

# THE APOSTLE

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2014

### SAINT MARK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF IRVINE

**Christ is Risen!! Truly He is Risen**

#### **Pastor's Column**

On April 20, we will again proclaim the Paschal greeting: Christ is Risen! The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is the cornerstone of our Christian Faith. If there is no resurrection, then there is no basis for the Faith. We say that Christ has "trampled down death by death," yet we are all too aware that there continues to be sin, tragedy, injustice, hypocrisy, betrayal and illness, war, murder and the like. How, then, is death overcome in the Resurrection? In this way: death is no longer the end of our hopes and aspirations, rather it is a passage (albeit a difficult one) to life in the Kingdom of Heaven. The Scriptures tell us that Jesus, being both God and man, broke down the dividing wall between humanity and God, making it possible for us to once again have communion with God, as did Adam and Eve before the Fall. This communion is made possible by our Lord's Pascha, that is to say by His Death on the Cross, and third day Resurrection.

The fact that the Crucifixion is inseparable from the Resurrection is most important. When Jesus comes again in glory, the end of earthly suffering and death will come, but in the meantime, Christ tells us that in order to be his disciples; we also must carry a cross. This means that we must expect to have to live with the consequences of sin (ours and others') and of the brokenness of this fallen world, just as Christ did, and to join our sufferings with His in order to share in his glory!

Along the way God does not leave us "on our own," but grants us strength and comfort to continue on the way. Indeed, in his merciful love, he grants us participation in the Kingdom to come even in this life (Holy Communion is the best, but not the only example of this).

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**Very Rev. Father Michael Laffoon, Pastor**  
Residence phone: (949) 559-6133  
**Rev Fr. Patrick Irish, Attached**  
**Rev. Protodeacon George Moubayed**  
**Sub-deacon: Athanasius Fakhouri**  
**Choir Director: Barbara Scholl**  
**Chanters: Jacob Bahbah, Theresa Joubran, Karim Youssef, & Mark Ellis**  
**Church Office Administrator: Lydia Wakileh**

#### 2014-2015 PARISH COUNCIL

**Chairman {15} Penny Skaff (949)713-7411**  
**Vice Chairman {14} Patrick Wilde (949) 330-9819**  
**Secretary & Assistant Treasurer {16} Richard Jirjis (949) 552-7424**  
**Issa Bahbah {15} Treasurer (714) 685-8841**  
**Michael Khoury {14} (714)373-1225**  
**Nelson Mamey {15} (949) 673-7400**  
**Roger Tierney {14} Humanitarian (949) 699-2413**  
**Fouad Tarazi {16} (949) 276-2923**  
**Kyra Pelachik {16} (714) 906-9231**  
**Afifa Artoul {16} (949) 215-2305**

[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  
**Teen SOYO President:** Leilah Rodriguez (949) 470-9876

So my dear ones, let us not be overwhelmed by the news of evil which we see and hear all the time. As have Christian believers throughout the centuries, let us remain people of hope. As such we must work for more justice, more peace, more good in the world, anticipating the day when Christ returns and "God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." (Rev. 21:3, 4)

In this hope, in this the light that shines from the Empty Tomb, let us rejoice!

المسيح قام! حقاً قام!

Truly He is Risen!

Fr. Michael

#### Passing of Metropolitan Philip

The primate of our Archdiocese, Metropolitan Philip (Saliba) passed from this life on Wednesday March 19, after a brief time in the hospital. He died at the age of 82. His Eminence had lived with heart disease for many, many years and it was truly a miracle that he thrived for so long. He served as Metropolitan for nearly 48 years, during which we grew from around 60 parishes to our present number of over 260. He was a constant advocate for Orthodox administrative unity and for the suffering people, both Christian and non-Christian, of the Middle East.

His Funeral services were held on March 28 at the St. Nicholas Cathedral of Brooklyn, New York and his burial at the Antiochian Village in Bolivar, PA on Monday March 31.

