



THE APOSTLE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2015

SAINT MARK ORTHODOX CHURCH

OF IRVINE

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HAPPY THANKSGIVING

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 & Jake Bahbah

Church Office Administrator: Lydia Wakileh

Teen's Advisors: Paula Rodriquez & Dana Chade

2015-2016 PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman - Randy Dabbah {17} (949) 293-7732

Vice Chairman – Barbara Scholl {18} (949) 533-4634

Secretary – Dimitri Kort {18} (909) 529-3671

Treasurer - Fouad Tarazi {16} (949) 637-0621

Assistant Treasurers- Kyra Pelachick {18} (714) 906-

9231 & **Dimitri Kort {18}** (909) 529-3671

Afifa Artoul {16} (949) 215-2305

Ghassan Awayjan {17} (951) 454-5429

Joe Daruty {17} (949) 612-7939

Richard Jirjis {16} (949) 552-7424

Paula Rodriquez {16} (949) 922-9916

[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: Ibrahim Khamis (714) 962-7367

Antiochian Women of St. Mark President: Denise Nassif (949) 500-8318

Teen SOYO President: Grace Bahbah (714) 401-2094

Pastor's Column

Reflection on the Participation in the Divine Liturgy (from oca.org)

As the late Protospesbyter Thomas Hopko wrote, "The word liturgy means common work or common action. The Divine Liturgy is the common work of the Orthodox Church. It is the official action of the Church formally gathered together as the chosen People of God. The word church, as we remember, means a gathering or assembly of people specifically chosen and called apart to perform a particular task." In the case of the Divine Liturgy, then, the "particular task" is to gather with the angels and the saints, who surround the throne of God, to offer thanks corporately to God for all that has been accomplished for our sake and salvation; to express our thanks through the celebration and reception of the Eucharist, His very Body and Blood; and to anticipate His second and glorious coming, when His eternal Kingdom—already fully present in the life of the Church—will be fully revealed to us. As such, we are called, first and foremost, to be a "worshipping people," called to join "with one mind and heart" with the angels and saints who have gone before us in worshipping Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with Whom we enter into a "common union" through the reception of Holy Communion—as a community, and not as isolated individuals.

Since the Liturgy is the "common action" of the People of God, it is not something merely "performed" by the clergy for the benefit of a "passive audience," so to speak. While the bishop or priest, as the "president of the Eucharistic Assembly," certainly has a central function in the

Liturgy, so do all of the members of the Church—including children, whose “holy noise” is a joyous sign of the ongoing life of the Church as it “marches through time”—especially through the singing of the liturgical responses and hymns, the various actions and gestures expressed in worship, and the collective offering of ourselves—as a worshipping community—to carry on the Lord’s work after the Liturgy formally ends. As some have said, the Liturgy only truly ends when the next Liturgy begins.

Given these realities, it is hardly the practice of the Church to conduct lengthy services for the purpose of accommodating the faithful in “dropping in as convenient” to light a candle or offer private, personal prayers during public worship. [The very public Liturgy of the Church is not the time to offer personal prayers “in secret.”] To truly “make” the Liturgy “happen,” the entire community should be gathered together and participate in—from the very beginning of the Liturgy through its end [and beyond!]
—the Liturgy. This means that from the very opening doxology—“Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...”
—to the final blessing the faithful should be present “with one mind” and heart and voice to celebrate their common faith, hope and love for God and one another through worship.

There are, of course, bound to be occasions in which arriving late or having to leave early may be unavoidable, but this is never the “norm.” For example, an unexpected snow storm may cause the occasional late arrival, or the need for a physician parishioner to heed an emergency call may be cause to leave a bit early—absences that, as one of our prayers notes, “are worthy of a blessing.” But these are the exception, and not the “norm.”

So, as the “common work” of the People of God, one who simply “drops by” to light a candle and offers a few personal prayers is not “liturgizing,” and the length of the Liturgy has nothing to do with making such “drop bys” more convenient, any more than hosting a formal dinner party at one’s home would be designed to allow those who just wish to drop by for sweets and a cup of coffee to do so. Contributing to the common work of the Liturgy involves everyone, from beginning to end, from

“Blessed is the Kingdom” to the final “Amen” and “Many years”—and ultimately, eternally beyond in “the never ending day of the Lord’s Kingdom” itself.

