SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT

- Protection of natural and cultural heritage.
- Improved visitor management and tourism infrastructure.
- Stronger destination branding aligned with international sustainable tourism trends.

ST. CATHERINE TODAY

FROM PILGRIMAGE SITE TO YEAR-ROUND SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION



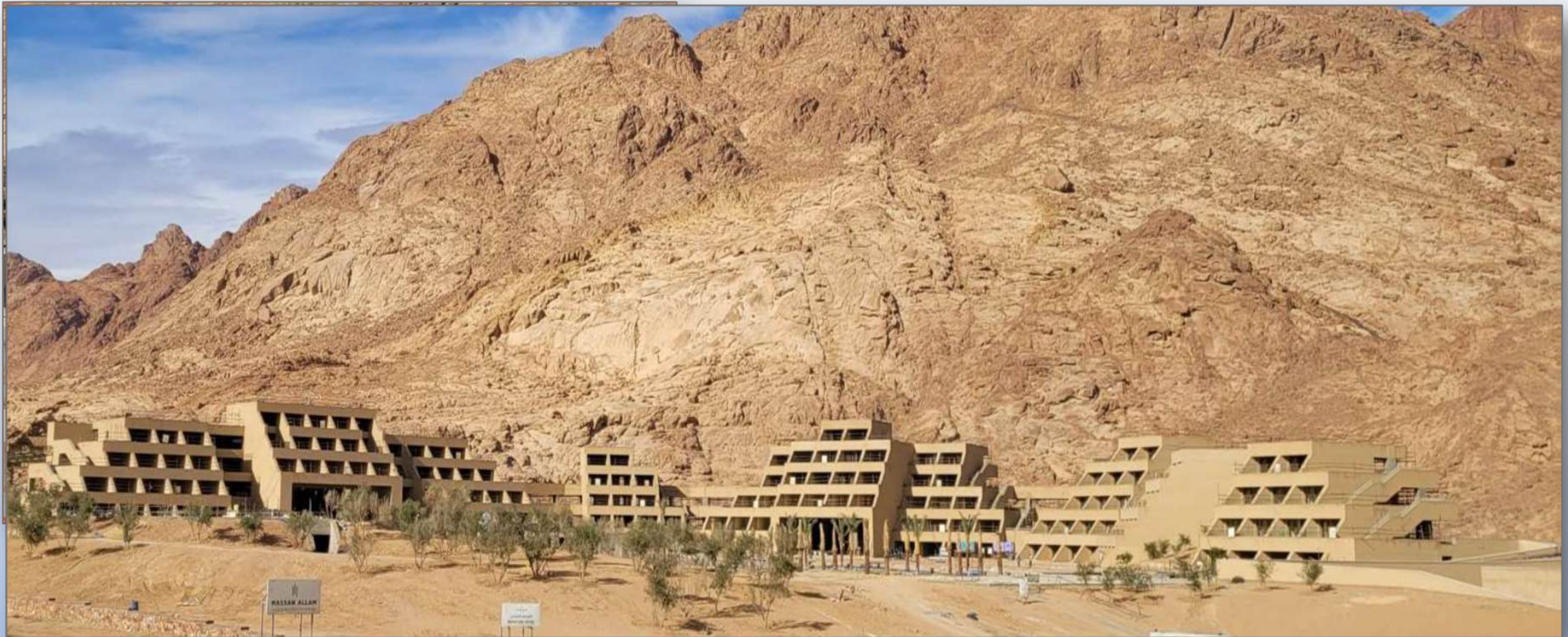
ساحة السلام



مركز الزوار

ST. CATHERINE TODAY

FROM PILGRIMAGE SITE TO YEAR-ROUND SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION



DESERT ROCK RESORT

ST. CATHERINE TODAY

FROM PILGRIMAGE SITE TO YEAR-ROUND SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION



