

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2014 SAINT MARK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF IRVINE

Pastor's Column

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Rev. Protodeacon George Moubayed
Sub-deacon: Athanasius Fakhouri
Choir Director: Barbara Scholl
Chanters: Jacob Bahbah, Theresa Joubran, Karim Youssef, & Mark Ellis
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2011-2012 PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman {15} Penny Skaff (949)713-7411
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[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: Maurice Karkar (949) 586-2560
Ladies Guild Co-Presidents: Vera Bahbah (714) 277-5709 & Afifa Artoul (949) 215-2305
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Attributes of the Perfect Church

Written by the Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky

"One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, 'Come, I will show you the bride of the wife of the Lamb'" (Revelation 21:9)

Here we are near the end of the Bible in the Revelation experience. Is it not odd that one of the angels with the seven bowls with the seven last plagues is here inviting us to witness the glorious marriage of the Lamb whom we know to be our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ as the bridegroom? Also to recognize that the bride is none other than the holy Church all dressed in radiant white, symbol of purity and innocence? It tells us about angels. They are as their name implies, "sent" as messengers by the Holy Trinity to humanity. An angel like this brought the reader to the vision of the destruction of the great harlot, Babylon. Here the angel is announcing the glorious wedding of the Lamb of God and the Bride, the holy Church that the Lord bought with the great price of His Cross. The Bride-Church is a symbol of all who have the following attributes of unblemished flawless virtues radiating from their souls.

St. Paul set forth the attributes of the perfect Church. In Revelation those who dwell in such a Church are among those in the New Jerusalem coming down from heaven to belong to Jesus Christ the Lamb of God who comes to claim His bride. From the apostle to the gentiles, we find their characteristics:

They are people who are devoted to one another: *"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love."* [Romans 21:10] When we read this, how does it resonate on the conscience of each member of the community we call Church?

These are people who can say of their fellow parishioners that they: *"Honor one another above [them]selves."* [Romans 12:10] It means that each member in good standing holds all others in the congregation above themselves. They feel it an honor to be part of such a community of believers. Does this really happen?

It's mandatory to dwell in harmony with one another: *"Live in harmony with one another."* [Romans 12:16] It means that nothing is as important as to preserve peace among the family of Christ. Of course there are differences of opinion in the parish -- everybody understands that -- but they also realize that without the peace of God that passes all understanding, their Eucharist is hollow because their relations are shallow and worldly, not godly.

Love one another: *"Let no debt remain outstanding except the debt to love one another."* [Romans 13:8] Until we can realize the order from the Divine Liturgy: *"Let us love one another that with one accord we may confess...Father, Son and Holy Spirit..."* as Jesus said, we are talking nonsense when we say we love God. Here the expectation is that by the time we approach heaven, we have made love a way of life.

Accept one another: *"Accept then one another, just as Jesus accepted you."* [Romans 15:7] To accept is to realize there are differences, and yet they do not prevent us from forgiving. The French say: *To understand is to forgive.* Acceptance is not approval -- not even tolerance. It is compassion.

Serve one another: *"You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge in sinful nature. Rather serve one another in love."* [Galatians 5:13] Is this not the meaning of foot washing? What more powerful an example can there be than the Son of God washing the feet of fishermen? Are we above the Master?

Forgive one another: *"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."* [Colossians 3:13] You will be stopped and forbidden entry into heaven if you come with a grudge defiling your soul.

Encourage one another: *"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."* [I Thessalonians 5:11] We are ordered to build up the confidence and to reinforce the positive images of all your sisters and brothers in Christ. There's no place for a downer or defeatist in Paradise.

Feasts, Special Services and Events for February 2014

Sunday, February 2 – 10:00 a.m. Feast of Presentation of our Lord in the Temple (regular

Saturday and Sunday schedule.)

Thursday February 13, 10:30 a.m. Bible Study

Saturday February 8, 8:00 p.m. Valentine's Dinner Dance in the Church Hall

February 20 - 23, West Coast Sacred Music Institute, hosted at St. Luke Church

February 24 – March 2 Cheesefare Week

Friday: February 28, 7:00 p.m. Parish Education Night

Advance Calendar for March 2014

March 3 – First Day of Lent

March 25 – Feast of the Annunciation

Archbishop Joseph's Schedule

February 2, 2014

St. Michael Church, Van Nuys, CA

Feast of the Meeting of the Lord

February 3-6, 2014

Sacred Heart Retreat Center, Alhambra, CA

Diocesan Clergy Seminar

February 7, 2014
OCA Diocese of the West, San Francisco, CA
Meeting of the West Coast Hierarchs

February 8-9, 2014
St. Timothy Church, Fairfield, CA
20th Anniversary Celebration

February 9, 2014
Orinda, CA
Northern California Order of St. Ignatius Dinner

February 14-17, 2014
St. George Church, Phoenix, AZ
Episcopal Visit

February 22-25, 2014
St. John the Evangelist Church, Orinda, CA
Episcopal Visit

WEEKLY SERVICES

Wednesday Vespers 6:30 p.m.

