

THE APOSTLE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2018

SAINT MARK ORTHODOX CHURCH

OF IRVINE

A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian
Archdiocese of North America
Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of all North America
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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 Rodriguez & Dana Chade

2017-2018 PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman - Barbara Scholl {18} (949) 533-4634
Vice Chairman - Kyra Pelachik {18} (714) 906-9231
Secretary - Jerri Lynn Mamey {18} (949) 831-5776
Treasurer - Marwan Dabit {20} (626)665-1096
Assistant Treasurers- Melad Hanna {20} (949) 433-1698 & **Richard Jirjis {20}** (714) 404-9002
Dimitri Kort {18} (909) 529-3671
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: Kristen Chala (909) 217-2317

Teen SOYO Co-Presidents: Christina Habeeb, Marianne Hanounch

Pastor's Column

Beloved in Christ,

As God would have it, Pascha falls rather early this year, on April 8. Lent will begin on February 19. During this time between the Theophany and Lent, we will be working, caring for our children, studying in school, fulfilling our obligations. What we need to guard against, however, is being caught unawares by Lent. It is easy, being as busy as we all are, not to get into the "swing of things" until Lent is well underway.

I am challenging you to take some concrete steps to get ready for the Great Fast this year.

1. Observe the Wednesday and Friday fast.
2. Look at your church calendar, and note that the pre-Lenten period begins on Sunday January 28th (the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee) with a fast free week. The following week is a "regular" week, with Wednesday and Friday as fasting days. Then we transition to Lent with a week of fasting from meat products (the week of Cheese fare) starting on Monday, February 12th. During this week we are allowed to eat eggs and dairy products, even on Wednesday and Friday. The last day of Cheese fare is Sunday February 18th. Lent, the Great Fast begins the next day. ***Most importantly, mark these days on your personal calendars, your family calendars, your smart-phones and all the places that you use to organize your time.***
3. Plan ahead: Make meal plans, dig out those Lenten recipes. If you have children, involve them in this planning, so that Lent is not "imposed" upon them, but simply part of your

family's life. Perhaps together you may agree that each night of Lent will have a regular menu (i.e. Monday's dinner will be black beans and rice, Tuesdays another dish, and so on). If not everyone in the home is Orthodox, or there are special dietary needs, discuss how to accommodate these realities. You should also check with your priest on these matters for guidance.

4. Note that beginning the week of February 19 there will be Monday Great Compline services, a Wednesday evening Liturgy of Pre-Sanctified Gifts, and a Friday evening Akathistos Service every week. Mark these on your calendars as well, and think how you (and your family) can be present at as many of these services as humanly possible. Also plan to intensify your prayer life and your alms-giving during this season.
5. Plan to come for Holy Confession, early in Lent. Lent is the "springtime of the soul." It is important, therefore, to cleanse our souls through this Sacrament, in order to prepare for the glorious Pascha.

Let us therefore use this time "in between" Theophany and Lent to prepare ourselves for the wonderful and God-given opportunity that is Lent.

Feasts, Special Services and Events for February 2018

Thursday, February 1 – 6:30 p.m., Evening Liturgy
Feast of the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple

Sunday February 4, Super Bowl Viewing Party at
St. Mark Church

Saturday February 10, 8:00 p.m. Valentine's Dinner
Dance in the Church Hall

Tuesday February, 13 A Journey to Fullness 6:30
p.m.

Monday February 19, First Day of Great Lent –
Holy Services Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,
Thursday & Friday (see Calendar). Remainder of
the month: Monday Compline 7:00 p.m.,
Wednesday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:30 p.m., Friday
Akathist 7:00 p.m.

Sunday February 25, Sunday of Orthodoxy. Evening
Vespers

Advance Calendar for March 2017

March 25 – Feast of the Annunciation (Sunday)

Metropolitan Joseph's Schedule

February 15–18

Antiochian Village in Bolivar, PA
Annual Mid-Winter Meetings

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.

THE LENTEN FAST (Lent begins on February 19)

During Great Lent, the rules of the dietary fast are thus: All of Lent and Holy Week we are to abstain from all meat and animal products (including eggs, milk, animal fats, etc.) The only exceptions are shellfish. In addition, Mondays through Fridays, we are to abstain from wine and other alcoholic drinks and olive oil. This is the "letter of the law." It is important for you and your family to participate in the "spirit of the law", working out this Lenten effort within your household in ways pleasing to God and beneficial for the soul. We all must be reminded that the purpose of the dietary fast is to help us to fast from sin and ungodliness! If you have questions regarding Lenten discipline, please see Fr. Michael.

