

**THE APOSTLE**  
**MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**  
**MARCH 2021**  
**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**  
**Rev. Deacon Nicholas Mamey**  
**Sub-deacon: Athanasius Fakhouri**  
**Choir Director: Barbara Scholl**  
**Chanters: Jacob Bahbah, Mark Ellis, Theresa**  
**Joubran, Karim Youssef, Perry Ioannides**  
**Teen Advisor: Fatin Fakhouri**

**2019 – 2020 PARISH COUNCIL**

**Chairman Kristin Chala {22}**  
**Vice Chairman – Penny Skaff {22}**  
**Secretary – Jerri Lynn Mamey {21}**  
**Treasurer – Osama Kishek {23}**  
**Assistant Treasurers- Michael Khoury {21} &**  
**Imad Alchammas {23}**  
**Gisele Awayjan {23}**  
**Lew Malouf {21}**  
**Barbara Scholl {22}**  
**Tammy Qutami {21}**  
[Number in brackets is the member's last year of his  
or her current term]  
**Church School Co-Directors: Tammy Qutami and**  
**Kristin Chala**  
**Men's Club President: Ghassan Awayjan**  
**Antiochian Women of St. Mark President: Vera**  
**Bahbah**  
**Teen SOYO President: Nadim Youssef**

**Pastor's Corner**

As God would have it, Pascha falls on May 2 this year. Lent will begin on March 15. During this time between the Theophany and Lent, we will be working, caring for our children, studying in school, and continuing to live under the strictures prompted by the current pandemic. 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. In these stressful times we will benefit all the more through the spiritual discipline of the Great Fast.

*I challenge 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 starting March 8<sup>th</sup> we are in Cheese Week, the last week before Great Lent. 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 March 14<sup>th</sup>. Lent, the Great Fast begins the next day. *Most importantly, mark these days on your personal calendars, your family calendars, smart-phones, Day-Timers 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 Monday March 15 there will be 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, to prepare for the glorious Pascha. Confessions are heard after Vespers on Saturday evenings and (during Lent) after Friday Akathist Services, or by appointment.

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

*In His love,  
Fr. Michael*

**THE LENTEN FAST (Lent begins on March 15)**  
*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.*

**Feasts, Special Services and Events for  
March 2021**

March 7 Judgement Sunday (last day to eat meat)  
March 8-14, Cheese Week

March 15, Clean Monday – Start of Great Lent

**Weekly Lenten Services**

Monday Great Compline 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:30 p.m.

Friday Little Compline and Akathist Hymn 7:00 p.m. (through April 16)

Thursday March 25, Feast of the Annunciation: Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m., (Orthros 8:45 a.m.)

**April 2021 Advanced Calendar**

April 4 Veneration of the Cross

April 25, Entrance of the Lord into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday)

*Selected Feast of the Month*

**MARCH 25**

**THE ANNUNCIATION**

Six months after John the Forerunner's conception, the Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth, a town of Galilee, unto Mary the Virgin, who had come forth from the Temple a mature maiden (see Nov. 21). According to the tradition handed down by the Fathers, she had been betrothed to Joseph four months. On coming to Joseph's house, the Archangel declared: "Rejoice, thou Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." After some consideration, and turmoil of soul, and fear because of this greeting, the Virgin, when she had finally obtained full assurance concerning God's unsearchable condescension and the ineffable dispensation that was to take place through her, and believing that all things are possible to the Most High, answered in humility: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And at this, the Holy Spirit came upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her all-blameless womb, and the Son and Word of God, Who existed before the ages, was conceived past speech and understanding, and became flesh in her immaculate body (Luke 1:26-38).

Bearing in her womb the Uncontainable One, the blessed Virgin went with haste from Nazareth to the hill country of Judea, where Zacharias had his

dwelling; for she desired to find Elizabeth her kinswoman and rejoice together with her, because, as she had learned from the Archangel, Elizabeth had conceived in her old age. Furthermore, she wished to tell her of the great things that the Mighty One had been well-pleased to bring to pass in her, and she greeted Elizabeth and drew nigh to her. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, she felt her six-month-old babe, Saint John the Baptist, prophesied of the dawning of the spiritual Sun. Immediately, the aged Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and recognized her as the Mother of her Lord, and with a great voice blessed her and the Fruit that she held within herself. The Virgin also, moved by a supernatural rejoicing in the spirit, glorified her God and Savior, saying: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," and the rest, as the divine Luke hath recorded (1:39-55)

### Parish & Organization News

All of our Organization activities are suspended until the State restrictions on gatherings is lifted.

## 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  
 Waleed Bachawaty 3/23  
 Joiel Betar 3/18  
 Lucy Billeh 3/20  
 Samir Billeh 3/3  
 Habib Chala 3/1  
 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

Therese Kdeiss 3/11  
 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 Patel 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  
 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

*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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