

**St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church**  
**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  
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.*  
*Church School after Holy Communion*



**December 17, 2017**  
**SUNDAY OF THE FOREFATHERS OF CHRIST**

## HYMNS AFTER THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

**Troparion of the Resurrection in the Third Tone:** Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and became the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy

**Troparion of the Forefathers in the Second Tone:** Thou hast justified by faith the ancient Forefathers, and through them Thou hast gone before and betrothed unto Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the saints, therefore, take pride in glory; for from their seed sprouted forth a noble fruit, and she it was who gave birth to Thee without seed. Wherefore, by their pleadings, O Christ God, save our souls.

All: **Troparion of 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 the Feast of the Nativity in Tone 3:** The Virgin brings forth today the Omnipotent One, and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One. Angels give glory with shepherds, and the magi journey with the star when for our sakes was born as a new babe, He who is from eternity God.

+++++

**Prokeimenon** (Daniel 3:26, 27) Tone 8: Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our Fathers. For you are just in all you have done.

### **The reading from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Colossians (3:4-11)**

Brethren, when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

**Alleluia Verses** (Psalm 98.6, 33:17) Tone 4: Moses and Aaron are among his priests. The righteous cried and the Lord heard them.

**The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (14:16-24)** The Lord spoke this parable: "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the

time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But, one by one, they all began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

++++  
**Holy Oblations are offered today by Ibrahim, Lydia, Michael, & Chris for Charlie** on the occasion of his birthday, and for the soul of Ibrahim's aunt Marika Haddad departed this life last week in Long Beach, by Elqura family for their beloved mother Loris Elqura departed this life 40 days, by Michael & Charlotte Khoury & family for Melody & George on the occasion of their birthdays and for the soul of Michael's mother Sumaya departed this life 11 years, by Mary Dibs, Barbara Scholl and family in thanksgiving for Steve's completion of his doctoral degree. Congratulations Dr. Scholl, and by Walid & Danice Najjar and family for their daughter Marina on the occasion of her birthday and for the soul of Walid's mother Gladys Najjar departed this life last week in Lebanon.

++++  
*Please remember in your prayers: Michael Debbas, Reham Turk, Darlyne Dibs, Nuha Qushair, Eleanor Wackeen, Georgette Salameh, June Anter, Kh. Katherine Tsichlis, Khouria Joanne Townsend, Tarek Fakhouri, Caren Deeb, and the suffering people of Mexico, Puerto Rico, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Palestine, Venezuela, Ukraine, and all people afflicted with disease and violence.*

<p><b>Ushers serving this week:</b> Paul Habeeb &amp; Don Nassif <b>Ushers serving next week:</b> Special team for Christmas Eve morning.</p>
---

**Quote from the Saints**

Those would see the Lord should purify their hearts with the continual remembrance of God. They will reach the contemplation of God in every moment, and within Him all will be light. *St. Isaac the Syrian*

## **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.

### **TO THE PARENTS OF OUR YOUNG CHILDREN**

- Relax! God put the wiggle in children; don't feel you have to suppress it in God's home. All are welcome!
- Sit toward the front where it is easier for your little ones to see and hear what's going on at the altar. They tire of seeing the back of others' heads.
- Quietly explain the actions of the Liturgy (what the priests, deacon, altar boys are doing)
- Sing the hymns and responses. Children learn how to worship in church by copying you.
- Incidental noise and movement are not reasons to take your child out of church. If a child's crying or movements become a distraction to others, then it is time to leave until they are calm.
- If you have to leave the church with your child, do so but please come back. Our Lord said, "Let the children come to me and forbid them not, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven."
- Remember that the way we welcome children in church directly affects the way they respond to the Church, to God, and one another. Let them know that they are at home in our house of worship.

### **TO THE MEMBERS OF OUR PARISH**

The presence of children is a gift to the Church and they are a reminder that our parish is growing!

Please welcome our children and give a little encouragement to their parents.

## Today

### **Our Antiochian Women's Annual pre-Christmas Bake Sale**

**St. Ignatius Sunday: Members of the Order of St. Ignatius assist in ushering and reading the epistle today**

**CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND DECORATIONS: Be sure to stop by the table in the narthex and in the bookstore for some really fine ideas for Christmas presents and some fine decorations. There is a larger assortment of both than usual. A free gift bag is included with the new special ornaments.**

We have received some pictures from **Life touch** here at the church. Please check the envelope on the table by the book store to find your picture. Please initial if you got yours. Thank you.

**Please make sure to pick up your 2018 calendar from the table by the bookstore. Please one calendar per family.**

*Advent (the Christmas Fast)* began on **November 15**. 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.

**Flowers...** add color and beauty to the church. When our iconostasis was designed we included flower boxes in front of the icons. Thank you to Leo Chade, Gisele Awayjan, Michael & Theresa Joubran, and others for bringing plants and cut flowers to place there. Perhaps you would consider donating flowers as well. Two rules of thumb: We do not want flowers or plants on the floor of the solea (the raised area in front of the iconostasis) and please keep the size of the flowers/plants reasonable so as not to obscure the holy icons.