**Feasts, Special Services and Events for
November**

Saturday November 7, St. Mark Wine and Food Tasting

Sunday November 8, Feast of Holy Archangels Michael & Gabriel Divine Liturgy,

Sunday November 15, Beginning the Christmas Fast (Advent)

Saturday November 21, Feast of Presentation of Theotokos in the Temple: Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. (Orthros at 9:00 a.m.)

On Sunday November 15th, Advent (the Christmas Fast) begins. This fast, which lasts exactly 40 days, prepares us to celebrate the Feast of the Nativity (Birth) of Jesus Christ, commonly known as Christmas. During this season we are reminded that the Christian life style must include alms giving (acts of charity), prayer and fasting. Therefore, we are asked to intensify these efforts. During Advent we should be praying more, giving more time and resources to those in need, eat less and more simply, and above all, seek to fast from sin. As usual, Wednesdays and Fridays are strict fasting days (abstention from all meat, poultry, dairy & egg products, alcohol and olive oil). Until December 20, the other days of the week we are to fast from all meat and meat products, with wine and olive oil allowed. As part of our Advent effort Orthodox Christians should also participate in the Sacrament of Confession.

December 2015 Advanced Calendar

December 4, Commemoration of St. Barbara, St. John of Damascus

December 6, St. Nicholas Sunday

December 20, Antiochian Women of St. Mark pre-Christmas Bake Sale

December 25, Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, Jesus Christ

December 27, (Sunday) Church School Christmas Program; after Liturgy

Metropolitan Joseph’s Schedule

November 6-8

Main celebration of the St. Raphael Jubilee year - St. Nicholas Cathedral, Brooklyn, NY

November 9

Pan-Orthodox clergy Retreat for NY Metropolitan Area (location TBD)

November 12-15

Various visits in New England

November 21-22

Church of the Redeemer, Los Altos, CA for their Expansion fundraiser

November 23-29

United Kingdom for the Enthronement of Metropolitan Silouan of Great Britain and Ireland

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

November 2

The Holy Martyrs Acyndinus, Pegasus, Anempodistus, Aphthonius, Elpidophorus and others with them

They were all Christians from Persia and suffered during the reign of King Sapor in the year 355. The first three were servants at the court of this same king but secretly served Christ their Lord. When they were accused and brought to trial before the king, he asked them where they came from. To this they replied: "Our fatherland and our life is the Most-holy Trinity, one in Essence and undivided, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, One God." The king subjected them to cruel tortures but they endured all heroically, with psalmody and prayer on their lips. During the time of their torture and imprisonment angels of God appeared to them many times, and one time the Lord Christ Himself appeared to them as a man "with a face radiant as the sun." When one of the torturers, Aphthonius, beheld a miracle, when boiling lead did no harm to

the martyrs, he believed in Christ and cried out: "Great is the Christian God!" For this, he was immediately beheaded, and many others saw and believed. Then the king ordered that Acyndinus, Pegasus and Anempodistus be sewn into animal skins and cast into the sea. But St. Aphthonius appeared from the other world with three shining angels, and led the holy martyrs to dry land and set them free. Elpidophorus was one of the king's nobles. When he revealed that he was a Christian and denounced the king for his slaughter of innocent Christians, the king condemned him to death and Elpidophorus was beheaded along with seven thousand other Christians. Then those first three martyrs [Acyndinus, Pegasus and Anempodistus] were finally thrown into a burning furnace along with twenty-eight soldiers and the king's mother, since they also believed in Christ-and thus, in the flames, they gave up their righteous souls into the hands of the Lord.

November 9

Saint Simeon Metaphrastes [the Translator]

Simeon was a gifted Constantinopolitan. He had both a secular and spiritual education. He attained the rank of imperial logothete [chancellor] and was first among the nobles at the imperial court, yet he lived a pure and blameless life as a true ascetic. He distinguished himself by great military bravery and statesmanly wisdom. For these qualities, Emperor Leo the Wise greatly respected him and sent him to Crete to negotiate a peace with the Arabs who then occupied the island. Successfully completing his mission, he returned to Constantinople and soon thereafter withdrew from the world and worldly affairs. He wrote many lives of saints, compiling 122 new biographies and correcting 539 biographies. He entered into rest in about the year 960, and a fragrant and healing myrrh flowed from his relics.

