

# **St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church**

**Self-ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, Diocese of the West**

17840 Sky Park Circle, Irvine CA 92614 (949) 851-8933

Church Office Hours: M-F – 9:30 am – 4:30 pm

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

Archpriest Michael Laffoon, Priest Patrick Irish

Protodeacon George Moubayed, Sub Deacon Athanasius Fakhouri

Choir Director Barbara Scholl

Chanters: Jacob Bahbah, Theresa Joubran, Mark Ellis,

Karim Youssef & Jake Bahbah

Church Office Administrator: Lydia Wakileh

Teen Advisors: Paula Rodriguez and Dana Chade

*Sunday Schedule: Orthros (Matins) & Confessions 8:45 a.m.*

*Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.*



**DECEMBER 6, 2015**

**NICHOLAS THE WONDER-WORKER, ARCHBISHOP OF MYRA**

## HYMNS AFTER THE ENTRANCE

**Troparion of the Resurrection in the Second Tone:** When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy Hell with Thy Godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the Powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of Life, glory to Thee.

**Troparion of St. Nicholas in the Fourth Tone:** Thy works of justice did reveal thee to thy community as a canon of faith, the likeness of humility and teacher of abstinence, O Father Bishop Nicholas. Wherefore, by humility thou hast achieved exaltation, and by thy meekness wealth. Intercede, therefore, with Christ God to save our souls.

**All: Troparion to St. Mark in the Fourth Tone:** From thy childhood the light of truth enlightened thee, O Mark, and thou didst love the labor of Christ the Savior. Wherefore thou didst follow Peter with zeal and didst serve Paul as a fellow laborer and didst enlighten the world with thy holy Gospel.

**Kontakion of Preparation for the Nativity of Christ in the Third Tone:** The Virgin cometh today to the cave ineffably to bring forth the Word eternal. Therefore, rejoice O earth at the message with the angels and shepherds give glory to him who shall appear by his own will as a young Child, he who is from eternity God.

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**Prokeimenon: (Psalm 115.15, 12)** Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. What shall I render to the Lord for all that He has given me?

### **The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (13:17-21)**

Brethren, obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now may the God of peace Who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Alleluia Verses (Psalm:131.9,13)** Your Priests O Lord, shall be clothed in righteousness, and your saints shall rejoice. For the Lord has chosen Zion.

**The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (13:10-17)**

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrite! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" As Jesus said this, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him.

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**Holy Oblations are offered today** by the Turk family for the soul of Fared El Nimry departed this life one year, by Theresa Joubran, Kouba family and Mickel family for Theresa's husband Michel Joubran on the occasion of his 80th birthday, and by Esperance Hadshiti for her daughter Heba Khoury on the occasion of her birthday and for the health of Samer, Antonio & Joel Khoury.

**Light Luncheon is given today** by Theresa Joubran on honoring her husband Michel Joubran's birthday.

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*Please remember in your prayers: Odette Chade, Maha Kureh, Darlyne Dibs, Eleanor Wackeen, Georgette Salameh, Lourice Kishek, Paul and June Anter and the suffering people of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Palestine, Yemen, Ukraine, West Africa, Nepal and all people afflicted with disease and violence.*

<p><b>Ushers serving Today:</b> Don Skaff &amp; Melad Hanna</p> <p><b>Ushers serving Next week:</b> Randy Dabbah &amp; Dimitri Kort</p> <p><b>Altar boys serving Today:</b> James Bahbah, Peter Williams, Nicholas Bahou, Youssef Youssef</p> <p><b>Altar boys serving next week:</b> James Dabbah, Paul Youssef, Nour Youssef, Matthew Dabbah</p>
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### **Quote from the Saints**

Fasting is an exceptional virtue; it represses bodily impulses and gives strength to the soul to fight against the poisoning of the heart through the senses, and provides it with a remedy against any past poisoning. Fasting causes the mind to be cleansed constantly. It withers up every evil thought and brings healthy, godly thoughts -- -holy thoughts that enlighten the mind and kindle it with more zeal and spiritual fervor.

Elder Ephraim of Philotheou Mount Athos

### **Canned Food Drive**

Low employment and homelessness continue to be significant problems, even in affluent Orange County. In light of this, the ongoing canned food collection of our parish is a small but important way to help. Please try to bring something to go in the collection barrel every week.

### **Good Samaritan Fund**

Several years ago, St. Mark Church established a fund for assisting those in need, both within our parish and in the general community. From time to time we ask for contributions to the Good Samaritan Fund, and this is one of those times. If you are in need of assistance or you are aware of someone in our parish that needs financial assistance, please speak with Fr. Michael.