Selected Saints of the Month

February 2

THE MEETING [PRESENTATION] OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE

The fortieth day after His birth, the All-Holy Virgin brought her Divine Son into the Temple of Jerusalem, in accordance with the Law, to dedicate Him to God and to purify herself. *Consecrate to me every first-born that opens the womb among the Israelites both of man and beast, for it belongs to me* (Exodus 13:2). *Tell the Israelites: when a*

woman has conceived and gives birth to a boy, she shall be unclean for seven days, with the same uncleanness as at her menstrual period. On the eighth day, the flesh of the boy's foreskin shall be circumcised, and then she shall spend thirty-three days more in becoming purified of her blood; she shall not touch anything sacred nor enter the sanctuary till the days of her purification are fulfilled. If she gives birth to a girl, for fourteen days she shall be as unclean as at her menstruation, after which she shall spend sixty-six days in becoming purified of her blood. When the days of her purification for a son or for a daughter are fulfilled, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the meeting tent a yearling lamb for a holocaust and a pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering. The priest shall offer them up before the Lord to make atonement for her, and thus she will be clean again after her flow of blood. Such is the law for the woman who gives birth to a boy or a girl child (Leviticus 12:2-7). Even though neither the one nor the other was necessary, nevertheless the Lawgiver did not, in anyway, want to transgress His own Law whom He had given through Moses, His servant and prophet. At that time, the high-priest Zaccharias, the father of John the Forerunner [Precursor], was on duty in the Temple [*serving as a priest before God in the order of his division* (St. Luke 1:8)]. Zaccharias placed the Virgin, not in the temple area reserved for women, but rather, in the area reserved for virgins. On this occasion, two unusual persons appeared in the Temple: the Elder Simeon and Anna, the daughter of Phanuel. The righteous Simeon took the Messiah in his arms and said: *Now, Master, You may let Your servant go in peace, according to Your word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation* (St. Luke 2: 29-30). Simeon also spoke the following words about the Christ-child: *Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel* (St. Luke 2:34). Then Anna, who from her youth served God in the Temple by fasting and prayers, recognized the Messiah and glorified God and proclaimed to the inhabitants of Jerusalem about the coming of the long-awaited One. The Pharisees present in the Temple, who having seen and heard all, became angry with Zacharias because he placed the Virgin Mary in the area reserved for virgins and reported this to King Herod. Convinced that this is the new king about whom the Magi from the east spoke, Herod immediately sent his soldiers

to kill Jesus. In the meantime the Holy Family had already left the city and set out for Egypt under the guidance of an angel of God. The Feast of the Meeting of our Lord in the Temple was celebrated from earliest times but the solemn celebration of this day was established in the year 544 A.D. during the reign of Emperor Justinian.

February 11

SAINT THEODORA

Theodora, a Greek empress, was the wife of the nefarious Emperor Theophilus the Iconoclast. After the death of Theophilus, Theodora became the ruling empress and reigned together with her son Michael III. At the Council in Constantinople (842 A.D.), she immediately restored the veneration of icons. On this occasion, the Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy was instituted which is still celebrated today on the First Sunday of the Honorable Fast [First Sunday in Lent]. This holy and meritorious woman of the Church gave up her soul to God on February 11, 867 A.D. It was at that time, by the divine and wonderful Providence of God, at the solemn triumph of Orthodoxy over all heresies, that St. Cyril and St. Methodius were sent as Christian missionaries to the Slavs.

February 21

SAINT ZACHARIAS PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

During the reign of the Greek Emperor Heraclius, the Persian Emperor Chozroes attacked Jerusalem in the year 614 A.D. Chozroes pillaged the city, removed the Honorable Cross [of Christ] to Persia and took an enormous number of Christians into bondage, among them was Patriarch Zacharias. The Jews assisted Chozroes in committing evil against the Christians. Among the other Jewish acts of wickedness, this one is mentioned: the Jews purchased from Chozroes 90,000 Christians as their slaves and slew them all. The aged Patriarch Zacharias remained in bondage for fourteen years. Many miracles occurred in Persia as a result of the Honorable Cross, so even the Persians said: "The Christian God has come to Persia." Later on, Heraclius forced the Persian emperor to return the Honorable Cross to Jerusalem, along with the patriarch and the remaining captives. Emperor Heraclius himself bore the Cross on his shoulders into the Holy City. St. Zacharias spent his remaining

days in peace and took up habitation with the Lord in the year 631 A.D. He was succeeded on the throne by Patriarch Modestus and followed by St. Sophronius (March 11).

