



THE APOSTLE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2016

SAINT MARK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF IRVINE

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

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

Email: frmlaffoon@yahoo.com
Website: 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
Teen's Advisors: Paula Rodriquez & Dana Chade

2016-2017 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 – Marwan Dabit {19} (626)665-1096
Assistant Treasurers- Kyra Pelachik {18} (714) 906-9231
Ghassan Awayjan {17} (951) 454-5429
Joe Daruty {17} (949) 612-7939
Mark Ellis {19}(949) 458-1604
Lori Nour {19} (949) 370-6224
Austin Turk {19} (949) 922-2350
[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 Acting President: Ghassan Awayjan (951) 454-5429
Antiochian Women of St. Mark President: Denise Nassif (949) 500-8318

Pastor's Column

Confessing in the Presence of a Priest Question

If we can make confession to God without the priest, then why do we have confession with a priest present?

Answer

In the early Church, confession was public; that is, one confessed one's sins in the presence of the entire faith community. When this became impractical, it was the priest who "stood in" for the community, as its presiding officer and as its witness to the penitent's repentance.

Further, while we can indeed confess directly to God—even a casual reading of the daily prayers reveals that we should do this—we often find that we need help and advice in overcoming the very things we have confessed.

We do not confess "to" the priest; rather, we confess to God "in the presence of" the priest who, as the prayer before Confession clearly states, is God's "witness" and who, having witnessed our confession of sins offers pastoral advice on how we can better our lives and overcome the very things we can confess. Just as one would not attempt to diagnose, much less cure, one's own physical ailments, so too one should not attempt to diagnose, much less cure, one's own spiritual ailments.

It is often the case that those who object to revealing their sins in the presence of a priest or to seek his advice have no qualms about revealing their sins to their neighbors, friends, psychiatrists, and so on, usually with the intention of obtaining advice—advice that is not necessarily godly or spiritually profitable, or even just plain “good,” for that matter.

Many years ago, a woman cornered my wife at coffee hour and told her that she was having an affair. She asked my wife’s advice.

My wife advised her that perhaps she should speak to me about this. The women replied, “But he’s a priest—I couldn’t tell him that!” This is somewhat akin to the person who finds a huge lump on his or her body, goes to the doctor, and then asks the receptionist to diagnose it. No doubt the receptionist would suggest that he or she have a seat and allow the doctor to look at it, only to find that the person with the huge lump replies, “But the lump’s much, much to big for me to show to the doctor!”

So, we confess in the presence of the priest to acknowledge that our sins, whether we wish to accept it or not, affect the entire faith community on the one hand, and that we cannot “heal ourselves” on the other. The priest is there to help us overcome those things for which we seek forgiveness, to give advice that a friend or neighbor might not be in a position to give, and to bear witness on behalf of the faith community, of which he is the spiritual father, that we have indeed repented and been forgiven by God.

Column by Fr. John Matusiak, reprinted from the web page of the Orthodox Church in America

<p style="text-align: center;">Feasts, Special Services and Events for November</p> <p>Saturday November 5, St. Mark Wine and Food Tasting</p> <p>Sunday November 15, Beginning the Christmas Fast (Advent)</p>
--

<p>Monday November 21, Feast of Presentation of Theotokos in the Temple: Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. (Orthros at 9:00 a.m.)</p>

On Saturday 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.

<p style="text-align: center;">December 2016 Advanced Calendar</p> <p>December 4, Commemoration of St. Barbara, St. John of Damascus</p> <p>December 6, Commemoration of St. Nicholas</p> <p>December 8, St. Nicholas Sunday</p> <p>December 21, Ladies Guild pre-Christmas Bake Sale</p> <p>December 25, Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, Jesus Christ</p> <p>December 29, (Sunday) Church School Christmas Program; after Liturgy</p>
--

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Metropolitan Joseph’s Schedule</u></p> <p><u>November 3–8</u> St. Philip Church of Fort Lauderdale, FL 50th Anniversary Celebration</p> <p><u>November 11–13</u> St. Paisios Serbian Orthodox Monastery of Safford, AZ Leading annual pilgrimage</p> <p><u>November 18–21</u></p>
--

Church of the Redeemer of Los Altos Hills, CA
Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos
Northern California Deanery Meeting

December 16–18

St. Ignatius of Antioch Church of Twin Falls, ID
Ordination of Subdeacon James Hefner to the Holy
Diaconate

WEEKLY SERVICES

Saturday Vespers 4:00 p.m.

