

# THE APOSTLE

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### JANUARY 2010

#### SAINT MARK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF IRVINE

#### HAPPY NEW YEAR

Saint Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church

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Website: [www.st-mark-church.org](http://www.st-mark-church.org)

**Very Rev. Father Michael Laffoon, Pastor**

Residence phone: (949) 559-6133

**Rev Fr. Patrick Irish, Attached**

**Rev. Deacon George Moubayed**

**Sub-deacon: Athanasius Fakhouri**

**Choir Director: Barbara Scholl**

**Chanters: Elia Qushair, Theresa Joubran, Dionysius**

**Ingraham, Mark Ellis, and Jacob Bahbah.**

**Church Office Administrator: Lydia Wakileh**

**Youth Director: Juliana Turk**

#### 2008-2009 PARISH COUNCIL

**Austin Turk {11} Chairman** (949) 581-2060

**Randy Dabbah {11} Vice Chairman** (949) 595-0863

**Kendall Schorr{12} Secretary** (714) 602-7936

**Theodore Skaff{12} Treasurer** (949) 305-9565

**Michael Khoury {10} Co Treasurer** (714) 717-2349

**Ghassan Awayjan {10} Building Committee & Membership** (951) 454-5429

**Mufid Samara {10} Building Committee** (714)809-1125

**Fouad Tarazi {11}Building Fund & Asst. Treas.** (949) 462-3232

**Paula Rodriguez: {12}Special Events & Stewardship** (949) 470-9876

**Vera Sidorenko: {10} Web Design** (949) 888-0540

[Number in brackets is the member's last year of his or her current term]

**Church School Director:**

**Eileen Ellis** (949) 458-1604

**Men's Club President:**

**Mark Ellis:** (949) 458-1604

**Ladies Guild President:**

**Vera Bahbah** (714) 943-7113

**Teen SOYO President: Melisa Khoury** (714) 373-1225

#### **Pastor's Corner**

*In this month we celebrate the Lord's Baptism (the Feast of Epiphany/ Theophany). In the gospels we read that Jesus came to the River Jordan to be baptized by His cousin, the Prophet and Baptizer John. Fr. Thomas Hopko, in his book on the Advent/Nativity/Theophany season, "The Winter Pascha" offers us an important Biblical reflection of the place of the Jordan in the history of salvation:*

The river Jordan plays a very important role in the Bible. Before it becomes the river in which Jesus the Messiah baptized, it is revealed as the river which bounds the "Promised Land." To cross the Jordan, for the people of Israel, was to enter into the fulfillment of the Lord's promises. It was to enter the "land flowing with milk and honey," the place where God would dwell with His people providing them with the endless blessings of His presence.

In the New Testament, with its spiritual and mystical fulfillment of the Old, to cross the Jordan was to enter into the Kingdom of God, to experience the fullness of the life of the age to come. The fact that Moses was not blessed to cross the Jordan thus became a symbol of the fact that the Law by itself could not save Israel or the world. It had to be Joshua, which literally means *Savior*, and is the Hebrew form of the Greek word *Jesus*, who leads the people across the Jordan and into the promised land, thus symbolizing the saving action of the new Joshua, Jesus the messianic Savior, in the covenant of grace (see Joshua 1:12).

When Joshua came to the Jordan the streams parted at the presence of God's people, with the priests bearing in their hands the Ark of the Covenant. As the waters of the sea parted to allow God's people to pass through as if on dry land at their exodus from Egypt, so also at the entry into the land of promise, the river of Jordan made way for God's

people to pass through into the place of their final destination (Joshua 3:11-13).

The Lord also commanded Joshua to take twelve stones out of the river Jordan and to place them together in one place in a pile where the people had passed through, to remain "to the people of Israel as a memorial forever" of what the Lord had done for them (Joshua 4:8-10).

After the people passed through the Jordan River, "the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before." (Joshua 4:18) This miraculous wonder became part of the living memory of Israel, and the event was celebrated in the worship of God's people ever since. The psalms which recall the divine action are sung at the Church's festival of the Epiphany as prefigurations of God's final act of the salvation of all people in the death and resurrection of His Anointed, the Beloved Son who was baptized in the same Jordan streams.

