

# ***THE APOSTLE*** **MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

## **SEPTEMBER 2014**

# **SAINT MARK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF IRVINE**

**Pastor's Column**

17840 Sky Park Circle  
Irvine, CA 92614-6407  
Tel: (949) 851-8933  
Fax: (949) 851-0010

Email: [frmlaffoon@yahoo.com](mailto:frmlaffoon@yahoo.com)  
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. 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 {15}** (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

Statement from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East

At a time when Syria's wounds have been bleeding for more than three years, amidst the wounds of Iraq, which has experienced conflict since the 1980's, amidst the unrest that is sweeping countries near and far, and amidst the world's indifference to Palestine's wounds, which have not healed in almost seventy years, these days in particular we are witnessing a multiplication of these wounds in the expulsion of Mosul's Christians and the all-out assault on Gaza amidst a disgraceful international silence.

The cycle of violence sweeping Iraq and Syria, expelling peaceful citizens has not let up, as recent events in Iraq and specifically in Mosul have completed the series of murder, religious prejudice, and terror. We strongly condemn attacks on any segment of society in this Middle East and we especially condemn the attack on the Christians of Mosul and their being compelled by force of arms to change their religion under the penalty of paying the jizya or abandoning their homes and having their property confiscated. These fundamentalist movements that are trying to become mini-states through force and terror with outside moral and material support are the greatest threat to people in the Middle East and to coexistence there. We ask the international community and specifically the United Nations and all global powers and organizations to take into proper consideration what is happening in Iraq, Mosul and the entire Middle East. We call on them to deal with the current

situation courageously, with a genuine language of human rights and not a language of interests that uses the principles of human rights and exploits them in the service of narrow aims and interests. We ask the countries that provide outside support to these groups, whether directly or indirectly, to cease immediately from all forms of material, moral, logistical and military support for these extremist groups and so cut off at its root the terrorism that is first of all a threat to the peace and peoples of those countries. We likewise call for an end to resorting to any form of violence as a means by which citizens deal with each other.

Because we in the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East constantly affirm that Christians and Muslims are two lungs of a single Middle Eastern body that stands on citizenship and common life, we reject anything that would first of all hurt Islam's reputation for tolerance, brotherhood and peaceful life, which we have experienced, and secondly disrupts the right of citizens to have a civic presence free from sectarian or racial pressures.

As the world watches what is happening in Mosul, the chain of violence is repeated in the Gaza Strip under various justifications, amidst a frightening international silence. This is happening while the outside world is content to watch a bloodbath that has not spared women, children and the elderly. It is as though the Middle East has become a testing-ground for every sort of weapon and a fertile soil for every sort of plot. It is as though the people of the Middle East are a commodity created to be dough in the hands of the forces of evil, when they are created to be the image of the Lord's splendor and the focus of the Creator's good pleasure, with good relationships with their fellow citizens and fellow humans.

We in the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and All the East understand the common fate that binds us to our Christian and Muslim brothers in Palestine. We implore the international community for a ceasefire in Gaza and an end to the sinful siege on our brothers in Palestine, whose cause remains first of all a humanitarian cause. The attachment of the Palestinians to their land and their longing to return to it is a cause for hope for all those suffering in this Middle East and a mark of shame upon the

faces of those for whom "human rights" end at the hills of Palestine while at the same time that they traffic in these "rights" in order to intervene in the affairs of other peoples.

We pray that God give peace to the world, that He give strength to all those in distress, that He cause peace to be lasting in the Middle East, so that humanity may enjoy well-being and tranquility.

Statement issued, July 23, 2014 at <http://www.antiochpatriarchate.org>

### **Feasts and Special Events for September 2014**

Tuesday September 8, Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos (service schedule TBA in weekly bulletin)

Sunday September 14, a.m. Feast of the Elevation of the Holy Cross (regular schedule of services). This commemoration is a fasting day regardless of the day of the week it falls.

Sunday September 21, Ladies Friendship Tea

Sunday September 28, Start of Church School **and** FOCUS Motel feeding.