February 28

SAINT BASIL THE CONFESSOR

Basil was a companion and co-suffer with St. Procopius of Decapolis. Basil faithfully followed his teacher Procopius, both in peaceful times and in times of persecution. He suffered many hardships from the iconoclasts. When the iconoclasts were defeated, Basil, according to God's Providence, returned together with Procopius to his monastery, where in fasting and prayer he lived a long life of asceticism. He died peacefully in the year 747 A.D.

Parish & Organizations News

Fallen Asleep in the Lord

On December 25 2017, Jamil George Nassar. His funeral was at St. Mark Church, his burial at Pacific View Memorial Park.

On December 30, 2017 Darlyne Dibs. Her funeral was at St Mark Church on January 13, 2018 with Grave side and burial at Westminster Memorial Park followed by meal of mercy at St Mark Church Hall. Memory Eternal!

Baptized into Christ

On January 14 2018, Emile David Tannous, son of David and Juliana Tannous at St. Nicholas Cathedral in Los Angeles.
His godmother is Shafika Tannous and godfather Anthony Turk.

Antiochian Women of St. Mark

On January 7, 2018 was our annual Zalabieh coffee hour which made \$271.00. Thank you to Gisele Awayjan and Tammy Qutami for organizing the event. Also, thank you to Lydia Wakileh for picking up the Zalabieh for us.

Our next Antiochian Women Meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2018 at St. Mark Church.

Upcoming one-day retreat at St. Barnabas on January 27, 2018: "Restoring the Image: Women,

Beauty, and the Church" with speaker, Kh. Krista West.

The Ladies Christmas Luncheon will be on Sunday, January 28, 2018 at Hanna's Restaurant in Rancho Santa Margarita.

SAVE THE DATE:

Our Valentine Party is scheduled for Saturday, February 10, 2018. Our event will be catered by Olive Tree Restaurant. The DJ Charlie Toubbeh will be providing the entertainment. Tickets can be purchased for \$65.00 per person.

*Prepared by Kristin Chala, President
Antiochian Women of St. Mark*

Teen SOYO

Old Business:

Sunday, January 7th we had our Christmas-New Year's party at Ice Palace in Aliso Viejo, where kids ice skated for a couple of hours. We then proceeded to Chilis for dinner and a fun Secret Santa gift exchange game. We had 37 people attend between St. Mark's and a few of our sister churches. We paid for St. Mark's kids Ice Skating through the SOYO Acct. Everyone had a really great time!

New Business:

Next SOYO meeting, was going to be on Sunday Jan.28, but due to the women's luncheon at Hanna's we will be rescheduling for a later date still to be determined.

*St. Nicholas Winter Camp Retreat is approaching Feb. 16th-19th

*Mid-Winters Conference is also the same weekend of Feb. 16th-19th unfortunately, which means the 3 DLAW Officers from St. Mark's will have to miss the retreat.

Financials:

Acct. Balance \$1,134.98

*Yours in Christ,
Paula Rodriguez
Teen SOYO Advisor*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Jessica Alchammas 2/26
Samir Artoul 2/2
May Asaly 2/15
Ivana Awayjan 2/27
Joseph Azzam 2/15
Maryse Benjamin 2/17
Matt Beyrooty 2/22
Mikhail Billeh 2/4
Sarah Chade 2/17
Leo Chade 2/14
George Chala 2/6
Vladimir Chendler 2/3
Randy Dabbah 2/18
Samira Eissa 2/1
Kevin Fortuna 2/22
Jamie Hanna 2/13
Gellan Kashou 2/20
Sammy Khamis 2/17
Diana Khamis 2/19
Charlotte Khoury 2/15
Amanda Khury 2/12
Simon Kishek 2/2
Adel Munayyer 2/13
Danice Najjar 2/22
Lori Nour 2/10
Tanya Richards 2/2
Rebekah Rodriguez 2/16
Paul Qaqundah 2/26
Mae Sakhel-Qushair 2/12
Nuha Qushair 2/10
Tammy Qutami 2/25
Robert Ranney 2/14
Kimla Ranney 2/24
Paula Rodriguez 2/6
Najib Saadeh 2/18
George Saba 2/2
Siham Saba 2/10
Yacoub Saba 2/17
Nabeel Salameh 2/16
Daniel Scholl 2/10
Sebastian Skaff 2/6
Michael Soury 2/25
Andre Terzian 2/25
Brenda Tax 2/13
Melanie Tierney 2/22
Tina Tomeo 2/19

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Tony & Maryse Benjamin 2/23
Fr. Patrick & Nina Irish 2/6
Antoune & Mayssoun Khoury 2/10
Ramzi & Randa Salameh 2/14
Don Jr. & Penny Skaff 2/14

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)

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IRVINE, CA 92614
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