"What ails you, O Sea that you flee O Jordan, that you turn back?... Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob" (Psalm 114:5,7)

The river Jordan was also parted by the passage of Elijah and Elisha, an event also recalled at the liturgy of Epiphany. (2 Kings 2) And it was from the Jordan that Elijah was taken up into heaven in order to return again, as the tradition developed, to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah. (See Mt 17:9-13) It was also in the Jordan that Naaman the Syrian was cleansed from his leprosy, a sign referred to by Jesus as a prefiguration of the salvation of all people, not only those of Israel. (Lk. 4:27) In the account of Naaman's cure the special significance of the Jordan is stressed once again.

*"He [Naaman] went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." (2 Kings 5:13,14)*

Can we not be washed in just any river and be clean? God answers, No. Only in the Jordan, in the baptism of Christ, are we cleansed from all of our sins. Only through the Jordan do we enter into the land of the living, the Promised Land of God's

kingdom. Only by the sanctified waters of the Jordan does God sanctify us forever.

*The River Jordan turned back of old,  
Before Elisha's mantle when Elijah ascended.*

*The waters were made to part in two,  
So the wet surface became a dry path.*

*This was in truth a symbol of baptism  
By which we pass through mortal life.*

*Christ has come to the Jordan to sanctify the waters.*

(Troparion of the prefeast of Epiphany)

*In His love,  
Fr. Michael*

### **Feasts, Special Services and Events for January 2010**

Wednesday, January 5 Feast of Theophany – 6:30 p.m Evening Divine Liturgy, followed by the Great Blessing of Waters (Orthros, 5:30 p.m.)

Friday January 15, 22, 29 – 7:00 p.m. Parish Education

Sunday, January 17 – Feast of St. Anthony the Great, Regular Schedule of Services

Sunday January 24, Sunday of Publican & Pharisee

Monday January 25 Feast of St. Gregory the Theologian

### **Advance Calendar for February 2010**

February 2, Feast of Meeting of the Lord in the Temple

February 5 & 12, Parish Education

February 24, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Discovery of the Head of St. John the Baptist

### **WEEKLY SERVICES**

Wednesday Vespers 6:30 p.m. (during Lent, Pre-Sanctified Liturgy)

Saturday Vespers 4:00 p.m. Confessions heard after service. [Note time change]

Sunday Orthros 8:45 a.m. Confessions heard from 9:00 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

Sunday Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

### **Bishop Joseph Schedule for January**

#### **January 9-10, 2010**

St. Athanasius Church, Goleta, CA

*Episcopal Visit*

#### **January 16-17, 2010**

St. Anthony Church, La Jolla, CA

*Patronal Feast Day*

#### **January 22-24, 2010**

Ss. Peter and Paul Church, Salt Lake City, UT

*Consecration of Church Building*

### **Selected Saints of the Month**

#### **January 1<sup>st</sup>**

#### **The Circumcision of our Lord and God And Savior Jesus Christ.**

On the eighth day after His birth, the divine Child was taken on the Temple and duly circumcised according to the Jewish Law that had been observed from the time of Abraham. At this time He was given the name Jesus, the name announced to the most holy Virgin by the Archangel Gabriel (Luke 1:31).

The Baptism of the New Covenant was prefigured in the Circumcision of the Old Covenant. The Lord's Circumcision shows that He took true human flesh upon Himself, not its semblance as heretics later taught of Him. The Lord was truly circumcised, desiring thus to fulfill all the Law, which He Himself had given through our forefathers and the prophets. Fulfilling all the ordinances of the Law, He superseded them by Baptism in His Church, for, as the Apostle declares: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:15).

#### **January 12<sup>th</sup>**

#### **The Holy Martyr Tatiana of Rome**

She was a Christian, of an eminent family, a deaconess in the Church. After the death of the Emperor Heliogabalus, the Emperor Alexander came to the throne in Rome. His mother, Julia Mamaea, was a Christian, but the Emperor himself was unsure and hesitant about the faith; an uncertainty that was clearly expressed by his keeping statues of both Christ and Apollo, of both Abraham and Orpheus, in his palace. His chief advisors took it into their own hands to persecute the Christians without his orders.

