

St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, Diocese of the West

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Church Office Hours: M-F, 10:00 am – 3:30 pm

Website: www.st-mark-church.org

Archpriest Michael Lalloo, Priest Patrick Irish

Protodeacon George Moubayed, Dn. Nicholas Maney, Sub Deacon Athanasius Fakhouri

Choir Director Barbara Scholl

Chanters: Jacob Bahbah, Mark Ellis, Theresa Joubran,

Karim Youssef

Church Office Secretary: Lydia Wakileh

Teen Advisor: Fatin Fakhouri



APRIL 5, 2020

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

ST. MARY OF EGYPT

LITURGY OF ST. BASIL

HYMNS AFTER THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

Troparion of the Resurrection in the First Tone: While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of life. Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ, glory to Thy kingdom, glory to Thy providence, O Thou Who alone art the lover of mankind.

Troparion of Saint Mary of Egypt in the Eighth Tone: In thee the image was preserved with exactness, O Mother; for taking up thy cross, thou didst follow Christ, and by thy deeds thou didst teach us to overlook the flesh, for it passeth away, but to attend to the souls since it is immortal. Wherefore, O righteous Mary, thy spirit rejoiceth with the Angels.

All: Troparion to St. Mark in the Fourth Tone: From thy childhood the light of truth enlightened thee, O Mark, and thou didst love the labor of Christ the Savior. Wherefore thou didst follow Peter with zeal and didst serve Paul as a fellow laborer and didst enlighten the world with thy holy Gospel.

Kontakion for the Theotokos in the Second Tone: O protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the Creator most constant: O despise not the suppliant voices of those who have sinned, but be thou quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession and speed thou to make supplication, thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.

Prokeimenon (Psalm 75.11,1) Tone 8: Make your vows and pay them to the Lord our God. God is known in Judah. His name is great in Israel.

The reading from Saint Paul's Letter to the Hebrews (9:11-14)

Brethren, Christ having appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; neither through the blood of goats and calves but through His own blood, entered in once for into the holy place, having found eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of bulls and goats and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Alleluia Verses (Psalm 94.1, 2) Tone 8: Come, let us rejoice in the Lord; Let us shout with jubilation unto God our Savior. Let us come into his presence in thanksgiving.

The Reading from the Gospel according to St. Mark (10:32-45)

At that time, Jesus took His twelve disciples, and began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and scourge him, and spit upon him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again."

And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him, and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And Jesus said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

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Holy Oblations are offered today by Anees, Brittany, Angelina, & Isabella and the Turk family for the soul of Reham the wife and the mother passed away two year, may her memory be eternal! and for all those on the frontlines of the struggle against COVID-19, especially doctors, nurses and all healthcare professionals, and of course for those who are seriously ill with this virus.

Until further notice, both Coffee Hour and Church School are cancelled.

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After the exclamation of the Ektenia of Fervent Supplication, "For thou art a merciful God..." we add the following

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest:

O God Almighty, Lord of heaven and earth, and of all creation visible and invisible, in thine ineffable goodness, look down upon us, thy people gathered in thy Holy Name. Be our helper and defender in this day of affliction. Thou knowest our weakness. Thou hearest our cry in repentance and contrition of heart. O Lord who lovest mankind, deliver us from the impending threat of the Corona Virus. Send thine angel to watch over us and protect us. Grant health and recovery to those suffering from this virus. Guide the hands of physicians and preserve those who are healthy. Enable us to continue to serve our suffering brothers and sisters in peace that together we may glorify thy most honorable and majestic name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

We then continue with the Second Litany of the Faithful.

Please remember in your prayers: Eleanor Wackeen, Jamal El-Sayegh, Francois & Maureen Maatouk, Tarek Fakhouri, Adele Bahbah, Paul Qaqundah, Theresa Joubran and the suffering people of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Palestine, Venezuela, Ukraine, and all people afflicted by violence and disease, especially those affected by the Coronavirus.

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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.

Today

Please remember that even in the midst of this difficult period, the expenses of the parish continue. It is important that we send in our donations and pledges via U.S. mail, or if you prefer to pay by credit card call the Church Office to set this up. We are working to keep our expenditures as low as possible until things return to a more normal state.

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.

This Week

Note that per the directive of our Metropolitan Archbishop, we are now only offering Holy Services on Friday evenings and Sunday mornings. Furthermore only the clergy and a few singers can be present.

Friday April 10, Little Compline with Canon of St. Lazrus 7:00 p.m.

Next Week

To Be Announced

Upcoming Services & Events

Note: The Lenten Retreat of the Antiochian Women schedule for April 3rd, 4th, & 5th has been cancelled.

The 57th Sweetheart Ball Saturday originally scheduled for April 25, has been postponed until Fall.