November 16

The Holy Apostle Matthew the Evangelist

Matthew, son of Alphaeus, was a tax collector when the Lord saw him in Capernaum and said: Follow Me. And he arose, and followed Him (Matthew 9:9). After that, Matthew prepared a reception for the Lord in his home and thus provided the occasion for the Lord to express several great truths about His coming to earth. After receiving the Holy Spirit,

Matthew preached the Gospel to the Parthians, Medes and Ethiopians. In Ethiopia he appointed his follower Plato as bishop, and withdrew to prayerful solitude on a mountain, where the Lord appeared to him. Matthew baptized the wife and the son of the prince of Ethiopia, at which the prince became greatly enraged and dispatched a guard to bring Matthew to him for trial. The soldiers returned to the prince saying that they had heard Matthew's voice, but could not see him with their eyes. The prince then sent a second guard. When this guard approached the apostle, he shone with a heavenly light so powerful that the soldiers could not look at him; filled with fear, they threw down their weapons and returned. The prince then went himself. Matthew radiated such light that the prince was instantly blinded. However, the holy apostle had a compassionate heart; he prayed to God, and the prince was given back his sight. Unfortunately, he saw only with physical eyes and not spiritual eyes. He arrested Matthew and subjected him to cruel tortures. Twice, a large fire was lighted on his chest, but the power of God preserved him alive and unharmed. Then the apostle prayed to God and gave up his spirit. The prince commanded that the martyr's body be placed in a lead coffin and thrown into the sea. The saint appeared to Bishop Plato and told him where the coffin bearing his body could be found. The bishop retrieved the coffin with Matthew's body from the sea. Witnessing this new miracle, the prince was baptized and received the name Matthew. After that, the prince left all the vanity of the world and became a presbyter and served the Church in a God-pleasing way. When Plato died, the Apostle Matthew appeared to the presbyter Matthew and counseled him to accept the episcopacy. He accepted the bishopric and, for many years, was a good shepherd until the Lord called him to His Immortal Kingdom. St. Matthew the Apostle wrote his Gospel in the Aramaic language. It was soon after translated into Greek and the Greek text has come down to us, while the Aramaic text has been lost. It is said of this evangelist that he never ate meat, but only vegetables and fruit.

November 25

**The Hieromartyr Peter, Archbishop of
Alexandria**

Peter was a disciple and successor of St. Theonas, Archbishop of Alexandria, and was for a time a teacher at Origen's famous school of philosophy. He ascended the archiepiscopal throne in the year 299, and died a martyr's death in 311, beside the grave of the Holy Apostle Mark. He governed the Church in a most difficult era, when assaults were being made against the faithful by unbelievers from without, and by heretics from within. During his time, 670 Christians suffered in Alexandria. Often, whole families were led to the scaffold and executed. At the same time, the ungodly Arius was confusing the faithful with his false teaching. St. Peter cut him off from the Church and anathematized him, both in this world and in the next. The Lord Himself visited this great and wonderful saint in prison.

Parish & Organizations News

Congratulations to:

Our New Parish Council Officers: Chairman: Randy Dabbah Vice-Chair: Barbara Scholl Treasurer: Fouad Tarazi (appointed co-treasurers: Dimitri Kort, Kyra Pelachik) Secretary: Dimitri Kort. Our other Council Members are: Afifa Artoul, Ghassan Awayjan, Joe Daruty, Richard Jirjis, and Paula Rodriguez.

Our New Men's Club Officers: President Ghassan Awayjan, Vice President Abe Khamis, Treasurer Osama Kishek and Secretary Don Skaff. Advisory Committee: Michael Asaly, Mufid Samara, Jacob Bahbah and Najib Saadeh.

Our Ladies Guild New Officers: Denise Nassif President; Barbara Khamis Vice President; Lori Nour Secretary; Gisele Awayjan and Theresa Jourbran Co Treasurers.

Our New Teen SOYO Officers: Pres.-Grace Bahbah co-Vice Pres.-Matt Beyrooty tied w/Peter William Secretary-Jay Skaff Treasurer-Alex Munayyer Historian-Christina Habeeb -Paul Rodriguez Jr. Historians-Nadim Youssef & Katrina Fakhouri (We had so many kids run that they voted we should have four) 8th gr. Rep's-Marianne Hanounah tied w/Diana Aldada 7th gr. Rep.-Merolla Youssef Grace Bahbah President; Jay Skaff Secretary.

Antiochian Women of St. Mark

Our meeting was on Tuesday October 13th at the church with potluck dinner.

We had 26 ladies in attendance with Fr. Michael at the meeting where Fr. Opened our meeting with the prayers.