When the virgin Tatiana was led to martyrdom, she prayed for her executioners. And lo, their eyes were opened and they saw four angels around the martyr. Seeing this, eight of them were converted to Christ, for which they were tortured and killed. St Tatiana's martyrdom was long-drawn-out: she was flogged, parts of her flesh were cut off, she was sawn with an iron saw, and then, all disfigured and bleeding, was flung that evening into prison to be brought out on the following day for further torture. But God sent His angel to the prison, to give her courage and heal her wounds. Tatiana, therefore, appeared before her torturers each morning in perfect health. She was thrown to a lion, but the lion became tame before her and did her no harm. Her hair was shorn, from an idea that occurred to their godless minds that some sorcery might be hidden in it, some magical strength. Finally she was led out, together with her father, and the two were beheaded. In such manner this heroic maiden finished her earthly life in about the year 225, and was crowned with an immortal crown of glory. She had the weak body of a woman, but a manly and valiant spirit.

#### **January 22<sup>nd</sup>**

#### **The Holy Apostle Timothy**

One of the Seventy, he was born in Lystra of Lycaonia of a Greek father and a Jewish mother. His mother and grandmother were praised by the Apostle Paul for their sincere faith (2 Tim. 1:4-5). He met the great Apostle for the first time in Lystra, and was the only witness of Paul's healing of the man lame from birth. Later, Timothy was an almost constant traveling-companion of Paul's, visiting Achaia, Macedonia, Italy and Spain with him. A great zealot for the Faith, a superb preacher and of a gentle spirit, Timothy contributed greatly to the

spreading and establishing of the Christian faith. Paul called him his own son in the faith (I Tim). After Paul's martyrdom, Timothy had St John the Evangelist as his teacher. But when the Emperor Domitian exiled John from Ephesus to the island of Patmos, Timothy remained in Ephesus as bishop. At the time of an idolatrous feast called Katagogium, the pagans resentful of the Christians, made a merciless, masked attack on Timothy and killed him, in about the year 93. His honored relics were later taken to Constantinople and buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles by the graves of St Luke the Evangelist and St Andrew the First – Called.

**January 29<sup>th</sup>**

### **The Hieromartyr Ignatius**

The chief feast of St Ignatius is, on December 20<sup>th</sup>. Today we celebrate the translation of his relics from Rome, where he suffered martyrdom, to Antioch, where he had been archbishop. When St Ignatius was summoned to Rome to answer for his faith before the Emperor Trajan (98-117) a number of citizens from Antioch accompanied him on this long journey, prompted by their great love for their chief pastor. The saint of God, in no wise willing to deny the faith of Christ and scorning all the flattery and promises of the Emperor, was condemned to death and thrown into the Great Circus before the wild beasts. They tore him to pieces and he gave his soul to God. Then his companions collected his bare bones, took them to Antioch and buried them. When the Persians occupied Antioch in the sixth century, the relics of St Ignatius were again taken from Antioch to Rome.

## **Parish & Organizations News**

**We welcome our new additions to our Church this year;**

Mr. & Mrs. Emad Rizkallah and family

Mr. & Mrs. Elias Silheet and family

Mrs. Samira (Saba) Eissa

Mrs. Siham Saba

Mr. & Mrs. Samir Lakkees and family

Mrs. Elsa Frech

### **Ladies Guild**

Ladies Guild held their first ever Craft sale on December 6<sup>th</sup>, and their Annual Bake Sale on December 20<sup>th</sup>, thanks for all the ladies who helped in the craft shop and who helped and chaired the Bake Sale especially Theresa Joubran, Julie Bahbah, Barbara Khamis and Traize Bahbah.

On December 13<sup>th</sup> the ladies had the Gold'n Trade event. Thanks to Penny Skaff for chairing this event, the benefit to our church totaled \$434.

On January 8, 2010 Ladies will have their Annual Christmas Party. Place to be announced later.

The Ladies next meeting is January Thursday 14.

They will be hosting a Zalabyeh Luncheon on January 10, 2010.

*Ladies Guild Secretary*

### **Teen SOYO**

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Greetings.