The 2020 Diocese of Los Angeles and the West Parish Life Conference, which was to be held in San Francisco July 1-5 is now cancelled.

Quote from the Saints

"Who of you that stand here could repeat [from memory] one Psalm, or any other portion of the divine Scriptures...and it is not this only that is the grievous thing, but that while ye are become so backward with respect to things spiritual, yet in regard of what belongs to Satan ye are more vehement than fire. Thus should any one be minded to ask of you songs of devils and impure effeminate melodies, he will find many that know these perfectly, and repeat them with much pleasure...it is because of this, that all things are turned upside down."

St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew

Fifth Sunday of Lent: St. Mary of Egypt

When Mary was only twelve years old, she left her parents and departed to Alexandria, where she lived a depraved life for seventeen years. Then, moved by curiosity, she went with many pilgrims to Jerusalem, that she might see the Exaltation of the venerable Cross. Even in the Holy City she gave herself over to every kind of licentiousness and drew many into the depth of perdition. Desiring to go into the church on the day of the Exaltation of the Cross, time and again she perceived a certain invisible power preventing her entrance, whereas the multitude of people about her entered unhindered. Therefore, wounded in heart by this, she decided to change her way of life and reconcile herself to God by means of repentance. Invoking our Lady the Theotokos as her protectress, she asked her to open the way for her to worship the Cross, and vowed that she would renounce the world. And thus, returning once again to the church, she entered easily. When she had worshipped the precious Wood, she departed that same day from Jerusalem and passed over the Jordan. She went into the inner wilderness and for forty-seven years lived a most harsh manner of life, surpassing human strength; alone, she prayed to God alone. Toward the end of her life, she met a certain hermit named Zosimas, and she related to him her life from the beginning. She requested of him to bring her the immaculate Mysteries that she might partake of them. According to her request, he did this the following year on Holy and Great Thursday. One year after this, Zosimas again went thither and found her dead, laid upon the ground, and letters written in the sand near her which said: "Abba Zosimas, bury here the body of wretched Mary. I died on the very day I partook of the immaculate Mysteries. Pray for me." Her death is reckoned by some to have taken place in 378, by some, in 437, and by others, in 522. She is commemorated also on the Fifth Sunday of Great Lent. Her life was recorded by Saint Sophronius of Jerusalem.



Lots on our Minds

We all have a lot on our minds as our lives are changing daily. First, big group settings were cancelled and postponed. Then we were told to keep things under fifty people. Then it was suggested keeping groups under ten. People are filled with worry and uncertainty. Friends are confined to their homes and can only reach out by social media. Other friends are allowed to still go out and about and are asking to hang out with us. Parents, neighbors and social media we tune into are talking non-stop about the Corona virus. It is consuming and changing our lives. But the question is, how can we still live and adjust and remain happy and healthy all at the same time. There is not one good answer. I can't wave a magic wand and let our lives go back to the way they were a month ago. I can not for sure say that a month from now we will all be back to our old way of life either. What we have to do is look for the good that can come out of this. When something is taken away from us, we want it back more than ever. We know we can't have it and we have a hard time understanding why. Our siblings are feeling this too. They are having a hard time not being in school. They are having a hard time with their dance lessons cancelled, piano lessons on Zoom instead of face to face, and now



their high school graduation is being postponed. Check in on each other and ask your siblings how they are doing. Help your family maintain a normal routine with breakfast, remote learning, lunch, chores, limited outdoor activities, dinnertime and evening routines. Think of ways you can help distract your parents and siblings by cooking meals together, taking a spur of the moment walk or hike or watching a new series on Netflix together. Look for the good in a very hard and uncertain situation. It isn't easy to do this but changing our mindset and knowing that our mind is something that we can control is one positive. We can control good thoughts. We can control looking out for our siblings. We can control talking to our parents about how we and they feel. We can and must be strong in this very hard time. We must forge on and know that it is only temporary and be grateful that we don't have to live like this every single day.

Bright Sadness

It is hard for us now to see the silver lining in our lives. Although spring is around the corner and Pascha is on the horizon, we want to feel bright and happy, but we also are filled with sadness. It is this same bright sadness that we feel during Holy Week. We are sad because we know that Jesus will suffer and die, but are happy knowing that on Pascha we celebrate His rising from the dead.



