



# **THE APOSTLE**

## **MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

**NOVEMBER 2018**

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING**

### **SAINT MARK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF IRVINE**

A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian  
Archdiocese of 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**  
**Rev. Deacon Nicholas Mamey**  
**Sub-deacon: Athanasius Fakhouri**  
**Choir Director: Barbara Scholl**  
**Chanters: Jacob Bahbah, Theresa Joubran, Karim  
Youssef, & Mark Ellis**  
**Church Secretary: Lydia Wakileh**  
**Teen's Advisors: Fatin Fakhouri & Muna Rizkallah**

#### **2017-2018 PARISH COUNCIL**

**Chairman Austin Turk {19}** (949) 922-2350  
**Vice Chairman – Lew Malouf {21}** (818) 842-0458  
**Secretary – Jerri Lynn Mamey {21}** (949) 831-5776  
**Treasurer – Marwan Dabit {20}** (626)665-1096  
**Assistant Treasurers- Melad Hanna {20}** (949) 433-  
1698 & **Richard Jirjis {20}** (714) 404-9002- **Michael  
Khoury {21}** (714) 717 - 2349  
**Mark Ellis {19}**(949) 458-1604  
**Lori Nour {19}** (949) 370-6224  
**Dana Chade {21}** (949) 939-8243  
[Number in brackets is the member's last year of his or  
her current term]  
**Church School Co-Directors:** Tammy Qutami (714)  
449-9680 and Kristin Chala (909) 662-9131  
**Men's Club Acting President:** Ghassan Awayjan (951)  
454-5429  
**Antiochian Women of St. Mark President:** Denise  
Nassiff (949)  
**Teen SOYO Co-Presidents:** Christina Habeeb,  
Marianne Hanouneh

#### **Pastor's Column**

Why fast before the Nativity?

#### *Question*

I was wondering why we fast before Nativity. The  
Lenten fast seems more obvious. Also, from what  
foods do we normally fast from during the Nativity  
fast?

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#### *Answer*

We fast before the Great Feast of the Nativity in  
order to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Our  
Lord's birth. As in the case of Great Lent, the  
Nativity Fast is one of preparation, during which we  
focus on the coming of the Savior by fasting, prayer,  
and almsgiving.

By fasting, we "shift our focus" from ourselves to  
others, spending less time worrying about what to  
eat, when to eat, how much to eat, and so on in  
order to use our time in increased prayer and caring  
for the poor. We learn through fasting that we can  
gain control over things which we sometimes allow  
to control us—and for many people, food is a  
controlling factor.

[We live in the only society in which an entire TV  
network is devoted to food!] While fasting from  
food, however, we are also challenged to fast from  
sin, from gossip, from jealousy, from anger, and  
from those other things which, while well within  
our control, we all too often allow to control us.

Just as we would refrain from eating a lot before going to an expensive restaurant for dinner—if we “ruin our appetite” we will enjoy the restaurant less—so too we fast before the Nativity in order to more fully feast and celebrate on the Nativity itself.

During the Nativity Fast, we are called upon to refrain from meat, dairy, fish, wine, and olive oil. At the same time, we are challenged, within this framework, to fast to the best of our ability, and to do so consistently.

If we must modify the extent to which we fast within this framework, it is of course possible, but in every instance our fasting should be consistent and regular, for Christ does not see fasting as an option, but as a “must.”

In Matthew Christ says, “WHEN you fast, do not be like the hypocrites,” not “IF you fast” or “IF YOU CHOOSE to fast.”

Finally, it seems quite odd that in our society—a society in which people gladly and freely spend huge sums of money for diets, most of which recommend that one refrain from red meats and dairy products—fasting is not more widely embraced. How odd that a Jenny Craig consultant or diet guru or physician will tell us to refrain from eating meat or cheese or butter and we will gladly embrace—and pay large sums of money for—his or her advice, while when the Church offers the same advice [at “no cost”] we tend to balk, as if we were being asked to do the impossible.

From <https://oca.org/questions/dailylife/why-fast-before-the-nativity>

*Fr Michael*

### **Feasts, Special Services and Events for November**

Saturday November 3, Feast of St. Raphael of Brooklyn Orthros 9:00 a.m. and Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Saturday evening: St. Mark Wine and Food Tasting

Wednesday November 7, Evening Divine Liturgy, Feast of Holy Archangels Michael & Gabriel Divine Liturgy, 10:00 a.m. (Orthros 9:00 a.m.)