Saturday Vespers 4:00 p.m. Confessions heard after service.

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.

Selected Saints of the Month

February 1st

THE HOLY MARTYR TRYPHON

Tryphon was born of poor parents in the village of Lampsacus in Phrygia. In his childhood he tended geese. Also from his childhood he was able to cure illnesses that afflicted people and livestock and was able to expel evil spirits. The Roman Empire at that time was ruled by Emperor Gordian whose daughter Gordiana went insane and this caused her father great sorrow. All the physicians were unable to help Gordiana. The evil spirit spoke through Gordiana and said that no one can cast him out except Tryphon. After many who were named Tryphon in

the empire were summoned, by Divine Providence, young Tryphon was also summoned. He was brought to Rome and he healed the emperor's daughter. The emperor lavished upon him many gifts all of which Tryphon, upon his return, distributed to the poor. In his village this holy youngster continued to tend geese and to pray to God. When Decius, the Christ-persecutor, was crowned emperor, Saint Tryphon was tortured and cruelly tormented for Christ. He endured all tortures with great joy saying: "Oh! If only I could be made worthy to die by fire and pain for the Name of the Lord and God, Jesus Christ!" All sufferings did him no harm and finally the tormentors sentenced him to be beheaded. Before his death Tryphon prayed to God and gave up his soul to his Creator in the year 250 A.D.

February 12th

SAINT THEODORA

Theodora, a Greek empress was the wife of the nefarious Emperor Theophilus the iconoclast. After the death of Theophilus, Theodora became the ruling empress and reigned together with her son Michael III. At the Council in Constantinople (842 A.D.), she immediately restored the veneration of icons. On this occasion, the Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy was instituted which is still celebrated today on the First Sunday of the Honorable Fast [First Sunday in Lent]. This holy and meritorious woman of the Church gave up her soul to God on February 11, 867 A.D. It was at that time, by the divine and wonderful Providence of God, at the solemn triumph of Orthodoxy over all heresies, that St. Cyril and St. Methodius were sent as Christian missionaries to the Slavs.

February 20th

SAINT LEO, BISHOP OF CATANIA

Beneath the volcanic Mount Etna in the town of Catania lived Leo the saint, a good shepherd and compassionate teacher of the people. He had great concern for the sick and the poor. His zeal for the Faith was as great as his charity toward the less fortunate. Appearing in Catania was a magician named Heliodorus who deluded the people with

various illusions and greatly demoralized the youth. At one time during the Divine Services, Heliodorus entered the church of God and began his obscenities. St. Leo approached him, tied him to one end of his pallium and led him to the market place of the city. Here, Leo ordered that a large fire be built and when the fire was burning, he stood in the middle of the fire and pulled Heliodorus into the fire. Heliodorus was completely consumed and Leo remained alive and unscathed. All who were bewitched by Heliodorus, and who looked upon him as someone divine, were ashamed. The compassionate and the zealous Leo was proclaimed throughout the entire kingdom as a great miracle-worker who, by his shining miracles, helps men. When Leo ended his course, he took up habitation with the Lord and from his relics flowed healing myrrh [Chrism]. He died in the eighth century.

February 24th

THE FINDING OF THE HEAD OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

The great and glorious Baptist John was beheaded according to the wish and instigation of the wicked Herodias, the wife of Herod. When John was beheaded, Herodias ordered that his head not be buried with his body for she feared that this awesome prophet, somehow, would resurrect. Therefore, she took his head and buried it deep in the ground in a secluded and dishonorable place. Her maidservant was Johanna, the wife of Chuza a courtier of Herod. The good and devout Johanna could not tolerate that the head of the Man of God remain in this dishonorable place. Secretly she unearthed it, removed it to Jerusalem and buried it on the Mount of Olives. Not knowing of this, King Herod, when he learned of Jesus and how He worked great miracles, became frightened and said: "This is John whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead" (St. Mark 16:16). After a considerable period of time, an eminent landowner believed in Christ, left his position and the vanity of the world and became a monk, taking the name, Innocent. As a monk, he took up abode on the Mount of Olives exactly in the place where the head

of the Baptist was buried. Wanting to build himself a cell for himself, he dug deep and discovered an earthen vessel and in it a head, which was mysteriously revealed to him, to be the head of the Baptizer. He revered it and reburied it in the same spot. Later, according to God's Providence, this miracle-working relic [The head of St. John] traveled from place to place, sunk into the darkness of forgetfulness and again was rediscovered. Finally, during the reign of the pious Empress Theodora, the mother of Michael and the wife of Theophilus and at the time of Patriarch Ignatius it was translated to Constantinople. Many miraculous healings occurred from the relic of the Forerunner [Precursor]. It is important and interesting to note that while he was still alive, "John did no miracles" (St. John 10:41), however, his relics have been endowed with miraculous power.