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.

Wednesday Vespers, 6:30 p.m.

Selected Saints of the Month

November 5

**SAINT JONAH, ARCHBISHOP OF
NOVGOROD**

Jonah was born in Novgorod and was orphaned early. A certain God-fearing widow took him and educated him. Seeing him as a child, Michael, the fool-for-Christ of Klops said to him prophetically: "Ivanushka, study diligently, for you will become archbishop in Novgorod the Great." And indeed, following the death of Archbishop Euthymius, Jonah was chosen and consecrated in his place. Jonah was devout and merciful to a rare degree for a mortal man. He built churches and monasteries and cared for his flock as a true good shepherd. He was offered the throne of Moscow as Metropolitan but declined, excusing himself because of his age. He entered into rest peacefully on November 5, 1570 A.D., and settled in the joyful heavenly habitations. One hundred years following his death there was a great fire in Novgorod. The relics of this saint did not burn in the furious flames, but on the contrary, from then on manifested healing power and emitted a wonderful fragrance.

November 14

THE HOLY APOSTLE PHILIP

Philip was born in Bethsaida beside the Sea of Galilee, as were Peter and Andrew. Instructed in Holy Scripture from his youth, Philip immediately responded to the call of the Lord Jesus and followed

Him (John 1:43). After the descent of the Holy Spirit, Philip zealously preached the Gospel throughout many regions in Asia and Greece. In Greece, the Jews wanted to kill him, but the Lord saved him by His mighty miracles. Thus, a Jewish high priest that rushed at Philip to beat him was suddenly blinded and turned completely black. Then there was a great earthquake, and the earth opened up and swallowed Philip's wicked persecutor. Many other miracles were manifested, especially the healing of the sick, by which many pagans believed in Christ. In the Phrygian town of Hierapolis, St. Philip found himself in common evangelical work with his sister Mariamna, St. John the Theologian, and the Apostle Bartholomew. In this town there was a dangerous snake that the pagans diligently fed and worshiped as a god. God's apostle killed the snake through prayer as though with a spear, but he also incurred the wrath of the unenlightened people. The wicked pagans seized Philip and crucified him upside-down on a tree, and then crucified Bartholomew as well. At that, the earth opened up and swallowed the judge and many other pagans with him. In great fear, the people rushed to rescue the crucified apostles, but only Bartholomew was still alive; Philip had already breathed his last. Bartholomew ordained Stachys as bishop for those whom he and Philip had baptized. Stachys had been blind for forty years, and Bartholomew and Philip had healed and baptized him. The relics of St. Philip were later translated to Rome. This wonderful apostle suffered in the year 86 A.D. in the time of Emperor Dometian.

November 20

**THE VENERABLE GREGORY OF
DECAPOLIS**

Gregory was born in Isaurian Decapolis of prominent and devout parents, Sergius and Mary. After he had completed his schooling, his parents desired that he marry, but he fled to the wilderness and was tonsured a monk. He lived in various places: Byzantium, Rome and on Mount Olympus. Wherever he was, he amazed men by his asceticism and miracles. At times a heavenly light illumined him and angels of God appeared to him. He gazed upon the beauty of the angels and listened to their sweet chanting. He lived a long and God-pleasing

life and died peacefully in the ninth century in Constantinople, his soul taking up its abode in the joy of his Lord.