### **Advance Calendar for October 2014**

October 5, Annual Parish Meeting  
October 10, 11, 12 Fall Diocesan Gathering, Modesto CA  
October 12, Parish Picnic, Mason Park

### **Metropolitan Joseph's Schedule September 7, 2014**

St. Matthew Church, Torrance, CA  
Episcopal Visit

### **September 8-12, 2014**

Conference in Washington, DC

### **September 12-15, 2014**

St. George Church, Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
Episcopal Visit

### **September 15-18, 2014**

Dallas, Texas

*Assembly of Bishops Meeting*

**At our October 5, 2014 Parish Meeting, the Nominating Committee will present a slate of candidates for election to three Parish Council seats.** If you would like to be nominated or to suggest someone for nomination, please speak with outgoing Council Members, or Fr. Michael. Per our parish Constitution, all nominations must be made through the Nomination Committee (outgoing Council members, Patrick Wilde, Roger Tierney and Michael Koury. The Nominating Committee must complete its work no later than 10 days before the Annual Meeting (September 25, 2014), and the list of Nominees will be printed in the Sunday Bulletin one week before the Annual Meeting. Only Orthodox Christians 25 years of age or older, who are Regular Pledged members of St. Mark's, are in good spiritual standing, and agree to fulfill the duties of a Council Member, may be nominated for Parish Council.

#### **WEEKLY SERVICES**

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.

#### **Construction has begun at St. Mark's**

Due to hall rentals, no Saturday Vespers will be held at St. Mark.

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

#### **September 5th**

##### **The Holy Prophet Zacharias**

He was the father of St. John the Forerunner. Zacharias was the son of Barachias, from the lineage of Abia, of the sons of Aaron. Zacharias was a high priest who held the eighth degree of service in the Temple at Jerusalem. His wife Elizabeth was the daughter of Sophia and sister of St. Anna, who was the mother of the Holy Theotokos. During the reign of King Herod the child-slayer, Zacharias was serving one day at the Temple of Jerusalem according to his turn. An angel of God appeared to him in the sanctuary, and Zacharias had great fear. The angel said to him: Fear not, Zacharias (Luke 1:13), and announced that Elizabeth would bear a son, in answer to their prayers. But both Zacharias and Elizabeth were old. When Zacharias doubted

the words of the heavenly herald, the angel said: I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God (Luke 1:19). Zacharias was struck dumb from that hour, and could not speak until his son was born and he had written on a tablet: His name is John (Luke 1:63). Then his speech returned, and he magnified God. Some time later, when the Lord Jesus had been born and Herod began to slaughter the children of Bethlehem, he sent men to find and kill the son of Zacharias-for Herod had heard all that had happened to Zacharias, and how John had been born. Upon seeing the soldiers coming, Elizabeth took John into her arms-he was a year and a half old at that time-fled from the house with him, and ran to a rocky and desolate place. When she saw the soldiers following her, she cried out to the mountain: "O mountain of God, receive a mother with her child!" and the rock opened and hid the mother and child. Then Herod, enraged that the child John had not been slain, ordered that Zacharias be slain before the altar. The blood of Zacharias was spilled on the marble and dried solid as stone, and remained as a witness to Herod's evil deed. In the place where Elizabeth hid with John a cave opened, water flowed out of it, and a fruit-bearing palm grew, all by the power of God. Forty days after the death of Zacharias, the blessed Elizabeth died. The child John remained in the wilderness, fed by an angel and protected by God's providence, until the day he appeared at the Jordan.

#### **September 8**

##### **The Nativity of the Most-holy Theotokos**

The Holy Virgin Mary was born of aged parents, Joachim and Anna. Her father was of the lineage of David, and her mother of the lineage of Aaron. Thus, she was of royal birth by her father, and of priestly birth by her mother. In this, she foreshadowed Him Who would be born of her as King and High Priest. Her parents were quite old and had no children. Because of this they were ashamed before men and humble before God. In their humility they prayed to God with tears, to bring them joy in their old age by giving them a child, as He had once given joy to the aged Abraham and his wife Sarah by giving them Isaac. The Almighty and All-seeing God rewarded them with a joy that surpassed all their expectations and all their most beautiful dreams. For He gave them

not just a daughter, but the Mother of God. He illumined them not only with temporal joy, but with eternal joy as well. God gave them just one daughter, and she would later give them just one grandson-but what a daughter and what a Grandson! Mary, Full of grace, Blessed among women, the Temple of the Holy Spirit, the Altar of the Living God, the Table of the Heavenly Bread, the Ark of God's Holiness, the Tree of the Sweetest Fruit, the Glory of the race of man, the Praise of womanhood, the Fount of virginity and purity-this was the daughter given by God to Joachim and Anna. She was born in Nazareth, and at the age of three, was taken to the Temple in Jerusalem. In her young womanhood she returned again to Nazareth, and shortly thereafter heard the Annunciation of the Holy Archangel Gabriel concerning the birth of the Son of God, the Savior of the world, from her most-pure virgin body.