### **Church Etiquette**

- Please be on time for services; those arriving late should not approach the Chalice for Communion.
- To receive Communion, one must be a baptized/chrisdated Orthodox Christian who has prepared by prayer, fasting, alms giving, and regular confession.
- Confessions are heard on Wednesday and Saturday evenings after Great Vespers and during the week by appointment.
- Men, women, and children: please dress modestly for services.
- Please remove lip balm or lipstick before receiving Communion or kissing the holy icons, Chalice, or Gospel.
- If you wish to stand for the entire service, please do so in the back or the aisle so as not to block the view of others who may need to sit. When seated, we should refrain from a posture of relaxation (e.g., crossing legs or arms).
- Pledges, Tithes, Donations: Giving 10% of one's income is God-pleasing, as are all gifts offered by a pious and cheerful giver with a humble heart. Membership forms, renewed annually, are located in the Hall.
- Children are welcome! Yet, if they interfere with the prayers of the faithful, we all may need a break. Food and drink (and toys) are not allowed in the Temple.

## Today

- 1- St. Nicholas Sunday
- 2- FOCUS Ministry. Please be at the Valencia Inn by 4:30 p.m. to set up for a special Christmas-themed dinner (St. Nicholas will appear). To make a last minute donation to the gift program, see Saeda Turk at the scrip table.
- 3- Antiochian Women Meeting at the teen's room after church

*Is the Fourth Sunday of the Christmas Fast (Advent).* 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. The only way to combat the commercialization and vaguely sentimental observance of the Birth of the Savior is to prepare for a Holy Feast Day by participating in some meaningful way in the Fast.

## This Week

**Monday December 7,** 6:30 p.m. Advent Paraklesis

**Tuesday December 8,** 5:30 p.m. Vespers; 6:30 p.m. Becoming Truly Human

**Wednesday December 9,** 6:30 p.m. Vespers

**Friday December 11,** Antiochian Women of St. Mark Church Bake Day at the church kitchen.

**Friday December 11,** 6:30 p.m. Advent Paraklesis

**Saturday December 12, 2015: St. Mark Orthodox Continuing Education**

Our topic: "Why Confession? The Sacrament of Repentance and Forgiveness" and our guest speaker, Fr. Steve Tsihchlis, Pastor of St. Paul Greek Orthodox Church of Irvine.

## Next week

**Sunday December 13,** The Antiochian Women of St. Mark Church Annual Christmas Bake Sale. Please see form included to fill out your order.

**Monday December 14,** 6:30 p.m. Advent Paraklesis

**Tuesday December 15,** 5:30 p.m. Vespers; 6:30 p.m. Becoming Truly Human

**Wednesday December 16, 6:30 p.m. Advent Paraklesis**

**Friday December 18, 6:30 p.m. Advent Paraklesis**

**Upcoming Services & Events**

**Sunday December 20,** His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph will be with us. The Antiochian Women will serve a luncheon in honor of his visit.

**Christmas week Services**

**Sunday December 20, 6:30 p.m. Pre- Feast Vespers**

**Monday December 21, 6:30 p.m. Pre- Feast Vespers**

**Tuesday December 22, 6:30 p.m. Pre- Feast Vespers**

**Wednesday December 23, 6:30 p.m. Pre- Feast Vespers**

**Thursday December 24, 1- Royal hours 9:30 a.m.**

**2- Divine Liturgy of the Paramon of the Feast 6:30 p.m.**

**Friday December 25<sup>th</sup>, Feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ; Orthros 9:00 a.m. and Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.**

**Sunday December 27, Church School Music program after Liturgy**

**Thursday December 31, Please mark your Calendar for St. Mark Men's Club Annual New Year's Eve Party! See flyer included for more information.**

**Meet and hangout with Orthodox Christian Young Adults from all over North America in Big Bear Lake, CA at the 2016 Young Adult Winter Retreat** - Hosted by the Young Adult Ministry within the Diocese of Los Angeles and the West. We've planned a weekend full of activities; including snow tubing, snowboarding, skiing and spiritual discussions lead by the V. Rev. Father Gregory Horton and the V. Rev. Father David Sommer. Our topic will be focused on "A Christian Ending to our Life - An Orthodox Christian perspective on death  
Date: **Jan 8-10, 2016** Price: Early Bird Rate (includes room/food): \$75/\$100 w/Lift Ticket

**More info and to register, please visit [www.dlawyoungadults.com/events](http://www.dlawyoungadults.com/events)**

**ORANGE COUNTY ORTHODOX YOUNG PROFESSIONALS**

Check out a list of upcoming meetings and activities. For more information and to get involved, please contact Kyra Pelachik at [hi\\_imkyra@yahoo.com](mailto:hi_imkyra@yahoo.com) or Charlie Kassaseya at [Charlesgk@gmail.com](mailto:Charlesgk@gmail.com) or call 858-761-1720. For an updated list of events, please visit [www.Facebook.com/OCOrthodoxChristianYoungProfessionals](http://www.Facebook.com/OCOrthodoxChristianYoungProfessionals)

**SAT, DECEMBER 12TH @ 9AM - PROJECT MEXICO DAY TRIP**

We're transforming an area into a nice park for the boys, with benches and pathways and maybe an icon shrine. For more information, please email [Charlesgk@gmail.com](mailto:Charlesgk@gmail.com).

