

# **THE APOSTLE**

## **MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

**MARCH 2019**

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

A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian  
Archdiocese of North America  
Metropolitan JOSEPH, Archbishop of New York and  
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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**

#### **2018-2019 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  
Khouri {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 President:** Ghassan Awayjan (951) 454-  
5429

**Antiochian Women of St. Mark President:** Denise  
Nassiff (949)

**Teen SOYO Co-Presidents:** Jillian Goson

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

Beloved in Christ,

*Lent begins on March 11 and we are, even now, in  
the Church calendar preparing for this. With this in  
mind, please read and ponder the article reprinted  
below!*

During Great Lent, and in the next several weeks  
the Church calls us to do what we should be doing  
all year round. We are instructed to fast, pray, do  
charitable works, worship in the church, and so on.  
We must also include in the list participation in the  
Sacrament of Holy Confession. In his book, "The  
Lenten Spring," Fr. Thomas Hopko (Dean Emeritus  
of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary)  
addresses some of the questions and issues  
regarding this neglected sacrament.

*It is not enough for us to know our  
sins and hate them. We must also confess  
them before God and man. We must  
acknowledge them before heaven and  
earth. We must expose them to the whole of  
creation in order to be rid of them from  
within our secret hearts. Confession is part  
of the spiritual life. Indeed it is part of life  
itself. There is no authentic existence for  
human beings without it. And there is  
certainly no authentic repentance. "If we  
say we have not sin, we deceive ourselves,  
and the truth is not in us. If we confess our  
sins, He is faithful and just, and will  
forgive our sins and cleanse us from all  
unrighteousness. If we say we have not  
sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word  
is not in us." (1 John 1:8-10)*

*Some say that there is no need to  
confess sins openly and publicly. They say*

*that people can confess directly to God. Such an idea is total nonsense. Confession to God in secret is no confession at all. It is simply the acknowledgment before the Lord that we know what He knows! Confession by definition is open and public. If it is not, it is simply not confession.*

*When the people were repenting in preparation for Jesus at the preaching of John the Baptist, it is written that they were baptized "confessing their sins" (Mark 1:5). This does not mean that they were telling God in the privacy of their hearts what He already knew. It means that they were proclaiming the evils that they had done for all to hear. And St. James commands Christians: "Confess your sins to one another!" he is not advising them to be aware of their transgressions in the secrecy of their souls. He is ordering them to reveal their wickednesses to each other so that they might be healed (James 5:16)*

*If confession is by definition the open and public acknowledgment of sins, why then do the Orthodox confess privately to their priests? It is not because the priests have some special power which others do not have... Priests have no power personally to forgive sins. Only Jesus Christ has such power. But the pastors have the ministry of witnessing the confession and repentance of God's people, and of officially sealing that confession and repentance with the assurance of divine forgiveness through the prayers of absolution.*

*The reason why people now confess to their pastors in private is because of the weakness of the body of Christians as a whole. Confession used to be public. It was done openly in the presence of all the members of the Church. Anyone willing to confess in this manner today is welcome do so. But it would most likely serve only to lead other in temptation rather than to inspire prayerful compassion... When*

*confession is done to the priest alone, it should be understood that it is to him as if it were it were to all. Or to put it another way, it is to all - God and man and the whole of creation - in the priest's person as the head of the church community and the sacramental presence within it of the Lord Jesus Himself.*

*Great Lent is a time for confession. All Christians should make their confession. A person who does not is hardly a Christian. He is certainly not Orthodox.*

*Fr. Michael*

**THE LENTEN FAST (Lent begins on March 14)**  
***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.***

<p>SPECIAL SERVICES/EVENTS IN MARCH March 2 Saturday of Souls, Orthros 9:00 a.m., Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m. Monday March 11 First Day of Great Lent Schedule of Services for 1<sup>st</sup> Week of Great Lent Great Compline Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 7:00 p.m. Wednesday Liturgy of Pre-Sanctified Gifts 6:30 p.m. Friday Little Compline with Akathist Hymn, 7:00 p.m. Week Day Service Schedule for the remainder of March Mondays Great Compline 7:00 p.m. Wednesdays Liturgy of Pre-Sanctified Gifts, 6:30 p.m.</p>
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Fridays Little Compline with Akathist Hymn, 7:00 p.m.