This month for the teens was a busy one. We had a very successful first ever Lenten bake sale. Teens volunteered to bake something Lenten and we came together to sell our baked goods. We hope you enjoyed them and thanks for supporting our teens. Also, we have just finished sending out our annual Christmas cards. We assembled them together after church and mailed them out. Coming up for our teens on Sunday Dec. 27th is lunch and a movie. In January is the annual Winter Camp. Our church is chartering a bus for our teens and teens of our sister churches. We will leave at 12pm on Friday Jan 8th and return Sunday Jan. 10th at 1pm. A special thanks to our officers for all their hard work since the beginning of the year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Juliana Turk

### **Men's Club**

Meeting was held at the church hall on December 13, 2009

The purpose of the meeting is to follow up on the Christmas and New Year parties and other activities for 2010

It was decided the Christmas party to be held at Melad and Wafa Hanna on the 26 of December.

Gift to be of at least \$15 value, no gag gifts please.

Mark Ellis to email the announcement

Elyas Khury spoke about the arrangements for the New Year party

A D.J. was hired and he will bring equipments, fog machine, lights.. etc

Food will be catered by Al Sultan and will be buffet style

Isa Khamis will purchase the party necessities

Set up should be done on Sunday December 27, 2009

3 baby sitters shall be needed,

Seat covers will be donated by the cater who uses our hall.

Ibrahim Khamis donated \$300 toward the purchase of gifts for raffles

Fouad Tarazi will donate pizza for the children.

Sly Al Dada will donate 3 oil changes for the raffle

Mark Ellis talked about Manhattan Declaration and encouraged people to sign it.

Father suggested a working day at St. Barbara Monastery next January

*In Christ*

*Nader Qoborsi*

### **Fallen Asleep in Christ**

On December 8<sup>th</sup>, our sister Georgette Khamis, one of the oldest members of St. Mark, and mother of Barbara Khamis. Her funeral was sung at St. Mark on Saturday December 12 and the burial at Westminster Memorial Park. We will miss her, May her Memory be Eternal!!

**Please note that as of May 2009, the main mode of distribution for this newsletter is via an email attachment. If have received this through the US mail and would like to receive it through email, please contact the Church Office with your current email address. Likewise if you prefer a hard copy, please also contact us.**

### **Hall Rentals!!**

St. Mark has entered into an agreement with a caterer for the use of our church hall. This agreement will greatly benefit our parish financially, but since we expect significantly more hall rentals, it is incumbent on our organizations and parishioners to schedule hall use well in advance. The parish will have "first call" on hall usage, but once we have committed a date to the caterer we must honor that commitment. Please plan ahead.

### **Bloopers**

1-Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

2- Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

3- The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

4-Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM - prayer and medication to follow.

5- The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

George Aldada 1/5  
Samira Attalla 1/1  
Samir Azzam 1/13  
Lorraine Baba 1/3  
Issa Bahbah 1/3  
Andrew Bahbah ¼  
Vicky Billeh 1/30  
Youssef Billeh 1/24  
Miaad Bushala 1/10  
Hilary Chala 1/30  
Sonia Daher ¼  
Alice De Abdo 1/3  
Michael Debbas 1/22  
Matthew Dabbah 1/5  
Robert Eadeh 1/7  
Elsa Frech 1/28

Sierra Gordon 1/10  
 Michael Hanna 1/29  
 Dennis Ingraham 1/27  
 Matthew Kalache 1/3  
 Louisa Kashou 1/22  
 Lana Kashou 1/7  
 Lilian Kassicieh 1/29  
 Helen Kassir 1/6  
 Isa Khamis 1/11  
 Andrew Khamis 1/8  
 Anton Kishek 1/15  
 Dimitri Kort 1/9  
 Philip Kouri 1/28  
 Olga Manneh 1/28  
 Dn. George Moubayed 1/7  
 Abla Moubayed 1/1  
 Sam Munayyer 1/10  
 Susan Qaqundah 1/7  
 Jordan Qutami 1/24  
 Emad Riskallah 1/25  
 Andrew Rodriguez 1/24  
 Farah Saba 1/15  
 Hanan Saba 1/15  
 Michael Sakhel 1/30  
 Georgette Salameh 1/31  
 Steve Scholl 1/6  
 Anton Turk 1/24  
 Keitie Turk 1/9  
 Ibrahim Wakileh 1/6  
 Susan Wilde 1/19



George & Lorraine Baba 1/5  
 Ken & Adele Habeeb 1/2  
 Robert & Kristina Hagel 1/10  
 Wael & Louisa Kashou 1/6  
 Anton & Itab Kishek 1/18  
 Walid & Danice Najjar 1/14  
 Matthew & Sophia Whitacre 1/11