Treasurer's report by Gisele Awayjan: our balance is \$ 8,602.61

Sunshine report by Donna Laffoon: cards were sent to; Leo & Irma Chade, Darlene Dibs, Eleanor Wackeen, Lorice Kishek, Michael & Theresa Joubran, Michael Asaly, Elsa Frech and the Qoborsis for the passing of Suhair's mom.

Scrip report by Saeda Turk: Saeda answered some questions and encouraged the ladies to use more of the scrip to benefit our church.

Old Business:

Ladies Annual Friendship Tea was a success on September 21st. Thanks to Denise Nassif and her family for hosting the ladies at their home. Over 50 ladies were in attendance and they all enjoyed the fellowship and the food.

The Fall Delegate Meeting was held on Saturday October 9-11 at St. Athanasius in Santa Barbara. Lydia Wakileh was there representing our St. Mark Ladies.

The Ladies had the Annual Breast Cancer Awareness walk on October 17th and the BCA Pizza luncheon on Sunday October 18th, thanks to all the Ladies who participated in the walk on Saturday and to all the Ladies who donated and helped at the Pizza Luncheon on Sunday.

New Business:

Thank you to our Outgoing Officers Julie Bahbah, Lydia Wakileh and Wissam Farraj.

Our new Officers for 2015-2016:

Denise Nassif – President; Barbara Khamis – Vice-President; Lori Nour–Secretary; Gisele Awayjan & Theresa Joubran Co-Treasurers . Congratulations to all!

Pre-Thanksgiving Luncheon will be on November 8th, and will be chaired by Denise Nassif.

November 7th, is our St. Mark Church Annual Wine & Food Tasting. Please support your church by reserving for this event with Gisele Awayjan.

Next meeting will be on Sunday November 1st at the Church after the Sunday Liturgy

Outgoing Secretary

Lydia Wakileh

Men's Club

The Men met on October 11th, to elect new officers. The new Officers are: President Ghassan Awayjan, Vice President Abe Khamis, Treasurer Osama Kishek and Secretary Don Skaff. Advisory Committee: Michael Asaly, Mufid Samara, Jacob Bahbah and Najib Saadeh.

Men's next meeting is on Thursday November 19th at the church hall.

Teen SOYO

October was a Youth Month in our Archdiocese. During the Sundays of October, members of our Teen SOYO read the Epistles, and assisted in ushering. Thanks to all the Teens who helped in this month because this was an important part of participating in SOYO.

On October 11th, SOYO had their elections for the 2015-2016 school years.

President -Grace Bahbah, co-Vice President -Matt Beyrooty tied w/Peter William, Secretary-Jay Skaff Treasurer-Alex Munayyer

On October 25th the Teen SOYO had sponsored a luncheon after Liturgy which was enjoyed by all.

October 25th Pre Pie Sales

November 20th is Vespers and ask Abouna

SOYO Secretary

Jay Skaff

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Angelina Alchammas 11/30
 Emad Alchammas 11/1
 George Aldada 11/1
 Amber Asaly 11/7
 Yorgo Awayjan 11/22
 Andy Bahbah 11/14
 Jake Bahbah 11/9
 Tarize Bahbah 11/11
 Geny Bahou 11/26
 Chris Bederov 11/13
 Diane Daruty 11/3
 Kayla Daruty 11/17
 Saad Elsayegh 11/6
 Spiro Fasheh 11/26
 Constantine Geronikolaou 11/17
 Paul Habeeb 11/28
 Alexander Haftty 11/7
 Melad Hanna 11/16
 Richard Hanna 11/18
 Anthony Hanounah 11/23
 Richard Jirjis 11/11
 Sophia Joellson 11/25
 Rania Karkar 11/28
 Lana Kashou 11/7
 George Kassir 11/3
 Grace Khoury 11/19
 Violette Khamis 11/17
 Lourice Kishek 11/17
 George Mokbel 11/17
 Michel Moubayed 11/7
 Elias Nasrawi 11/26
 Denise Nassif 11/13
 Kristen Nassif 11/16
 Leilah Rodriguez 11/17
 Anthony Saadeh 11/28
 Randa Salameh 11/23
 Mufid Samara 11/25
 Autumn Schorr 11/16
 Ronda Schorr 11/5
 Kendall Schorr 11/22
 Theodore Skaff 11/24
 Don Jr. Skaff 11/5
 Simon Sliheet 11/30
 Sereen Soury 11/11
 Patrick Wilde 11/13
 Nadim Youssef 11/16