Thomas was wanting a break from his new way of life. Remote learning high school was not as much fun as going to school and seeing all his friends. He separated the blinds in his bedroom window. Mr. Benson was outside with a pile of mulch at least twice the size of Thomas. Sweat was dripping off his nose. His shirt was drenched and his face was red. Thomas read about people who died of a heart attack shoveling snow. He thought that Mr. Benson was too old to be doing that himself, so he texted a few other kids on the street to go help spread mulch. When the kids arrived, Mr. Benson handed out jobs and everyone got to work. He didn't make a big deal about their kindness but he sure did appreciate it. After two and a half hours of load after load after load, he brought out drinks and ice pops for the kids. They all sat down on the dirty driveway, six feet apart, and he asked why they all showed up. No one said anything. They all just shrugged and kept sipping down their blue sugary drink. Benson said he wanted to share a story with them about a man who paid it forward so much that he eventually lost his own life for it.

He began telling the kids about Pantoleon. Thomas thought the name sounded like the French word for pants, but he listened intently as Mr. Benson went on saying that Pantoleon was born to a Christian mom

and a pagan worshiping father. His mother was raising him in the church but when she died, he was sent to a pagan school where he studied medicine. Pantoleon's skills got the attention of the then emperor Maximian, who wanted to appoint him the royal physician after he finished up his schooling. Pantoleon was curious about the Christian faith after seeing a massacre of Christians that were secretly living in his town. A priest invited him to his house and spoke to him. Pantoleon visited him every day. One day on his way to visit the priest, he saw a child bitten by a snake lying dead on the street. He said a prayer asking God to bring the child back to life. He thought to himself that if the boy rose up he would become a Christian. The boy stood up alive and Pantoleon watched the snake die right before his eyes. This miracle changed his life. He was baptized and then upon his father's death, Pantoleon decided he would dedicate his life to those in need. He visited prisoners and helped heal their wounds. When the Emperor discovered all that Pantoleon was doing, he was brought in and told to offer a sacrifice to idols. Instead he asked that the most ill prisoner be brought before the emperor, asking that his physicians call upon their gods to heal the person and prove their worth. When they could not, Pantoleon asked God to heal the then paralyzed man and he stood up and walked away. The emperor was so mad that he had the man executed on the spot and ordered Pantoleon to be tortured. No matter what they did to him, he lived. He was scraped with hooks, tied to a tree, stretched on a rack, thrown into the sea with a boulder around his neck and thrown in boiling tar. He lived through all these tortures. Eventually he was taken to be beheaded. Tied to an olive tree, a sword was struck at him and the sword turned to wax. As the saint prayed, the soldiers's eyes filled with tears as they killed him. The tree immediately blossomed with tons of olives. All who saw this believed and became Christians too. We know him today as St. Panteleimon.

Doing good sometimes comes with a price. Yours may be a blister or a stiff back by tomorrow morning. Some were not as lucky as you when they did good deeds for others. "But I am grateful for you all," Mr. Benson said with a smile. "Say a prayer for all those doctors out there when you lay your head down tonight. Ask St. Panteleimon to intercede for them all!" The kids all said they would and went back to their school work with lots to think about.

In the Spotlight

The great martyr and healer Panteleimon is a saint that is celebrated in the Orthodox church on July 27th each year. He is the patron saint of all doctors, nurses, and anyone working in the medical field. St. Panteleimon dedicated his life to those who were suffering from illness and those who were sick. He helped people who couldn't afford to be treated and he didn't ask for pay in return. He visited prisoners and healed the wounds they received from being tortured. Pretty soon, word spread in town that Panteleimon was the best doctor around and townspeople began to seek treatment only from him. This angered other doctors and they had him thrown in jail and eventually killed.



The Great Martyr Demetrios

The Great Martyr Demetrios is the patron saint for young people. When we pray to God through St. Demetrios we can ask him to pray to help us in this time of uncertainty. St. Demetrios was no stranger to uncertain times. He was born into a well-to-do family from Macedonia and had much nobility in his family. His family was admired for being smart, good hearted, and God-loving people.

He was trained as a military leader in the Eastern Empire in the 300's. Eventually he was appointed to be the commander of Roman forces under a ruler who was a pagan and worshiped idols. This ruler, Galerius Maximian, persecuted all Christians. Demetrios didn't hide his faith even though he knew full well the Emperor's point of view. Demetrios loved learning about his faith and teaching that faith to others. It is said that people saw the way Demetrios acted and spoke and knew that his faith was from his heart. He converted many people to Christianity.

After a major war victory, the emperor was on his way back to Rome when he stopped off in Demetrios's city, Thessalonica. There he wanted to make a sacrifice of thanks to the idols there. His officers, knowing that it was Demetrios's city, and being jealous of how much he was loved by all, threw him

under the bus to the emperor by saying that he was a Christian. Maximian was shocked to find out that one of his very own was a Christian and ordered him to be locked up in a bathhouse in town. While in town, Maximian arranged for a gladiator combat game to take place. He had a giant, strong warrior that he challenged anyone to fight. A youth named Nestor wanted to stand up for Demetrios and also against the emperor. He went to Demetrios and asked him for permission to fight and to pray to God for his safety. When Nestor entered the arena, everyone laughed at the young boy like David against Goliath. But when the gladiator charged towards him, he asked for help from the God of Demetrios. Then he stepped aside and thrust a knife into the giant's heart killing him instantly.