**November 30
SAINT FRUMENTIUS THE ENLIGHTENER
OF ABYSSINIA**

In the time of Emperor Constantine the Great, a learned man from Tyre by the name of Meropius traveled to India. He took with him two young Christians, the brothers Edesius and Frumentius. On the journey, their boat was shipwrecked in a storm off the coast of Abyssinia, and the wild Abyssinians killed everyone on the boat except these two brothers. They lived in Abyssinia for several years, and managed to enter into service in the imperial court of the Abyssinian king. Frumentius began to preach the Christian Faith, initially very cautiously, and was convinced that this land would be fruitful for such preaching. The two brothers then took ship: Edesius to Tyre, to his parents, and Frumentius to Alexandria, to Patriarch Athanasius the Great. Frumentius explained the situation in Abyssinia to the Patriarch, and sought pastors for those newly converted to the Faith. St. Athanasius consecrated Frumentius to the episcopacy. St. Frumentius returned to Abyssinia where, by his zeal and his miracles, he converted all of Abyssinia to the Christian Faith in his own lifetime. This great shepherd of the flock of Christ, the enlightener of Abyssinia, reposed peacefully in the year 370 A.D. and went to live in the Kingdom of his Lord.

Parish & Organizations News

Congratulations to the new Parish Council Officers for 2016-2017:

Chairman, Randy Dabbah; Vice-Chairman, Barbara Scholl; Treasurer, Marwan Dabit; Secretary, Dimitri Kort; Kyra Pelachick was appointed Assistant Treasurer; Mark Ellis, Austin Turk, Lori Nour, Joe Daruty, Ghassan Awayjan.

Departed this life

On July 8, Irma (Odette) Chade, the wife of Leo Chade, and the mother of Richard, Edward, Helen & Alma Chade. Her funeral was sung at St. Mark Church and the graveside service and burial at

Pacific View Memorial Park & Mortuary in Corona Del Mar. Meal of Mercy was held at Dana Point Yacht Club. May her Memory Be Eternal.

**ORTHODOXY IN THE VINEYARD - YOUNG
ADULT RETREAT**

Meet and hangout with Orthodox Christian Young Adults from all over in Napa, CA at a Young Adult Fall Retreat - Hosted by the Young Adult Ministry within the Antiochian Diocese of Los Angeles and the West. We've planned a day of spiritual discussion lead by Jacob Saylor - Youth Directory at Assumption Greek Orthodox Church. The day will include time at Holy Assumption Monastery in Calistoga, CA (just outside of Napa), lunch, wine tasting at the local vineyard and dinner. Our topic will be focused on "In the world, but not of the world - How to be an Orthodox Christian in a materialistic and sometimes superficial world."

21+ Young Adult Event

Date: Saturday, November 5, 2016

Time: 8:30am - 7:30pm

Cost: \$50 Per Person (includes Lunch, Wine Tasting and Dinner)

For more info and to register, please visit www.dlawyoungadults.com. Make sure to register online by Sunday, October 30, 2016 - Space is limited!

November 11-13, 2016, Annual Pilgrimage to St. Paisius. Please see flyer included for more information

Antiochian Women of St. Mark

Antiochian Women of St. Mark had their Meeting on October 2nd, which started with a prayer by the president Denise Nassif, 13 ladies attended the meeting

Treasurer's report by Gisele Awayjan and Lydia Wakileh

End balance is \$9700.00

Scrip Report by Saeda Turk we encourage everyone to call the 800 number for Ralph to join the Ralphs community contribution to benefit our church and also use gift cards for department stores and gas.

Old Business

Friendship Tea was held on September 25th at the home of Rima Tarazi many thanks to Rima about 50 Antiochian Women attended the meeting. It was a lovely day with lots of wonderful goodies and fellowship.

New Business

Outgoing officers Lori Nour and Barbra Khamis Thank you Ladies for your wonderful work.

Incoming officers: Marty Morrison, Wisam Farraj, & Lydia Wakileh.

Congratulations to the new Antiochian Women Officers for 2016-2017: President, Denise Nassif; Vice President, Marty Morrison; Secretary, Wisam Farraj; Treasurer, Gisele Awayjan and Treasurer assistant, Lydia Wakileh.

The fall gathering for 2016 was held on October 7-9, and was hosted by St. Simeon Orthodox church in Santa Clarita.