#### THE LENTEN FAST

*During Great Lent, the rules of the dietary fast are thus: All of Lent and Holy Week we are to abstain from all meat and animal products (including eggs, milk, animal fats, etc.) The only exceptions are shellfish. In addition, Mondays through Fridays, we are to abstain from wine and other alcoholic drinks and olive oil. This is the "letter of the law." It is important for you and your family to participate in the "spirit of the law", working out this Lenten effort within your household in ways pleasing to God and beneficial for the soul. We all must be reminded that the purpose of the dietary fast is to help us to fast from sin and ungodliness!*

*If you have questions regarding Lenten discipline, please see Fr. Michael.*

#### SPECIAL SERVICES/EVENTS IN APRIL 2014

Final Week of Lenten weekly services

Monday April 7: Great Compline 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday April 9: Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts, 6:30 p.m.

Friday April 11: Little Compline with Canon of St. Lazarus 7:00 p.m.

Saturday April 12: Divine Liturgy, Lazarus Saturday 10:00 a.m.

#### Palm Sunday and Holy Week

Sunday April 13, **Entrance of our Lord and Savior into Jerusalem {Palm Sunday}** 8:45 a.m.

Orthros, 10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy

Sunday evening, 7:00 p.m. **Bridegroom Orthros**

Monday April 14, 7:00 p.m. **Bridegroom Orthros**

Tuesday April 15, 7:00 p.m. **Bridegroom Orthros**

Wednesday April 16, 7:00 p.m. **Holy Unction Service**

Thursday Morning April 17: **Orthros** 9:00 a.m., **Vespertal Divine Liturgy**, 10:00 a.m.

Thursday Evening April 17: **Service of the Twelve Passion Gospels**, 7:00 p.m. **Archbishop Joseph presiding**

Friday Morning April 18: **Royal Hours**, 9:30 a.m.

Friday Afternoon April 18: **Vespers of the Taking Down of our Lord's Body from the Cross**, 3:30 p.m.

Friday Evening April 18: **Service of Lamentations** 7:00 p.m.

Saturday morning May 4: **Holy Saturday Vespertal Divine Liturgy** 10:00 a.m.

**Saturday night April 19/20: PASCHA Rush, Procession, Orthros and Divine Liturgy 11:00 p.m. Pascha Breakfast following.**

April 27, Thomas Sunday

#### May 2014 Advanced Calendar

May 11, Mother's Day

May 17, Ladies Guild Mother/Daughter Tea

May 29, Ascension of our Lord

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.

**Archbishop Joseph's Schedule**  
April 4, 2014  
Camp Loch Leven, Mentone, CA  
Antiochian Women's Retreat in Southern California

April 6, 2014  
St. George Church, Upland, CA  
Episcopal Visit

April 13, 2014  
St. Nicholas Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA  
Palm Sunday

April 14, 2014  
St. Andrew Church, Riverside, CA  
Holy Monday Evening Bridegroom Orthros

April 15, 2014  
St. Barnabas Church, Costa Mesa, CA  
Holy Tuesday Evening Bridegroom Orthros

April 16, 2014  
St. Luke Church, Garden Grove, CA  
Holy Unction Service

April 17, 2014  
**St. Mark Church, Irvine, CA**  
Passion Gospel Service

April 18, 2014  
St. Nicholas Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA  
Lamentation Service

April 19-22, 2014  
St. Ignatius of Antioch Church, Twin Falls, ID  
GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA

April 23, 2014  
St. Nicholas Cathedral, Los Angeles, CA  
Bright Wednesday Service

**Construction has begun at St. Mark's**  
Due to hall rentals, no Saturday Vespers will be held at St. Mark. Unless otherwise announced, we will celebrate Saturday Vespers with Holy Nativity of the Theotokos Serbian Orthodox Church (2148 Michelson Drive, Suite 1, Irvine) at 5:00 p.m. Some special services may be at other churches.

**Selected Saints of the Month**

**APRIL 5<sup>TH</sup>**

**THE VENERABLE MARK OF TRACHE**

He is also called "Mark the Athenian" because Athens was the place of his birth. His parents died after he completed his higher education in Athens. He thought to himself that death, even for himself, was unavoidable and that one should sufficiently prepare beforehand for that honorable departure from this world. Distributing all of his possessions to the poor, he sat on a plank in the sea and with a tenacious faith in God's help, prayed that God direct him wherever He wills. God, in His Providence, protected him and brought him to Lybia (or Ethiopia) to a mountain called Trache. Mark lived an ascetical life on this mountain for ninety-five years, seeing neither man nor beast. For thirty years, he waged a violent combat with evil spirits and suffered from hunger, thirst, frost and heat. He ate dirt and drank sea water. After thirty years of the most vehement suffering, the defeated demons fled from him and an angel of God began to bring him food daily in the form of bread, fish and fruit. St. Serapion visited him before his death and, afterward, made known the miraculous life of Mark. Mark asked St. Serapion: "Are there any Christians in the world now, who, if they were to say to this mountain, 'Arise from here and hurl yourself into the sea,' would it be so?" At that moment, the mountain upon which they stood moved in the direction of the sea. Mark raised his hand and stopped it. Such was the miracle-working power which this man of God possessed. Before his death,