## R- pledges in Bulletin 2010

| Name                        |
|-----------------------------|
| SLEIMAN & SEHAM ALDADA      |
| PAUL & JUNE ANTER           |
| ANAHD AZZOUNI               |
| ISSA & JULIE BAHBAH         |
| LEO & IRMA CHADE            |
| VLADIMIR & JOANNA CHENDLER  |
| RUTH CONN                   |
| RANDY & MAY DABBAH          |
| SUE DABBAH                  |
| SONIA DAHER                 |
| NOHA DAHER                  |
| EDNA DEEB                   |
| NICHOLAS DIBS               |
| MARY DIBS                   |
| DARLYNE DIBS                |
| JERALD DONOVAN              |
| SAMIRA EISSA                |
| CHARLOTTE EL-HINN           |
| MARK & MEGAN EL-HINN        |
| OMAR & FATIN FAKHOURI       |
| SAMI & WISAM FARRAJ         |
| SPIRO & SAMIRA FASHEH       |
| KEVIN & SARA FORTUNA        |
| ELSA FRECH                  |
| MICHAEL & SANDEE GORDON     |
| JAMES N. & SANDELLA GOSON   |
| KAREEM (KEN) & ADELE HABEEB |
| ESPERENCE HADSHITI          |
| ROBERT & KRISTINA HAGEL     |
| GEORGE & MARY HANNA         |
| GEORGE & CHARLOTTE HANNA    |
| DENNIS INGRAHAM             |
| MICHEL & THERESA JOUBRAN    |
| ELIAS & HILDA KHAMIS        |
| IBRAHIM & DIANA KHAMIS      |
| JABRA KHAMIS                |
| ISA & BARBARA KHAMIS        |
| MITRI KHAMIS                |
| MICHAEL & CHARLOTTE KHOURY  |
| SIMON & LOURICE KISHEK      |
| DIMITRI & KANDY KORT        |
| MICHAEL & DONNA LAFFOON     |
| EMILIE LAFFOON              |
| SAMIR & ROBIN LAKKEES       |
| NELSON MAMEY                |
| MARY MANSOUR                |
| NABIL & ANNE MANSOUR        |
| NABIL & SUSIE MITRI         |
| SAM & ADEL MUNAYYER         |
| SAMMY & LANA NINO           |
| JASON NINO                  |
| TANYA NINO                  |

*The Apostle is a monthly newsletter of St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church. Parish Organizations are to submit articles by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to the Church office (949-851-8933)*

|                                |
|--------------------------------|
| PAUL & SUSAN QAQUNDAH          |
| JAMAL & TAMMY QUTAMI           |
| ISSAM & BERNADETTE RAMSEY      |
| ROBERT & KIMLA RANNEY          |
| JOSEPH RICHARDS                |
| EMAD & MUNA RISKALLAH          |
| TONY & PAULA RODRIGUEZ         |
| CARLOS & RHONDA RODRIGUEZ      |
| JERRI ROMLEY                   |
| SIHAM SABA                     |
| YACOUB & GENEVIEVE SABA        |
| FARAH & SYLVIA SABA            |
| MUFID & SALAM SAMARA           |
| STEVEN & BARBARA SCHOLL        |
| KENDALL & RONDA SCHORR         |
| ANGELIKA & AUTUMN SCHORR       |
| MILAD & MADONA SHAHEEN         |
| YURI & VERA SIDORENKO          |
| THEODORE & KATHY SKAFF         |
| DON JR & PENNY SKAFF           |
| ELIAS & RANIA SLIHEET          |
| FOUAD & RIMA TARAZI            |
| DAVE & BRENDA TAX              |
| ANDRE & SHARITA TERZIAN        |
| ROGER & CAROL TIERNEY          |
| GEORGE & MARTHA TOUBBEH        |
| JULIANA TURK                   |
| ANTON & KEITIE TURK            |
| AUSTIN & SAEDA TURK            |
| ELEANOR WACKEEN                |
| CHARLIE WAKILEH                |
| IBRAHIM & LYDIA WAKILEH        |
| MICHAEL WAKILEH                |
| ROBERT & THEODORA<br>WHITEHEAD |
| PATRICK & SUSAN WILDE          |

**Total pledge cards: 87**

**Total Pledged to Date: \$ 120,166**

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