Breast Cancer walk chaired by Afifa Artoul took place on Saturday October 22nd, and followed by a Luncheon on Sunday October 23rd. Thank you Ladies. The Pizza for Lunch was donated by Fouad and Rima Tarazi in memory of Rima's mother Genie Saba. Thank you Tarazis.

November meeting will be held on Thursday November 3, 6:30 p.m. at the church hall with potluck dinner.

Our Ladies Annual Pre-Thanksgiving Luncheon will be held on Sunday November 13th.

Wisam Farraj

Antiochian Women Secretary

Men's Club

The Men's Club had their meeting on Sunday October 16 at the church after Liturgy.

Officers were not elected. Deacon George will stay on as acting Treasurer. The members in attendance identified important events and assigned lead members to form committees to help with each event. The Men's Club will meet again on Sunday, November 13th after liturgy.

1. Men's Club Christmas Party - Abe Khamis (Lead) Austin Turk austinturk@aol.com

2. New Years Eve – Elias (Lead) Nader Q, Jacob Bahbah: JBahbah2000@yahoo.com
Don Skaff – dskaff@cox.net
Maurice Karkar, mkarkar@hotmail.com
Abe Khamis,

Samir Billeh, samir.billeh.1951@gmail.com
Ghassan Awayjan – gadesigns@sbcglobal.net

3. Super Bowl - Austin Turk (Lead)
austinturk@aol.com

Tony Rodriguez,

4. Mother's Day Luncheon - Deacon George (Lead) protodeacon_giorgios@yahoo.com
Austin Turk austinturk@aol.com

5. Usher List - Don Skaff (Lead) dskaff@cox.net
Randy Dabbah rjdabbah1@yahoo.com

6. Guest Speakers - Austin Turk (Lead)
austinturk@aol.com

Respectfully submitted by

Don Skaff/Men's Club President

Teen SOYO

General Business;

*The month of October is "Youth Month" and we kicked it off by holding a Car Wash and hosting a Taco luncheon on October 2nd! Congratulations to all our hard working teens for rolling their sleeves up and really "soaking" into doing a good job! We would like to thank all of our parishioners who supported our SOYO fundraiser and helped us to earn a net profit of \$405.00.

*October 7-9th was a busy weekend for our teens since there were two different weekend activities for them to go to. The Fall Gathering was hosted by St. Simeon Mission in Santa Clarita. A handful of our teens carpooled up North Friday night to the Gathering and attended the workshops, Diocese SOYO meeting, Vespers, Liturgy, and enjoyed fellowship with their peers from our sister churches. *At the same time some of our young ladies attended a "Lock-down" ALL Girls Retreat & St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Church in Irvine. Dr. Albert Rossi, (a professor from St. Vladimir Seminary), was the guest speaker and addressed current social and moral issues with the girls. It proved to a fruitful and positive experience for those who attended.

*October 16th was Special Olympics Awareness Day. Marianne Hanouneh read a letter to our parishioners about Special Olympics and George Bahbah shared his personal experience from attending Special Olympics at The Antiochian

Village this last Summer. Thanks to the generosity of St. Mark's parishioners we donated \$849.00 towards Special Olympics!

*We also held a SOYO meeting October 16th. We voted on new officers for 2016/2017. Congratulations to the following new officers;
President: Grace Bahbah
Vice President: Marianne Hanouneh
Secretary: Jay Skaff
Treasurer: Diana Aldada & Jillian Goson
Historians: George Bahbah & Paul Rodriguez
Public Relations: Sami Skaff
8th Grade Rep: Yasmeen Rizkallah
7th Grade Rep: Andrew Hanouneh & Rachel Ranney

*November 6th will be our next SOYO Mtg. directly after Sunday School.

Financials:

*Current balance \$955.00 (outstanding debts owed)

***In Christ,
Paula Rodriguez
SOYO Advisor***

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

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
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 Hanouneh 11/23
Richard Jirjis 11/11
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
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
Sereen Soury 11/11
Patrick Wilde 11/13
Nadim Youssef 11/16

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

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

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

NOVEMBER 2016 NEWSLETTER