Monday March 25, Divine Liturgy, Feast of the Annunciation 10:00 a.m.

*April 2019 Advanced Calendar*

April 21, Palm Sunday

April 22-27, Holy Week

April 28, GREAT AND HOLY PASCHA

### 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.

## **Selected Saints of the Month**

### **March 5**

#### **THE HOLY MARTYR CONON OF ISAURIA**

He was brought up in the Christian Faith and baptized in the name of the All-holy and Life-giving Trinity by the Archangel Michael himself. Until his death, the archangel of God invisibly watched over him. Conon was illumined and empowered by the grace of the Holy Spirit, so that his heart was driven not by anything worldly but only by the spiritual and heavenly. When his parents forced him into marriage, the first evening he took a candle and placed it under a vessel and asked his bride: "Which is better, light or darkness?" She replied: "Light." He then began to talk to her about the Faith of Christ, and about the spiritual life as being far superior and more desirable than the physical. In this he succeeded. Afterward Conon converted his wife and her parents to the Christian Faith. Conon and his wife lived as brother and sister. Shortly thereafter, his wife and parents died, and he withdrew completely from this worldly life and devoted himself totally to prayer, fasting and divine contemplation. He performed great miracles, through which he converted many to Christianity. Among other examples, Conon compelled evil

spirits to serve him. During a time of persecution he was captured, tortured and pierced throughout with knives. The sick anointed themselves with his blood, and they were healed. Afterward he lived for two additional years in his town of Isauria, and then presented himself to the Lord. This glorious saint lived and was martyred in the second century

### **March 15**

#### **THE HOLY MARTYR NICANDER THE EGYPTIAN**

Nicander was skinned and then beheaded for his faith in Christ. His crime was that, as a physician, he ministered to Christian martyrs and honorably buried their martyred bodies. He suffered honorably in the year 302 A.D.

### **HYMN OF PRAISE**

#### **THE HOLY MARTYRS AGAPIUS, ALEXANDER, NICANDER AND THOSE WITH THEM**

From every state the Lord chooses His army:  
Everyone in whom the flame of love and faith  
burns;

From among physicians, sages, peasants and  
laborers,

From among emperors and fishermen--an army of  
martyrs!

The sword beheaded, the Lord received the  
wise Alexander;

The sword beheaded, the Lord took the  
merciful Nicander;

The sword beheaded eight beautiful, young apples;  
Beneath the sword, the All-sustaining Hand  
received them.

Those whom the world scoops up and discards from  
its sheepfold

The Lord with His tender hand gathers as the most  
beautiful blossoms.

Shoveled aside as a weed, the first citizen Agapius  
Was received by the Lord as His son.

Ten martyrs, glorious men,

Now sing in eternity in the angelic choir.

Not all deaths are the same; all die, but for what?

Some of the dead are blessed and others cursed.

Who dies for Christ's sake--with him is a blessing;

Who dies persecuting Christ--with him is a curse.

### **March 21**

#### **SAINT JAMES, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR**

Neither the place of his birth nor the place where James served as bishop are known. Only this is

known: he fulfilled the law of Christ and spent much time laboring ascetically in strict fasting and prayer. During the reign of Copronymos, James endured great hardships and suffering, such as hunger, imprisonment and ridicule of all sorts at the hands of the iconoclasts. Finally, he gave up his soul to God, Whom he had faithfully served in this life. He lived and suffered in the eighth century.

### **March 26**

#### **THE HOLY ARCHANGEL GABRIEL**

Gabriel is the herald of the Incarnation of the Son of God. He is one of the seven archangels who stand before the throne of God. He appeared to Zacharias to announce the birth of the Forerunner. Gabriel said of himself: *I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God* (Luke 1:19). His name Gabriel means "man-God." The Holy Fathers, in speaking about the Annunciation, comment that an archangel with such a name was sent to signify Who He was, and what He would be like, Who would be born of the All-pure One. He would be the God-man, the mighty and powerful God. Some of the Fathers understood that this same Gabriel appeared to Joachim and Anna concerning the birth of the Virgin Mary, and that Gabriel instructed Moses in the wilderness to write the Book of Genesis. The Holy Fathers say that Gabriel belongs to the first and greatest order of heavenly powers, that is, the Seraphim, since the Seraphim stand closest to God. He is, therefore, one of the seven Seraphim closest to God. The names of the seven are Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Salathiel, Jegudiel, and Barachiel. To this number some add Jeremiel. Each one has his own particular service and all are equal in honor. Why did God not send Michael? Because Michael's service is to suppress the enemies of the Faith of God, while Gabriel's is the mission of announcing the salvation of mankind.