Upon seeing the sight and hearing Nestor's prayer, the Emperor ordered his immediate arrest and beheading. Then he ordered soldiers to go to Demetrios's cell and kill him with their swords and spears. When they did, there were some nearby Christians who came and took his body for burial. When they carried him away, they said that his body flowed with a beautiful scent like myrrh. After his death, many people in Thessalonica were healed from sickness and disease upon the intercessions of St. Demetrios.

Christ is Risen...

With the reality facing us that we might be stuck at home this Pascha, how can we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord? Well there are many sites where you can watch services online. Antiochian Village is one place where you can watch through Facebook live. <https://www.facebook.com/AntiochianVillage/> Holy Transfiguration Monastery is another a place to catch up on services that you've missed out on. <https://www.youtube.com/user/EllwoodCityChapel/videos>. Things seem all out of whack, and we will be missing the services at our home parishes. We will miss kissing the winding sheet and holding our candles in procession as we walk around the church three times in the dark. We will miss eating with our friends and family at the paschal feast. We will miss cracking eggs and going on egg hunts. It is one-hundred percent normal to miss these things and be sad if we actually can't celebrate Pascha in church this year. We wouldn't be normal if we didn't miss what is familiar to us. But there is something that we must still be aware of. Even if we can't go to church for Easter services, it doesn't mean that Christ isn't risen. If we are in church on Pascha or not, we can still celebrate in the joy that Christ triumphantly marched through the streets of Jerusalem on a donkey. People shouted that he was their king. Then a few days later, that king was put on trial, sentenced to death, crucified on a cross and placed in a tomb. Then early in the morning, when the women went to anoint Him with spices, they found an angel sitting by the empty tomb. We can still proclaim their words of HE IS RISEN to everyone...even if it is through a video chat, on social media, or over text messages. Being stuck at home doesn't change the fact that Christ is Risen!!!



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The Baba and Yiayia Corner

"Do you believe in miracles, Baba?" Sophie asked. Baba said that she did and did even before she herself experienced a miracle. She said that one day she was lost when she first came to the United States. She couldn't find her way and she stopped at a gas station to ask for directions. When she walked in, there was a man standing behind the counter that looked exactly like her father, though her father was long dead. He began to tell her where to go and his voice was just like she remembered her father's voice to be. When she left, she felt shivers all over her body and couldn't remember the directions he gave her. So she went back in to ask again and there was a different man there. She asked where the other man was and she was told by this second man that he was the only one working today. He wrote down directions for her and she was on her way. She told Sophie that it was God, bringing her memories of her father. She can't explain it, it is just a miracle.

"Speaking of miracles," Yiayia interjected, "Have you heard about St. Demetrios? Back in the old country I met a priest who experienced a miracle firsthand. His

name is Fr. Christos and he was a deacon at the time. It was at least thirty years ago when he was in church in October for the feast of St. Demetrios. A bunch of ladies were chanting the vespers stichera for the saint when he heard one of the ladies shriek. He came out of the altar to see the women pointing to the silver casket of the saint that they were kneeling in front of. They couldn't talk. Pouring out of the casket was what seemed like gallons of the most beautifully scented myrrh. He ran to get a cotton ball to wipe it up and where he wiped, more myrrh appeared. The scent was so strong that it filled the whole church and poured out into the street. People that passed by were attracted by the smell and walked into the church as well. Soon people with tears streaming down their cheeks came in from all over venerating the casket of St. Demetrios, their beloved saint." "Wow that is a very powerful story Yiayia!" Sophie exclaimed. "Well, honey, it is not a story. It is real and shows us that our faith is truly alive and God is present in our lives through the saints. So yes, I too believe in miracles!"

Books Books Books

Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson is a timeless book that is just what the doctor ordered. This book, (and its multiple versions on YouTube which you MUST check into) are inspiring. With just a crayon in hand, Harold's whole world opens up to him. In this time of boredom, uncertainty, frustration, and wonder, let's turn that energy into a journey for our mind, heart and soul. Take a piece of paper. With a purple crayon, or anything that writes for that matter, close your eyes and make one line all over the paper. Move the crayon extremely slowly, making some lines straight, some sharp and some curvy as they overlap and intersect. After about 30 turtle slow seconds, take the crayon off the paper. Look at your creation. You will see things emerge from the lines that are hiding inside. Your story will unfold right before your eyes. It's a fun distraction that will give you hours of storytelling possibilities, just like Harold's purple crayon brought to him...but don't just take my word for it!