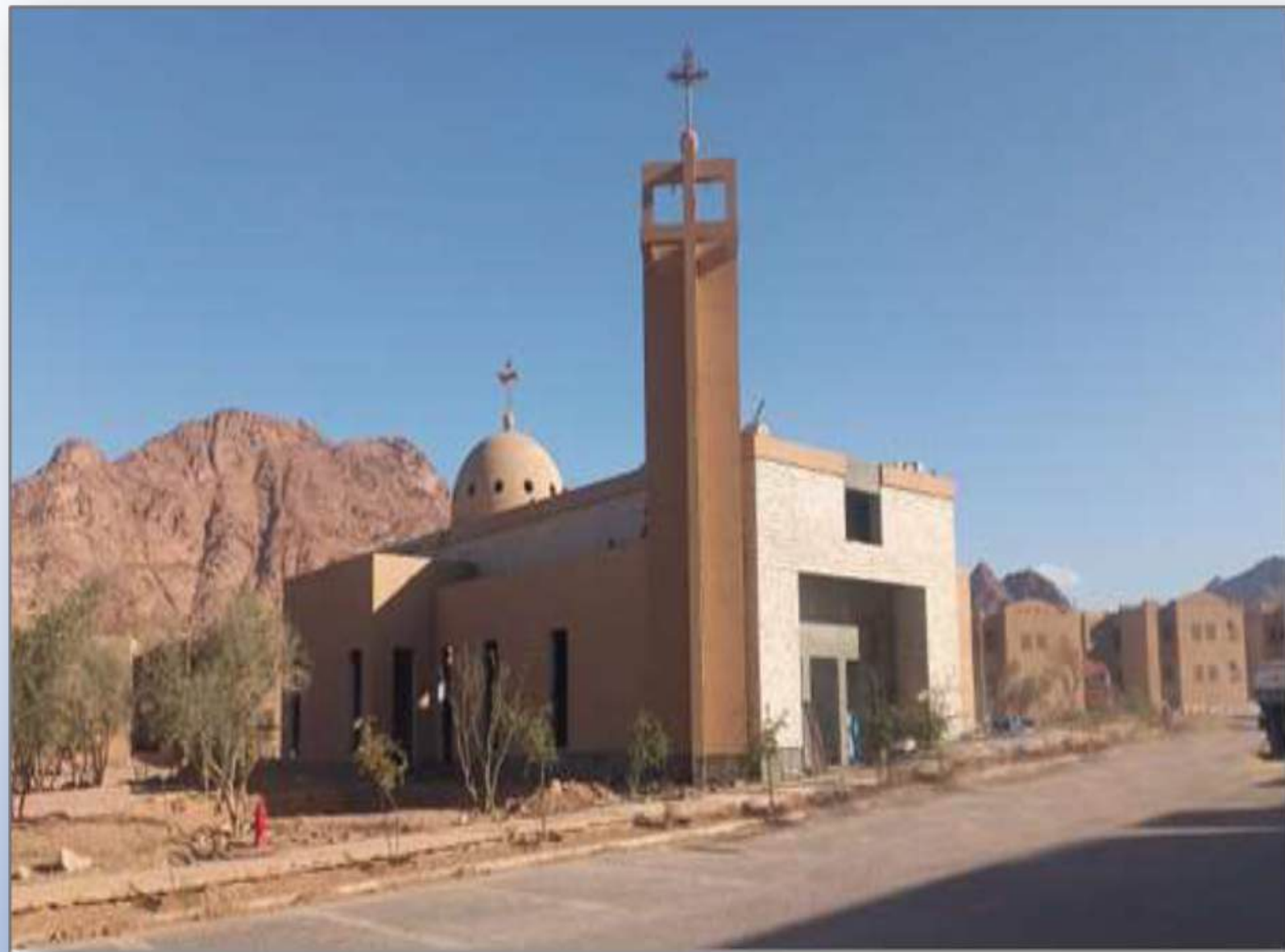
ZAITOUNA RESORT HOTEL
المنتجع الفندقى بالزيتونة



المنتجع السياحى أعلى الهضبة

ST. CATHERINE TODAY

FROM PILGRIMAGE SITE TO YEAR-ROUND SUSTAINABLE DESTINATION



OUR LADY OF ZEITOUN CHURCH
كنيسة الزيتونة



THE MOSQUE OF THE HOLY VALLEY
مسجد الوادي المقدس



THANK YOU