### **Parish & Organizations News**

#### **Antiochian Women of St. Mark**

The ladies had their monthly meeting on February 17, total attendance were 16.

Valentine Dinner Dance was a big success. President Denise gave thanks to everyone who attended the dance and to everyone who donated items to the auction.

March is Antiochian Women Month, the ladies will be responsible to serve church by reading the Epistles and Ushering, every woman is welcome to read and usher during March.

On March 24 our ladies organization will be putting on a delicious Lenten luncheon after church, with Lubia and rice, hummus, Arabic salad, bread, fresh fruit and a Lenten desserts. Please come and enjoy this luncheon together and all proceeds will be donated to Antiochian Charities of America.

Bake Sale is planned on April 21, 2019 chaired by President Denise, selling Spinach Pies.

Pascha breakfast is on April 28th, a sign-up sheet will be prepared.

***Submitted by Vera Bahbah***

#### **Men's Club**

Men's Club had the February 2019: Super Bowl viewing event at Church Hall and it was enjoyed by all.

End of Spring 2019: Fund raising Event June 1, Hafli.

September 2019: Tarneeb Tournament

***From the Report sent to Parish Council***

#### **Teen SOYO**

President Jillian Goson; Treasurer Diana Aldada; Vice President Amanda Khoury; Secretary Nicole Fakhouri;

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE PAST MONTH we did not have any special events in the past month. No official meeting was held this month; however, informal discussions between officers have occurred.

PLANS FOR ENSUING MONTHS The officers have discussed of a multi-church Orthodox retreat at a ranch in Temecula that has been donated to us. This will possibly occur in June.

CHALLENGES FOR THIS ORGANIZATION we are trying to reach out to get our teens involved

***From the Report sent to Parish Council***

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Sleiman Aldada 3/11  
Diana Aldada 3/4  
Joseph Attalla 3/27  
Sarah Asaly 3/10  
Gisele Awayjan 3/24  
Anahid Azzouni 3/19  
Jacob Bahbah 3/1  
Nicholas Bahou 3/25  
Wally Batarseh 3/12  
Joiel Betar 3/18  
Lucy Billeh 3/20  
Samir Billeh 3/3  
Nuha Daher 3/20  
Mark El-Hinn 3/30  
Dina Elsayegh 3/30  
Nicole Fakhouri 3/1  
Katrina Fakhouri 3/26  
Carole Jo Goson 3/29  
Wetcka Haffty 3/19  
Sameer Hanna 3/17  
Amanda Hanna 3/25  
Fr. Patrick Irish 3/12  
Maurice Karkar 3/25  
Mitri Khamis 3/6  
Tanya Khamis 3/4  
Samir Khamis 3/20  
Amanda Khoury 3/5  
Melissa Khoury 3/19  
Najat Khury 3/20  
Elena Khury 3/29  
Jerri Mamey 3/26  
Nabil Mansour 3/24  
Linda Mokbel 3/31  
Liana Munayyer 3/3  
Walid Najjar 3/11  
Elizabeth Nassar 3/2  
Kyra Pelachik 3/2  
Daniel Rizkallah 3/16  
Deena Salameh 3/23  
Ramsey Samara 3/18  
Jamal Sayegh 3/3  
Samira Skaff 3/29  
Juliana Tannous (Turk) 3/4  
Richard Tierney 3/2  
Martha Toubbeh 3/30  
Isabella Turk 3/10  
Osama Turk 3/12

Michael Wakileh 3/23  
Lydia Wakileh 3/25  
Matthew Whitacre 3/19

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Samir & Maysa Azzam 3/4  
Carlos & Rhonda Rodriguez 3/1  
George & Martha Toubbeh 3/28

*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)***

**SAINT MARK ANTIOCHIAN  
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17840 SKY PARK CIRCLE  
IRVINE, CA 92614  
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