## **Let's Get it Done!! St. Mark 2018 Stewardship Pledge Drive!**

This month we've had a great response with 36 families turning in their 2018 Pledge cards! So far we've raised \$73,372 which is 36% of our goal of pledging \$205,000. But we still have some pledge cards out there and would like all the pledge cards turned in by the end of the month. So please take the time to fill them out today. Remember that you don't need to make your first payment until January 2018. Your financial pledge and commitment is important and supports the work of the church, the parish itself and those who work for St. Mark. We appreciate your prayers and support. Additional pledge cards are available in the back of the church and can be dropped off in the white box between the church and the hall. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask a parish council member.

In Christ, St. Mark Stewardship Committee

**Please remember to take your Sunday Bulletin** home, it will help you to remember the services and the events going on in your church. Please put the Liturgy book service back in the pocket when you are done using it. Thank you!

### **This Week**

**Tuesday December 19**, Journey to Fullness 6:30 p.m.

**Wednesday December 20**, Vespers, 6:30 p.m.

**Friday December 22**, Royal Hours 9:30 a.m.

### **Next week**

**Sunday December 24**, Paramon of the Feast;  
**Church School Christmas Program**  
**Festal Vespers 6:30 p.m.**

**Monday December 25**, Nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Liturgy  
**10:00 a.m. (Orthros 8:45 a.m.) Church Office will be closed!**

### **Upcoming Services & Events**

**December 31**, Annual St. Mark New Year's Eve Dinner Dance (see flyer for more information)

**Monday January 1**, Feast of our Lord's Circumcision and St. Basil Day, Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. (Orthros 8:45 a.m.) Church Office will be closed!

**St. Mark Church Blood Drive, January 21, 2018.** Please save the date, invite family and friends. Thanks for saving lives. Please see flyers included for more information.

## **2018 Sweetheart Ball: Prospective Debutantes and Parents**

The Ladies' Society of St. Nicholas Orthodox Christian Cathedral is now preparing to host the 56th Sweetheart Ball to be held on Saturday, April 14, 2018, at the Universal Hilton Hotel.

Your experience as a debutante will be most memorable, filled with a variety of activities! Nothing would give us greater pleasure than to share this amazing experience with you this coming year. Debutantes must be at least 15 years old by October 1, 2017.

If you are interested in becoming a debutante in the Sweetheart Ball please email or call me as soon as possible. The deadline to sign up is October 15th, 2017.

Much Love,

Caren Deeb Kouri [auntylulu@aol.com](mailto:auntylulu@aol.com) (818-399-8899)

## **Orange County Forum**

A place for Orthodox Christian young adults in the OC area, married and single, to have fellowship, fun and engage in social and service activities. This group serves to foster the unity of faith, love and friendship between the Orthodox young adults in the community with discussion, speakers and fun social events. Join our Face book group at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/OrangeCountyForum> for a list of scheduled events and more information. Our next meeting is Tuesday December 19 at St. Mark Church.

## **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.

## **Sunday of the Holy Forefathers of Christ**

On the Sunday that occurs between December 11 and 17, we commemorate the great Fathers and Mothers and Prophets of the Old Testament, starting with Adam, Abraham, the Righteous Sarah, Isaac and Jacob, including Holy Prophet Elias and Daniel, and concluding with Holy Prophet Zechariah (Zachary), Joachim and Anna, Holy Prophet and Forerunner John the Baptist and The Theotokos. They lived before the Law and under the Law, especially the Patriarch Abraham, to whom God said, "In thy seed shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3, 22:18).

## Section from Advent Paraklesis

### Ektenia of Supplication

Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, according to thy great mercy, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

Choir: Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. Lord have mercy. (*after each petition*)

Again we pray for Metropolitan Joseph, the priests, hieromonks, deacons, hierodeacons and monastics and all our brotherhood in Christ.

Again we pray thee, O Lord, that thou wouldst make us worthy to praise and glorify thee together with the angels and shepherds.

We give thanks unto the, O Lord, that thou hast chosen us from the barren Church of the Gentiles and hast grafted us, a young olive shoot, upon the root and stock of righteous Abraham; and we pray thee to open our ears that we might hear the Prophet's warning and 'prepare the way of the Lord.'

Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health and salvation and visitation and pardon and forgiveness of sins for the servants of God, all Orthodox Christians of true worship, now gathered to prepare for the feast of thy holy nativity.

For thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind, and unto thee we send up glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

### **Troparion for the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ (Special Tone 4)**

Make ready, O Bethlehem, for Eden hath been opened for all. Prepare, O Ephratha, for the tree of life hath blossomed forth in the cave from the Virgin. For her womb did appear as a supersensual paradise, in which is planted that holy Vine. If we should eat thereof we shall live and not die as Adam of old. Christ shall be born, raising the image that fell of old.