**September 10**  
**Saint Pulcheria the Empress**

She was the daughter of Emperor Arcadius. She vowed to remain a virgin for life, and, as a sign of this vow, she had an altar of gold and precious stones built in the cathedral church. She reigned with her brother, Theodosius the Younger. Pulcheria was a great zealot for the Orthodox Faith. At her insistence, the Third Ecumenical Council, which condemned the Nestorian heresy, was convened in Ephesus. She built the famous Church of the Holy Theotokos of Blachernae in Constantinople. Following the death of Theodosius, she married Marcian, the emperor-elect, but lived with him as with a brother. She discovered the relics of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste. She reposed in the Lord on September 10, 453, at the age of fifty-five.

**September 19th**  
**The Holy Martyr Zosimas the Hermit**

Dometian, a Sicilian prince, went hunting in the mountains with his servants. There he saw an old man surrounded by wild beasts as tame as lambs. Asked who and what he was, the elder replied that his name was Zosimas, that he was a Christian, and that he had lived long among the wild beasts, who were better than those who lived in the city and tortured Christians. This offended Dometian, who

was himself a cruel persecutor of Christians. He chained Zosimas and sent him ahead to Nazareth, as he especially wanted to torture him there, to intimidate those who believed in Christ. When Dometian had wounded and bloodied Zosimas with blows, he tied a stone around his neck and suspended him from a tree. Then the prince mocked him, saying: "Command that a wild beast come forth so that we may all believe!" The holy martyr prayed to God, and, indeed, an enormous lion appeared, drew near to Zosimas, and placed his head under the stone to alleviate the martyr's suffering. In great fear, the prince freed Zosimas, but the latter soon rendered his spirit into the hands of his Lord.

**Parish & Organizations News**  
Special thanks to Mr. Leo Chade for providing the beautiful flowers for our church almost every Sunday.

Thanks to Penny and Don Skaff and to the Golf Committee for the hard work, success of our 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament that was held on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Also we would like to thank all the people who helped at this event: Nelson Mamey, Kyra Pelachick, Afifa Artoul, Patrick Wilde, Issa Bahbah, Sam Skaff, Jay Skaff, Roger, Carol & Melanie Tierney, Anahid Azzouni, Sara Fortuna,

**Ladies Guild**

On August 31<sup>st</sup> our Ladies visited Santa Barbara Monastery with our Priest Fr. Michael Laffoon where he was the guest speaker at the Monastery. Ladies were off for Summer time; hope you all have enjoyed your Summer.

Our Ladies Guild Friendship Tea will be held on Sunday September 21 at the home of Dr. Samir and Maysa Azzam in Anaheim Hills. More information will follow in the weekly bulletin.

***Ladies Guild President***  
***Vera Bahbah***

## Men's Club

Our Men's club met Thursday July 31 at the Church Hall and the speaker was Sleiman Aldada who talk about cars.

Next men's club meeting to be announced at the weekly bulletin.

**Don Skaff**

*Men's club secretary*

## **Teen SOYO**

Many of our teens enjoyed St. Nicholas Camp and they are getting ready for school.

Next meeting will be announced in the church weekly bulletin.

**George Bahbah**

*Teen Secretary*

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

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Ghassan & Geny Bahou 9/6  
Youseff & Rita Billeh 9/9  
Scott & Diane Daruty 9/4  
Norman & Wetchka Haffty 9/2  
Haitham and Sahar Hanna 9/9  
Michael & Charlotte Khoury 9/11  
Nader & Suhair Qoborsi 9/16  
Jamal & Tammy Qutami 9/21  
Farah & Silvia Saba 9/15  
Ibrahim & Lydia Wakileh 9/19  
Hani & Marian Youssef 9/5

### **"No Debt Building Campaign"**

**Our sanctuary remodel and expansion is progressing and we hope to move into the new sanctuary by the end of October. In order to complete this work with little or no debt, we have embarked on a "No Debt" Campaign. So far we have pledges and donations totaling \$72,700. Thanks to those who have made these pledges. Please consider your "No Debt" contribution today!**

*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)***

***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.***

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Arij Alchammas 9/9  
Andy Bahbah 9/19  
Nora Bahbah 9/9  
Chloe Dabit 9/15  
Joe Daruty 9/21  
Rania Debbas 9/19  
Nicholas Debbas 9/2  
Andrew Ellis 9/14  
Mark Hanna 9/15  
Jeries Hanna 9/8  
Zaina Hanna 9/11  
Nadia Karkar 9/16  
Abe Khamis 9/20  
Alex Munayyer 9/14  
Giselle Rizkallah 9/4  
Heba Saadeh 9/16  
Hiam Sayegh 9/24  
Alexander Turk 9/26  
Christy Wilde 9/13  
Theodora Whitehead 9/23

**SAINT MARK ANTIOCHIAN**

**ORTHODOX CHURCH  
17840 SKY PARK CIRCLE  
IRVINE, CA 92614**

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