**WEEKLY SERVICES**  
Wednesday Vespers 6:30 p.m.

he prayed for the salvation of mankind and then gave up his soul to God. St. Serapion saw angels as they bore Mark's soul and he also saw an extended hand from heaven which received it. St. Mark lived to be one-hundred thirty years old and died about the year 400 A.D.

### **APRIL 13<sup>TH</sup>**

#### **THE PRIEST-MARTYR ARTEMON**

Artemon was a priest in Laodicea during the reign of Emperor Diocletian. Before his tormenting judge, he spoke of himself: "I am called Artemon, a slave of Christ, my God. For sixteen years I was a lector and read books in the Church of my God. For twenty-eight years, I was a deacon and read the Holy Gospel. With the help of Christ, I have fulfilled thirty-three years as a presbyter teaching men and placing them on the path of salvation." The judge brought him to the temple of Aesculapius, where the soothsayers nursed large reptiles dedicated to this "god." They all assumed that the snakes would bite Artemon. Artemon crossed himself and by the power of the cross nailed all the snakes to the ground rendering them unable to move. After that, he brought them all out into the courtyard, breathed upon them and all of them died instantly. All of the soothsayers were in great fear. Upon seeing this miracle, Vitalis, the chief soothsayer of this temple, fell to his knees before Artemon and cried out: "Great is the Christian God!" The martyr then baptized him along with several of his friends. The malicious judge remained persistent in his malice and tortured the aged Artemon in various ways. Once, he wanted to throw him into a vat of boiling pitch but, he fell off his horse into the pitch and he himself was incinerated. Two eagles were seen who swooped down upon the judge, lifted him from the horse and dropped him into the pitch. St. Artemon remained free for a period of time and traveled about, always accompanied with his two beloved deer, and instructed the people. Again, he was captured and was beheaded in the year 303 A.D. and his soul took up habitation in the Kingdom of Christ our God, Whom St. Artemon faithfully served.

### **APRIL 20<sup>TH</sup>**

#### **BLESSED ANASTASIUS SINAITES, PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH**

While a monk on Mt. Sinai, Anastasius was elected patriarch of Antioch during the reign of Emperor Justinian. He was elevated to this rank by virtue of his charity, chaste life, great spiritual learning and a staunch faith. The Emperor Justinian fell into the heresy of Docetism [this heresy taught that Christ's sufferings were apparent and not real], which Eutychius the Patriarch of Constantinople and this Blessed Anastasius sharply rebelled against. The emperor banished Eutychius and also wanted to banish Anastasius but he was unable to find any reproach in his life. However, when Justinian died, repenting beforehand and re-instating Eutychius to the throne, then his successor Justin succeeded in banishing Anastasius on the basis of some spurious calumnies. Anastasius remained in exile for twenty-three years and was re-instated to the throne of Antioch during the reign of Maurice. He governed the Church of God for six years and ended his earthly sojourn in the year 599 A.D.

### **APRIL 29<sup>TH</sup>**

#### **SAINT BASIL OF OSTROG**

Basil was born in Popova, a village in Hercegovina of simple and God-fearing parents. From his youth, he was filled with love for the Church of God and when he reached maturity, he entered to the Monastery of the Dormition (Assumption) of the Birth-giver of God in Trebinje and there received the monastic tonsure. As a monk, he quickly became renown because of his genuine and rare ascetical life. Saint Basil took upon himself mortification upon mortification each one heavier and more difficult than the last. Later, against his will, he was elected and consecrated bishop of Zahumlje and Skenderia. As a hierarch, he first lived in the Monastery Tvrdosh and from there, as a good shepherd, strengthened his flock in the Orthodox Faith, protecting them from the cruelty of the Turks and the cunning ways of the Latins. When Basil was exceedingly pressed by his enemies and, when Tvrdosh was destroyed by the Turks, he moved to Ostrog, where he lived an austere ascetical life, protecting his flock by his ceaseless and fervent prayer. He died peacefully in the Lord in the sixteenth century, leaving behind his incorruptible relics; incorruptible and miracle-working to the present day. The miracles at the grave of St. Basil are without number. Christians and Muslims alike come before his relics and find

healing of their most grave illnesses and afflictions. A great people's assembly (pilgrimage) occurs there annually on the Feast of Pentecost.