Wednesday November 15, Beginning the Christmas Fast (Advent)

Friday November 16, 7:00 p.m. St. Raphael of Brooklyn encounter

Tuesday November 20, Evening Divine Liturgy, Feast of Presentation of Theotokos in the Temple Liturgy, 10:00 a.m. (Orthros 9:00 a.m.)

**On Thursday November 15<sup>th</sup>, 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.

New monthly event: **An Evening with St. Raphael of Brooklyn.** On Friday November 16 at 7:00 p.m. we will meet at St. Mark Church. We will hear and discuss the life and writings of St. Raphael of Brooklyn.

### **December 2018 Advanced Calendar**

December 2, St. Nicholas Sunday

December 4, Commemoration of St. Barbara, St. John of Damascus

December 6, Commemoration of St. Nicholas

December 16, Ladies Guild pre-Christmas Bake Sale

December 23, (Sunday) Church School Christmas Program; after Liturgy

December 25, Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, Jesus Christ

### **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, 7:00 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.

## 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  
Issa Batarseh 11/11  
Dana Batarseh 11/3  
Chris Bederov 11/13  
Dominic Benjamin 11/6  
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 Hanounch 11/23  
Richard Jirjis 11/11  
Sophia Joellson 11/25  
Rania Karkar 11/28  
Lana Kashou 11/7  
George Kassir 11/3  
Grace Khoury 11/19  
Violette Khamis 11/17  
Lourice Kishek 11/17  
Helen Mahshi 11/29  
George Mokbel 11/17  
Anthony Najjar 11/24  
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  
Ziad & Helen Mahshi 11/12  
Tony & Paula Rodriguez 11/7  
Fouad & Rima Tarazi 11/3  
Dave & Brenda Tax 11/14  
Roger & Carol Tierney 11/12  
Bob & Theodora Whitehead 11/13

## Parish & Organizations News

### Married on 9/30/2018

**Akash Urban Patel and Elena Christy Khury at St. Luke's Garden Grove, CA.**

**Their witnesses were Diana Khury and Adit Josan. Congratulations**

### On October 21, 2018

**Charlie Wakileh and Michelle Nichole Furlanetto at St. Paul Greek Church in Irvine CA. Best man is Michael Wakileh and maid of honor is Lena Hekimian. Congratulations**

### Baptized into Christ

**On July 1, 2018 Ayla Khamis daughter of Jabra and Nicole Khamis. Her godmother is Patricia Khamis and her godfather is Michael Naccara.**

### Fallen Asleep into the Lord

**On 9/1/2018 Virgin Francis George, Mother of May Asaly. Her funeral was at St. Mark Church on 9/7/2018 and the burial at Ascension Cemetery Lake Forest, followed by the meal of mercy at St. Mark Church Hall. Memory Eternal**

### Antiochian Women of St. Mark

The Antiochian meeting took place on October 21, 2018. Father's Day Luncheon was held on June 17th. Our Friendship Tea Party was held on Sept 15th and was a success. Our planned activities coming up are Our Annual Breast Cancer Walk is set for Saturday Oct 27, followed by the Luncheon Fundraiser on Sunday the 28th. Our Annual Pre-Thanksgiving Luncheon will be on Nov 11th. We have an upcoming Wine Tasting and Giselle is asking for Silent Auction items on Nov 3. Christmas Bake Sale will be Dec 16th. We approved giving \$150 for Hanna's gift and donated \$200 toward the Wine Tasting Auction. The committee also welcomed new members Christina Mamey and Marcy Chade. Meeting adjourned at 12:50pm

**Tania Maalouly**  
**Secretary Antiochian Women**

### Teen SOYO

On Saturday October 20, our Teen SOYO group held their first activity of the Fall at the Rizkallah home in Tustin. Two "Be the Bee" videos were viewed and question and answer with Fr. Michael and Dn. Nicholas followed. Dinner and fellowship completed the evening. Thanks to the Rizkallah family for hosting us. Please check the Sunday bulletin for our next meeting date and time.

*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 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to the Church office (949-851-8933)*

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ORTHODOX CHURCH  
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