Vladimir & Joanna Chendler 11/5
 Jimmy & Carole Goson 11/28
 Tony & Paula Rodriguez 11/7
 Fouad & Rima Tarazi 11/3
 Dave & Brenda Tax 11/14
 Roger & Carol Tierney 11/12
 Bob & Theodora Whitehead 11/1

*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 15th of the month to the Church office (949-851-8933)



**SAINT MARK ANTIOCHIAN
 CHRISTIAN CHURCH
 17840 SKY PARK CIRCLE
 IRVINE, CA 92614
 NOVEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER**

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

St. Barbara Orthodox Monastery Chapel Building Benefit Dinner

at

Saint Luke Orthodox Church
13261 Dunklee Avenue, Garden Grove 92840

Sunday, November 8th 2015
Tickets: \$50/each - \$25/under 12

6pm Cocktail Hour—7pm Dinner
Featuring delicious food by Chef Kimmy Tang
Wine-Tasting with Fr. John Finley

For Tickets please contact St. Luke Orthodox Church



Chef Kimmy Tang is the owner and creative force of Asian fusion restaurant 9021Pho. Supported by a celebrity clientele and other members of the community, 9021Pho is popular for its healthy and unique dishes.

Monies raised will go towards completing the building of the chapel.



Centennial Jubilee of the Falling Asleep
of St. Raphael of Brooklyn
1915-2015

"Good Shepherd of the Lost Sheep in America"

St. Raphael of Brooklyn Church Feast Day celebration

Southern California, please come and honor St Raphael and us by attending this Feast Day commemoration and Centennial Jubilee of St Raphael's Falling Asleep

With the blessing of Metropolitan JOSEPH
His Grace Bishop DEMETRI Khoury will oversee our Feast Day weekend.

Our weekend schedule:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| Friday, November 6 th : | Great Vespers with Litia & Artoklasia | 6:00pm |
| Saturday, Nov. 7 th : | Matins Hierarchical Divine Liturgy | 9:00am 10:15am |

Luncheon following Liturgy, location to be announced.

We will be asking for a donation from each person to cover the cost of the luncheon and fundraising to pay off our mortgage.

Parish Location:
72910 Haskell Rd.
Thousand Palms, CA 92276
(760) 408-6116
frdk57@gmail.com

THE ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF ST. MARK CHURCH
INVITES YOU TO SHARE
THEIR 4TH ANNUAL PRE- THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON

Happy Thanksgiving



SUNDAY NOVEMBER 8TH, 2015
AFTER LITURGY

A TRADITIONAL TURKEY FEAST, PREPARED BY THE HANDS OF OUR
FAITHFUL WOMEN OF ST. MARK

SERVING YOU TURKEY, HAM, GREEN BEANS CASSEROLE, CANDIED
YAMS, MASHED POTATOES & GRAVY, STUFFING, CRANBERRIES, AND
PUMPKIN/ PECAN PIES

DONATION IS \$10 ADULTS
\$5 CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS OLD

ORTHODOX YOUNG ADULT

WINTER RETREAT

"A CHRISTIAN ENDING TO OUR LIFE"

AN ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVE ON DEATH

JANUARY 8-10, 2016

GUEST SPEAKERS:

V. REV. FATHER GREGORY HORTON
V. REV. FATHER DAVID SOMMER

BIG BEAR LAKE CHRISTIAN RETREAT CENTER
575 PRAIRIE LANE | BIG BEAR LAKE, CA | 92315

EARLY BIRD RATES (BEFORE 11/30/15)

\$75: FOOD, ROOM AND SNOW TUBING
\$100: FOOD, ROOM, SNOW TUBING AND BEAR MTN. LIFT TICKET

REGULAR RATES (STARTING 12/1/15)

\$90: FOOD, ROOM AND SNOW TUBING
\$115: FOOD, ROOM, SNOW TUBING AND BEAR MTN. LIFT TICKET

REGISTER ONLINE BY MONDAY, DECEMBER 21
WWW.DLAWYOUNGADULTS.COM/EVENTS
(LIMITED SPACE)



*St. Mark's Annual
Dinner & Wine
Tasting Event*

PRESENTED BY: Father John Finley

WHEN: Saturday, November 7th at 7:00 PM

WHERE: St. Mark's Church Hall
(17840 Sky Park Circle, Irvine, CA, 92614)

\$60 per person

Cost Includes: Elegant dinner, wine, and music

FOR YOUR EARLY RESERVATIONS CONTACT GISELE
AWAYJAN AT: 951-454-4177