### **Memory Eternal**

On March 1, 2014, Mary Mansour, mother of Nabil Mansour. Her funeral was on March 7<sup>th</sup> at Pacific View Memorial Park Corona del Mar, followed by a meal of mercy at St. Mark Church Hall.

## **Parish & Organizations News**

### **Ladies Guild**

March was Antiochian Women Month, thanks to all the ladies who read the Epistle, Ushered and served during the 5 weeks of March.

Thanks to Julie Bahbah, Theresa Joubran, Barbara Khamis, Nadia & George Sindaha and Afifa Artoul, Who baked spinach pies at the church kitchen for the Pre Orders on March 14<sup>th</sup>.

A sign up poster is posted at the church hall to sign up for your donation for the Pascha Breakfast.

Our Easter Bake sale orders forms are included in this newsletter for your use to order your Easter goodies by April 11. All pick up will be on Palm Sunday April 13<sup>th</sup>.

Your input is very important to us, please plan to attend the monthly meeting and share your ideas with the ladies.

Ladies Guild had their meeting on Sunday March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

*Vera Bahbah, President*

### **Men's Club**

Our Men's Club has been very active during our remodeling in helping set up our iconostasis and holy tables every Sunday in addition to their regular ushering duties. Their April Meeting is To Be Announced.

## **Teen SOYO**

The Teens enjoyed an afternoon of Volleyball with the teens of St. Luke on March 30. In April they will do the all-night Vigil at the tomb of Christ on Holy Friday.



Jessica Azzam 4/28  
Andrew Azzam 4/17  
George Bahbah 4/8  
Grace Bahbah 4/8  
Julie Bahbah 4/11  
Peter Batarseh 4/25  
Malvina Chala 4/2  
Matthew Daruty 4/25  
Diala Debbas 4/11  
Liana Debbas 4/16  
Selim Debbas 4/22  
Mary Dibs 4/27  
Samar Elsayegh 4/30  
Elaina Fakhouri 4/11  
Fatin Fakhouri 4/11  
Ian Fortuna 4/27  
Tyler Hilmar 4/25  
Theresa Joubran 4/1  
Juliette Khamis 4/4  
Mary Ann Khamis 4/1  
Aida Khamis 4/21  
Sophia Liquete 4/25  
Nathaniel Liquete 4/25  
Jean Nasrawi 4/26  
Jason Nino 4/15  
Sammy Nino 4/7  
Jeries Qoborsi 4/12  
Daniel Qoborsi 2/24  
Paul Rodriguez 4/13  
Alexander Saadeh 4/17  
Michael Saba 4/2  
Aaron Scholl 4/11  
Jay Skaff 4/8  
Sarah Smathers 4/17  
Charlie Tarazi 4/7  
Carol Tierney 4/24  
Stephanie Toubbeh 4/30  
Gina Turk 4/26



Michael & Rania Debbas 4/9  
Maurice & Nadia Karkar 4/17  
Robert & Linda Mokbel 4/23  
Sam & Adel Munayyer 4/29  
Marwan & Hanan Saba 4/29  
Mufid & Salam Samara 4/27

**St. Mark 2014 Stewardship Pledge Drive  
Progress Report**

Thank you to all of you who have made their 2014 Pledge Commitment to St. Mark. As of March 25<sup>th</sup>, we have a total of \$185,200 pledged which is 96% of our total goal of \$192,000. We have also successfully collected 136 pledge commitments!

We are so close to reaching our goal!! If you haven't made your pledge commitment yet then please take a few minutes today during Coffee Hour to fill out a pledge card.

In Christ,

St. Mark Stewardship Committee

*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 at the coffee hour.***

*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)***

**Bloopers**1- Pick-up the new calendar from the Welcome Center. Please let us know if you have any additions or corrections  
2- Portrait School: 10 AM (Please bring a person that you will be able to shoot that morning)

**SAINT MARK ANTIOCHIAN  
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