

St. Mark Orthodox Church

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese,
His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York and
Metropolitan of all North America

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

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



March 18, 2018

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

VENERABLE JOHN OF THE LADDER

LITURGY OF ST. BASIL

HYMNS AFTER THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

Troparion for the Resurrection, in the Eighth Tone: From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee.

Troparion of St John Climacus in the Eighth Tone: The barren wilderness thou didst make fertile with the streams of thy tears; and by thy deep sighing thou hast given fruit through thy struggles a hundred-fold. Accordingly, thou hast become a star for the universe, sparkling with miracles. Therefore, O righteous Father John Climacus, intercede with Christ God to save our souls.

Kontakion for the Sundays in Lent, in the Eight Tone: To thee the Champion Leader do I offer thanks of Victory. O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror; but as thou that hast that power invincible, O Theotokos, thou alone canst set me free; from all forms of danger free me and deliver me, that I may cry unto thee: Hail, O Bride without bridegroom.

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Prokeimenon (Psalm 28.11, 1) Tone 7: The Lord will give strength to His people. The Lord will bless His people with peace.

The Reading is from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (6:13-20)

Brethren, when God made a promise to Abraham, since He had no one greater by whom to swear, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by one greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, He interposed with an oath. So that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Alleluia Verses (Psalm 91.1, 2) Tone 7: It is good to give praise unto the Lord, and to chant unto Thy name, O Most High. To proclaim in the morning Thy mercy, and Thy truth by night.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark (9:16-30)

At that time, a man came to Jesus, kneeling down and saying unto him, "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked Thy Disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And Jesus answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to Me." And they brought the boy to Him; and when the spirit saw Jesus, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if Thou canst do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when Jesus had entered the house, His Disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And Jesus said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And Jesus would not have anyone know it; for He was teaching His Disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and after He is killed, He will rise on the third day."

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For the Liturgy of St. Basil, in lieu of the usual hymn to the Theotokos, we sing "In Thee Rejoiceth..." (See page 57 of the Congregational Liturgy book)

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Holy Oblations are offered today by Fr. Michael for the soul of Fr. Thomas Hopko, former dean of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological School, departed this life three years, by the Turk family for Osama & Ezabella on the occasion of their birthdays, by Michael & Charlotte Khoury for Melissa on the occasion of her birthday and for the health and salvation of George, Melody, Grace, Amanda, Ghina and Fida, and by Imad & Arij Alchammas for the soul of Arij's father Nadim Watfa, and for the health and salvation of their children Jessica and Angelina and for the Alkasab & Alchammas families. We also remember our father in Christ, Metropolitan Philip, departed this life three years. Memory Eternal!

Coffee hour is given today by the Coffee Hour Committee

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Please remember in your prayers: Michael Debbas, Reham Turk, Nuha Qushair, Eleanor Wackeen, Georgette Salameh, June Anter, Seham Aldada, 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.

March is Antiochian Women's Month, the Ladies will participate in Ushering, Reading the Epistle and serving during the 4 weeks of March.

This week ushers: Lana Nino & Barbara Khamis

English Epistle reader: Barbara Scholl

Next week Ushers: Carol Tierney & Tarize Bahbah

Next week English Epistle reader: Mary Dibs

Next week Arabic Epistle reader: Lilian Kassicieh

House Blessings

During Lent, Fr. Michael will continue to bless homes, please use the forms on the information table to request a visit. The home blessings will last about 40 minutes per home. When Fr. Michael arrives, all televisions, stereos, and radios should be turned off. If there is an icon corner in the home, the prayers will take place there, if not, an icon and a lit candle should be set up on a suitable table. A list of all those living in the home and others you would like to be included in the prayers should also be placed on the table.

Quote from the Saints

"He whose will and desire in conversation is to establish his own opinion, even though what he says is true, should recognize that he is sick with the devil's disease."

St. John Climacus

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

If you think you may wish to rent our hall for graduation celebrations in the month of June, we ask you to reserve by the end of March. After that we will release any open dates to our caterer.

Antiochian Women's meeting.

Our new 2018 Church Photo Directory is here. Please see Lydia at the coffee hour to pick up your directory today.

2018 St. Mark Stewardship Pledge Update!

Thank you to all who have pledged so far! To date, we've had 120 families turn in their 2018 pledge cards and have raised \$184,887 which is 90% of our goal of reaching \$205,000. We're less than \$20,000 away from our goal!! If you haven't yet, please take the time to fill out your pledge cards today! We appreciate your prayers and support.

Thank you to our newest 3 pledging families: Elyas & Najat Khury, Ted & Kathy Skaff and George & Martha Toubbeh.

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

THE LENTEN FAST has begun: 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.

Monday March 19: Great Compline 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday March 21: Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy 6:30 p.m., followed by Potluck dinner (Lenten) and book study on "Crazy John."

Thursday March 22, 7:00 p.m. Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete

Friday March 23: Little Compline with Akathist Hymn 7:00 p.m. (fifth Madyha)

Next week

Sunday March 25, Feast of the Annunciation. Our Antiochian Women will offer a fish luncheon for the Feast, \$8 adults & \$5 kids, and Fr. Wayne Wilson

of St. Barnabas Church will speak during the luncheon on “The Theotokos, Our Model for Receiving the Grace of God.”

Monday March 26: Great Compline 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday March 28: Pre-Sanctified Divine Liturgy 6:30 p.m., followed by Pot-luck dinner (Lenten) and book study on “Crazy John.”

Friday March 30: Little Compline with Canon of St. Lazarus 7:00 p.m.

Saturday March 31: Orthros (9:00 a.m.) and Divine Liturgy (10:00 a.m.) of Lazarus Saturday

Upcoming Services & Events

Sunday April 1: Entrance of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday). Ladies Bake Sale

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 Facebook group at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/OrangeCountyForum> for a list of scheduled events and more information.

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.

Fourth Sunday of Lent: St. John of the Ladder

The memory of this Saint is also celebrated on March 30. He is celebrated today because his book, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, is a sure guide to the ascetic life, written by a great man of prayer experienced in all forms of the monastic polity; it teaches the seeker after salvation how to lay a sound foundation for his struggles, how to detect and war against each of the passions, how to avoid the snares laid by the demons, and how to rise from the rudimental virtues to the heights of Godlike love and humility. It is held in such high esteem that it is universally read in its entirety in monasteries during the Great Fast.