

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

Archpriest Michael Laffoon, Priest Patrick Irish

Protodeacon George Moubayed, Deacon Nicholas Mamey

Sub Deacon Athanasius Fakhouri

Parish Council Chairman: Austin Turk

Choir Director Barbara Scholl

Chanters: Jacob Bahbah, Mark Ellis,

Karim Youssef

Teen Advisor: Fatin Fakhouri



DECEMBER 25, 2020

**THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, GOD AND SAVIOR
JESUS CHRIST**

SPECIAL REFRAIN OF THE SECOND ANTIPHON

Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, who wast born of a Virgin, who sing to Thee, Alleluia.

ENTRANCE HYMN (instead of "Come let worship...")

Priest: Out of the womb, before the morning star have I begotten Thee: the Lord hath sworn and will not repent: thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedech.

People: Save us, O Son of God, who wast born of a Virgin, who sing to Thee, Alleluia.

HYMNS AFTER THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

All: Troparion of the Feast Tone in the Fourth Tone: Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shone to the world the light of wisdom. For by it those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to adore thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, glory to thee.

Kontakion for Christmas in the Third Tone: On this day the Virgin beareth the Transcendent in Essence; to the Unapproachable, the earth doth offer a small cave; Angels join in choir with shepherds in giving glory; with a star the Magi travel upon their journey; for our sakes is born a young Child, He that existed before the ages as God.

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Instead of "Holy God..." we sing "As many as have been baptized...."

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Prokeimenon (Psalm 65:4, 1): Let all the earth worship you and sing to you. Shout with joy to God, all the earth.

The reading from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians (4:4-7)

Brethren, when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son, into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So through God you are no longer a slave but a son. And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

Alleluia Verses (Psalms 18:1, 2) The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament proclaims the work of his hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night proclaims knowledge.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew (2:1-12)

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to

worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: `And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'"

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Quote from the Saints

He who denies that Mary gave birth to God will not see the glory of His Divinity, and he who denies that He was clothed in sinless flesh will receive neither salvation nor the life which was granted through his body. His very deeds give witness and His divine strength teaches the contemptuous that He is true God. And his sufferings give proof that he is true man.

St. Isaac the Syrian

December 25 through January 4 is a fast-free period.

Canned Food Drive

Low employment and homelessness continue to be significant problems, even in affluent Orange County. In light of this, the ongoing canned food collection of our parish is a small but important way to help. Please try to bring something to go in the collection barrel every week.

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.

A NOTE TO OUR VISTORS

Welcome to St. Mark's! We are pleased to have you here with us today. Please be informed that only those Orthodox Christians who are prepared through prayer, fasting, and the sacrament of confession should approach the Chalice for the Eucharist. The Orthodox Church does not practice "open communion" or intercommunion with other churches (non-Orthodox). If you have any questions concerning this, please talk to Father Michael before taking communion. Visitors are welcome to venerate the cross at the end of the service and to receive some of the blessed bread, if they so desire.

For Orthodox Christians to receive Holy Communion:

- You must be spiritually prepared and uphold the beliefs and moral teachings of the Church.
- You must keep the fast (Wednesday & Friday, and other fasting seasons)
- If married, your marriage must have been consecrated in the Orthodox Church.
- If (unfortunately) divorced, you must be formally restored to communion by the Church by confession and Episcopal decision.

If an Orthodox Christian has left the church, or has been absent from services for a long period, and is returning, he or she must see the priest prior to receiving the sacraments of the Church.

Today

Please make sure to pick up your 2021 calendar from the table by the bookstore. Please only one calendar per family.

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

No Services December 25 at St. Mark Church.

Next week

Thursday December 31

- 1. Feast of our Lord's Circumcision and St. Basil Day, Divine Liturgy 6:30 p.m. (Orthros 5:30 p.m.)**
- 2. Friday January 1, Church Office will be closed!**

Upcoming Services & Events

Tuesday January 5, Evening services for Holy Theophany. Divine Liturgy and Great Blessing of Waters: Orthros 5:30 p.m., Divine Liturgy 6:30 p.m. January 5 is a strict fasting day.

Monday January 6, Feast of Theophany.

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 Nativity of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

The incomprehensible and inexplicable Nativity of Christ came to pass when Herod the Great was reigning in Judea; the latter was an Ascalonite on his father's side and an Idumean on his mother's. He was in every way foreign to the royal line of David; rather, he had received his authority from the Roman emperors, and had ruled tyrannically over the Jewish people for some thirty-three years. The tribe of Judah, which had reigned of old, was deprived of its rights and stripped of all rule and authority. Such was the condition of the Jews when the awaited Messiah was born, and truly thus was fulfilled the prophecy which the Patriarch Jacob had spoken 1,807 years before: "A ruler shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince from his loins, until there come the things stored up for him; and he is the expectation of the nations" (Gen.49:10).

Thus, our Saviour was born in Bethlehem, a city of Judea, whither Joseph had come from Nazareth of Galilee, taking Mary his betrothed, who was great with child, that, according to the decree issued in those days by the Emperor Augustus, they might be registered in the census of those subject to Rome. Therefore, when the time came for the Virgin to give birth, and since because of the great multitude there was no place in the inn, the Virgin's circumstance constrained them to enter a cave which was near Bethlehem. Having as shelter a stable of irrational beasts, she gave birth there, and swaddled the Infant and laid Him in the manger (Luke 2:1-7). From this, the tradition has come down to us that when Christ was born He lay between two animals, an ox and an ass, that the words of the Prophets might be fulfilled: "Between two living creatures shalt Thou be known" (Abbacum 3:2), and "The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib" (Esaias 1: 3).

But while the earth gave the new-born Saviour such a humble reception, Heaven on high celebrated majestically His world-saving coming. A wondrous star, shining with uncommon brightness and following a strange course, led Magi from the East to Bethlehem to worship the new-born King. Certain shepherds who were in the area of Bethlehem, who kept watch while tending their sheep, were suddenly

surrounded by an extraordinary light, and they saw before them an Angel who proclaimed to them the good tidings of the Lord's joyous Nativity. And straightway, together with this Angel, they beheld and heard a whole host of the Heavenly Powers praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men" (Luke 2:8-14).

The Orthodox Greeting of the Feast

Christ is Born! Glorify Him!

Al-Masseeh Welida! Fa maj-iduh! (Arabic)

Christos Gennate! Dhoxasate! (Greek)

Hristos se Nashte! Maritzi-L! (Romanian)

Christos Rozhda yet'sya! Sla' vite Yego! (Slavonic)