Parish & Organizations News

Ladies Guild

The ladies served luncheon on January 5, 2013, that included the traditional Zalabieh desert on the Epiphany Sunday.

They gathered for their Christmas party on Sunday January 12, 2014 at the Wyndham Hotel, great food was served and fun games were planned, Exchanged gift thru the white elephant, every one enjoyed it.

Ladies Guild are sponsoring the Valentine Dance on February 8, 2014, everyone is invited to participate and have fun, please make sure to reserve your seat by calling the Afifa Artoul @.

March is Antiochian Women Month, the ladies will usher, read the Epistle on Sundays and serve Coffee, and every lady is welcome to be part of this service.

When everyone left our Lord Jesus Christ alone on the cross, the women were there. Can you see how important the women are?

You are the myrrh-bearing women."

By His Grace Bishop Joseph

Vera Bahbah, President

Men's Club

Thank you Sam & Adel Munayyer for opening their home for the Men's Club Annual Christmas Dinner. Men's Christmas Party final number raised is \$1200.00

The New Year's Party was a success with over 300 people attending. The Men's Club profited \$7300 from the event. A special thank you to Sami Farraj for donating the service charge fee that the venue charged us. This generous donation allowed for a greater profit.

Men's Club Contributed three checks:

\$500.00 to the Good Samaritan Fund

\$1000.00 to the Building Fund

\$5000.00 to the General Fund

New Business Discussion on how to get more people involved in Men's Club, like; Backgammon Tournament, Ping Pong Tournament (Wael is putting this together), and Tarneeb Tournament

The Men's Club will support the remodeling effort at St. Mark, and this will be lead by Deacon George who will be putting together a plan that will be presented at the February Men's Club Meeting.

Next Men's Club meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 20. It is tentatively scheduled to be at St. Mark Church hall but may be moved to a different location.

Respectfully submitted by

Don Skaff/Men's Club Secretary

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Samir Artoul 2/2

May Asaly 2/15

Ivana Awayjan 2/27

Joseph Azzam 2/15

Mikhail Billeh 2/4

Irma Chade 2/5

Sarah Chade 2/17

Vladimir Chendler 2/3

Randy Dabbah 2/18

Zahieh Debbas 2/4

Amanda Eadeh 2/24

Samira Eissa 2/1

Kevin Fortuna 2/22

George Hanna 2/13

Ben Hanna 2/29

Georgie Hanna 2/14

Gellan Kashou 2/20

Sammy Khamis 2/17

Diana Khamis 2/19

Charlotte Khoury 2/15

Amanda Khury 2/12

Simon Kishek 2/2

Adel Munayyer 2/13

Danice Najjar 2/22

Tanya Nino 2/2

Paul Qaqundah 2/26

Mae Sakhel-Qushair 2/12

Nuha Qushair 2/10

Tammy Qutami 2/25

Robert Ranney 2/14

Kimla Ranney 2/24

Paula Rodriguez 2/6

Najib Saadeh 2/18

George Saba 2/2

Siham Saba 2/10

Yacoub Saba 2/17

Nabeel Salameh 2/16

Daniel Scholl 2/10

Madona Shaheen 2/23

Sebastian Skaff 2/6

Michael Souri 2/25

Andre Terzian 2/25

Brenda Tax 2/13

Melanie Tierney 2/22

Tina Tomeo 2/19

HAPPY

Fr. Patrick & Nina Irish 2/6

Antoune & Maysoun Khoury 2/10

Ramzi & Randa Salameh 2/14

Don Jr. & Penny Skaff 2/14

*BUY SCRIP! Our Ladies Guild buys scrip from many and various stores and restaurants (see list included in this bulletin) at a 3 to 10% discount. When you buy the scrip, which is accepted just like cash at the issuing store, the parish benefits. You pay no more for these goods and services and are making a donation to our parish. **You can purchase this scrip from Saeda Turk & Kristin Chala at the coffee hour.***

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

Bloopers

- 1-The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.
- 2- The sermon this morning: "Jesus Walks on the Water." The sermon tonight: "Searching for Jesus."

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