## **TUESDAY DECEMBER 15TH @ 7PM - EAST VS. WEST**

Join young adults at Saint Barnabas as V. Rev. Father Josiah Trenham leads us in a discussion about the difference between Orthodoxy and Catholicism.

### **"IS EVERY THOUGHT YOURS?"**

It is an ongoing challenge being an Orthodox Christian living in the 21st Century.

We're here to help!

Our Young Adult forum is a group open to all college, graduate, and young professionals between the ages of 18-30 in the Southern California area. The Forum offers young adults a context in which they come together to strengthen their relationships with one another and thereby strengthen their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Join us in forming a strong community bond where fruitful conversations happen over dinner. Food and drinks are provided both for the soul and for the body. Our evenings go from 7pm-9pm.

For more information contact our young adult director  
at [christian@stpaulsirvine.org](mailto:christian@stpaulsirvine.org) or visit our website

at [www.stpaulsirvine.org/youth](http://www.stpaulsirvine.org/youth) and [www.facebook.com/groups/stpaulsirvine](http://www.facebook.com/groups/stpaulsirvine)

December: 8th & 22nd

January: 26th ; February: 9th & 23rd

March 8th & 22nd ; April: 12th & 26th

May: 10th & 24th

The 55th St. Nicholas Ladies Society Sweetheart Ball

Saturday, February 20, 2016, 6pm

Pull out your Ball gown and dust off your Tuxedo!

Plan on spending a delightful evening with your family  
and friends at the prestigious  
Century Plaza Hotel.

Join us in supporting our Cathedral as we  
celebrate our beautiful St. Nicholas Debutantes.

Tania Matar will be taking reservations starting on Sunday, November 22, 2015.

[taniamatta@sbcglobal.net](mailto:taniamatta@sbcglobal.net) or 818-903-0953

Yours in Christ,

Caren Deeb Kouri

Sweetheart Ball Chairman

818-399-8899

**Parish Council Report** (November 16 Meeting) Financial information requested by Umpqua bank for our commercial loan will be complete this week. Roof repair near book store was completed last week. And the repairs on the are near Fr. Michael's office will be done on November 17, 2015.

City of Irvine building final inspection is due to obtain final certification of occupancy. We are operating with temporary COOP.

Wall of Recognition/ Donor wall was discussed and will be further discussed in the December meeting. Wine tasting event on November on November 7, 2015 was a huge success and netted the church \$4,217.30.

Metropolitan Joseph will visit St. Mark on December 20.

Antioch an Educational Institute Fundraiser will be held on November 21, 2015. Motion to buy one table (10 guests) for \$750 was approved. Motion approved to send \$500 check to Kevin Speier Go Fund Me page for cancer treatment. Financial snapshot (YTD as of November 15): Total Income = \$296,924; Total Expenditures = \$275,233. Account Balances: General Checking \$45,985; Building Fund \$131,233; Good Samaritan/Hanna Chade \$18,872; Reserve Account \$28,339. Motion to transfer \$20,000 from Checking to Reserve passed.

### **St Mark's has once again adopted three families for the Christmas Season.**

Gift cards and wrapped gifts are accepted this year for donations, name tags are put on the Christmas tree for gifts. Please bring your gift cards or wrapped gift by **December 20<sup>th</sup>** , and see Geisel Awayjan after Liturgy if you have any questions. Please help make this Christmas a little brighter for those less fortunate than ourselves. Any donation for food is gladly accepted

### **St. Mark 2016 Stewardship Pledge Drive Progress Report**

Thank you to all of you who have made their 2016 Pledge Commitment to St. Mark. As of December 5, we have 23 pledges for a total of \$55,920 pledged.

### **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.



## **Saint of the Day**

### **Nicholas the Wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra**

This Saint lived during the reign of Saint Constantine the Great, and reposed in 330. As a young man, he desired to espouse the solitary life. He made a pilgrimage to the holy city Jerusalem, where he found a place to withdraw to devote himself to prayer. It was made known to him, however, that this was not the will of God for him, but that he should return to his homeland to be a cause of salvation for many. He returned to Myra, and was ordained bishop. He became known for his abundant mercy, providing for the poor and needy, and delivering those who had been unjustly accused. No less was he known for his zeal for the truth. He was present at the First Ecumenical Council of the 318 Fathers at Nicaea in 325; upon hearing the blasphemies that Arius brazenly uttered against the Son of God, Saint Nicholas struck him on the face. Since the canons of the Church forbid the clergy to strike any man at all, his fellow bishops were in perplexity what disciplinary action was to be taken against this hierarch whom all revered. In the night our Lord Jesus Christ and our Lady Theotokos appeared to certain of the bishops, informing them that no action was to be taken against him, since he had acted not out of passion, but extreme love and piety. The Dismissal Hymn for holy hierarchs, *The truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock ...* was written originally for Saint Nicholas. He is the patron of all travellers, and of sea-farers in particular; he is one of the best known and best loved Saints of all time.