

St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese, Diocese of the West

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Archpriest Michael Laffoon, Priest Patrick Irish

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Karim Youssef

Teen Advisor: Fatin Fakhouri



JANUARY 2, 2022

**FOREFEAST OF & SUNDAY BEFORE THEOPHANY OF CHRIST SYLVESTER, POPE
OF ROME; COSMAS THE WONDERWORKER, ARCHBISHOP OF
CONSTANTINOPLE; REPOSE OF VENERABLE SERAPHIM OF SAROV**

HYMNS AFTER THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

Troparion for the Resurrection, in the Third Tone: Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

Troparion of the Forefeast in Fourth Tone: Make ready, O Zebulon, and prepare, O Nephtali, and thou, River Jordan cease thy flow and receive with joy the Master coming to be baptized. And thou, Adam, rejoice with the first mother, and hide not yourselves as ye did of old in paradise; for having seen you naked, he appeared to clothe you with the first robe. Yea, Christ hath appeared desiring to renew the whole creation.

Troparion of St. Seraphim of Sarov in the Fourth Tone: Thou didst love Christ from thy youth, O blessed one, and ardently desiring to work for Him alone, thou didst struggle in the wilderness with constant prayer and labor; and having acquired love for Christ with compunction of heart, thou didst prove to be the beloved favorite of the Mother of God. Wherefore, we cry to thee: Save us by thy prayers, O Seraphim, our Holy Father

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 Forefeast in the Fourth Tone: Today hath the Lord appeared in the streams of the Jordan, crying out to John and saying: Fear not to baptize me, for I have come to save Adam, the first created.

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Prokeimenon (Psalm 27:9,1) O Lord, save thy people and bless thine inheritance. Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my God.

The reading from Saint Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy (4:4-8)

My son Timothy, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

For I am already on the point of being sacrificed; the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.

Alleluia Verses (Psalm 66:1) May God be merciful to us and bless us. May he cause his face to shine upon us and have mercy on us.

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark (1:1-8)

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight -- "

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And there went out to him all the country of Judea, and all the people of Jerusalem; and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leather girdle around his waist, and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

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Holy Oblations are given today by Paula Rodriguez and her children Leilah and Paul for husband and father Tony, who is recovering from shoulder (rotator cuff) surgery and by Emilie Laffoon for the soul of her cousin Robert Simon, departed this life 11 yrs.

Coffee Hour today is given by the Coffee Hour Committee

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Please remember in your prayers: Yuri Sidorenko, Therese Joubran, May Dabbah, Sylvia Saba, Tarek Fakhouri, Adib and Nabila Zabaneh, Fouad and Mary Farraj (kidney transplant), Laura Anter (brain surgery) and

the suffering people of Haiti, India, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, Somalia, Palestine, Venezuela, Ukraine, and all people afflicted by violence and disease, especially those affected by the Coronavirus.

Note: According to the recent CDC guidelines, if you are fully vaccinated, you need not wear a mask in church or in the hall. If you are not, you should wear a mask. A social distancing area has been set aside in the church on the left side (as one faces the altar).

Today

Please make sure to pick up your 2022 calendar from the table by the bookstore.

Holy Land religious gifts are offered for sale by Roni Hannouneh. Proceeds benefit our church.

This Week

Wednesday January 5, Orthros (5:30 p.m.), Divine Liturgy and Great Blessing of Waters (6:30 p.m.) for the Feast of Theophany

We are in a fast free season. There is no fasting from Christmas Day through January 4th. January 5 is a strict fasting day.

Next week

Sunday January 9, SOYO sponsored trip to LA Clippers game. See Fatin Fakhouri to reserve tickets.

Upcoming Services & Events

**Tuesday January 11, Ladies (Antiochian Women) Holiday Dinner
Adult Education Tuesday classes will resume on January 18.**

Quote from the Saints

As it is impossible to verbally describe the sweetness of honey to one who has never tasted honey, so the goodness of God cannot be clearly communicated by way of teaching if we ourselves are not able to penetrate into the goodness of the Lord by our own experience.

St. Basil the Great

Today's Commemoration

The Venerable Seraphim of Sarov (January 2)

Seraphim was one of the greatest Russian ascetics, clairvoyant elders and miracle-workers. He was born in 1759 A.D. and he reposed in 1833 A.D. Seraphim was distinguished by great humility. When the entire world praised him, he referred to himself as "the wretched Seraphim."

In 1777, at the age of 19, he joined the Sarov monastery as a novice (*poslushnik*). He was officially tonsured (took his monastic vows) in 1786 and given the religious name of Seraphim (which means "fiery" or "burning" in Hebrew). Shortly afterwards, he was ordained a hierodeacon (monastic deacon). In 1793, he was ordained as a hieromonk (monastic priest) and became the spiritual leader of the Diveyevo Convent, which has since come to be known as the Seraphim-Diveyevo Convent.

Soon after this, Seraphim retreated to a log cabin in the woods outside Sarov monastery and led a solitary lifestyle as a hermit for 25 years. During this time his feet became swollen to the point that he had trouble walking. Sarov's eating and fasting habits became more strict.^[2] At first he ate bread obtained from the monastery and vegetables from his garden, then only vegetables. For three years, he ate only grass.^[2]

One day, while chopping wood, Seraphim was attacked by a gang of thieves who beat him mercilessly with the handle of his own axe. He never resisted, and was left for dead. The robbers never found the money they sought, only an icon of the Theotokos (Virgin Mary) in his hut. Seraphim had a hunched back for the rest of his life. However, at the thieves' trial he pleaded to the judge for mercy on their behalf.

"After this incident, Seraphim spent 5 months in the monastery, recovering, and there again returned to the desert, for the former spiritual feats."

After this incident Seraphim spent 1,000 successive nights on a rock in continuous prayer with his arms raised to the sky, a feat of asceticism deemed miraculous by the Eastern Orthodox Church, especially considering the pain from his injuries.

In 1815, in obedience to a reputed spiritual experience that he attributed to the Virgin Mary, Seraphim began admitting pilgrims to his hermitage as a confessor. He soon became immensely popular due to his reputation for healing powers and gift of prophecy. Hundreds of pilgrims per day visited him, drawn as well by his ability to answer his guests' questions before they could ask.

As extraordinarily harsh as Seraphim often was to himself, he was kind and gentle toward others — always greeting his guests with a prostration, a kiss, and exclaiming "Christ is risen!", and calling everyone "My joy". He died while kneeling before an *Umilenie* icon of the Theotokos which he called "Joy of all Joys". This icon is kept currently in the chapel of the residence of the Patriarch of Moscow.

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 on Sundays or use the new mobile app, RaiseRight by ShopWithScrip, is simply the right way to fundraise. Just make sure to choose "E-Gift Card" and you will have it in your email in less than a minute. Let's start shopping and earning money for your favorite church, St Mark Irvine! Get the app: <https://www.raiseright.com/> **USE THE ENROLLMENT CODE LFA187LD11116***