

THE APOSTLE
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 2022
ST. 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
17840 Sky Park Circle
Irvine, CA 92614-6407
Tel: (949) 851-8933
Fax: (949) 851-0010
Email: frmlaffoon@gmail.com
Website: www.st-mark-church.org

Very Rev. Father Michael Laffoon, Pastor
Residence phone: (949) 559-6133
Rev. Fr. Patrick Irish, Attached
Rev. Protodeacon George Moubayed
Sub-deacon: Athanasius Fakhouri
Choir Director: Barbara Scholl
Chanters: Jacob Bahbah, Mark Ellis, Theresa
Joubran, Karim Youssef
Teen Advisor: Fatin Fakhouri

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[Number in brackets is the member's last year of his
or her current term]

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Teen SOYO President: Nour Youssef

Advisor: Fatin Fakhouri

PASTOR'S CORNER

The Muskox Response To COVID-19

Fr. Michael Gillis, pastor of Holy Nativity Antiochian
Orthodox Church, Langley British Columbia.

Last night I watched an episode of Dr. Oakley,
Yukon Vet on Disney Plus. It was about Dr.
Oakley treating a muskox. The episode is
called, "One Angry Muskox." In order to treat
this animal, they had to tranquilize it, but before
they could tranquilize it, they had to separate it
from the herd. And the reason they had to
separate it is what I want to talk about. They
had to separate it from the herd to tranquilize it
because if the (male) muskox were to fall
down, the other muskox would take advantage
of the opportunity to attack it, injuring or killing
it.

My first reflection on hearing this was, "How
terrible these animals are!" However, on
further reflection, I saw that these muskox are
only mimicking human behavior—or worse yet,
human beings are only mimicking the worst
aspects of animal behavior.

I think the reason this idea hit me so profoundly
is that in the past three days I have had no less
than five pastoral conversations with people
deeply troubled by the rending of friendships
and family relationships due to differing
opinions about how best to respond to COVID-
19.

It seems in so many situations we have
forgotten to be Christians. We have forgotten
that good, well intentioned people may not
always see eye to eye (such as the Jewish and
Gentile Christians in the New Testament). We
have forgotten that our Kingdom is not of this
world, but is a Kingdom of righteousness and
peace in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). We

have forgotten that mercy triumphs over justice (James 2: 13).

We all want a just and safe society, and if human beings could easily agree on what that looked like, there would be no need for mercy, no need for patience or the bearing of the burden of others—that is, to bear the burden that the other often is. If human beings easily agreed with one another, Jesus wouldn't have to tell us to go the extra mile, turn the other cheek, or love our enemies.

Fear and anger, however, seem to trump common sense and faith in God. Fear and anger open in us a floodgate of animal passions making it seem appropriate to demonize (or de-humanize) those we disagree with. Fear and anger release our inner muskox ready to trample those who are less clear thinking than we are, less concerned for liberty or the common good than we are, less eager to create a just and safe society than we are—or at least that's how it appears to us. And we don't have time to listen, truly listen, to one another. Fear and anger create urgency so that we don't have time to listen, we don't have time to care, we don't have time to be Christians.

We all have acquaintances, friends and family with whom we disagree, about our response to COVID-19, or about a thousand other very difficult and very important matters. Will these disagreements trump our faith? Will we love and be kind and generous and patient when it is most difficult to be so? Or will fear and anger (and maybe a bit of self-righteousness) open the floodgate of the inner muskox?

**Feasts, Special Services and Events for
February 2022**

February 2, Feast of Meeting of the Lord in the Temple

February 13-19 Fast-Free Week

February 24, 1st & 2nd Discovery of the Head of St. John the Baptist

February 27, Judgement (Meatfare) Sunday

February 28, Start of Cheese Week

March 2022 Advanced Calendar

March 6, Forgiveness Sunday (end of Cheese Week)

Monday March 7, Pure Monday (First day of Great Lent.

March 13, 1st Sunday of Lent (Sunday of Orthodoxy)

March 25, Feast of the Annunciation

February 27, Judgement (Meatfare) Sunday

**SELECTED SAINT
OF THE MONTH**

Theodore the Commander & Great Martyr
(February 17)

The holy Martyr Theodore was from Euchaita of Galatia and dwelt in Heraclea of Pontus. He was a renowned commander in the military, and the report came to the Emperor Licinius that he was a Christian and abominated the idols. Licinius therefore sent certain men to him from Nicomedia, to honor him and ask him to appear before him. Through them, however, Saint Theodore sent back a message that it was necessary for various reasons, that Licinius come to Heraclea. Licinius, seeing in this a hope of turning Saint Theodore away from Christ did as was asked of him.

When the Emperor came to Heraclea, Saint Theodore met him with honor, and the Emperor in turn gave Theodore his hand, believing that through him he would be able to draw the Christians to the worship of his idols. Seated upon his throne in the midst of the people, he publicly bade Theodore offer sacrifice to the gods. But Theodore asked that the emperor entrust him with the most venerable of his gods, those of gold and silver, that he might take them home and himself attend upon them that evening, promising that the following day he would honor them in public. The Emperor, filled with joy at these tidings, gave command that Theodore's request be fulfilled.

When the Saint had taken the idols home, he broke them in pieces and distributed the gold and silver to the poor by night. The next day a centurion named Maxentius told Licinius that he had seen a pauper pass by carrying the head of Artemis. Saint Theodore, far from repenting of this, confessed Christ boldly. Licinius, in an uncontrollable fury, had the Saint put to many torments, then crucified. While upon the cross, the holy Martyr was further tormented -- his privy parts were cut off, he was shot with arrows, his eyes were put out, and he was left on the cross to die. The next day Licinius sent men to take his corpse and cast it into the sea; but they found the Saint alive and perfectly whole. Through this, many believed in Christ. Seeing his own men turning to Christ, and the city in an uproar, Licinius had Theodore beheaded, about the year 320. The Saint's holy relics were returned to his ancestral home on June 8, which is also a feast of the Great Martyr Theodore.

PARISH & ORGANIZATION NEWS

Teen SOYO

No activities are planned for February. March events TBA.

Antiochian Women of St. Mark

The ladies are busy making plans for March, which is Women's Month.

St. Mark Men's Club

No activities are planned for February. March events TBA.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- Jessica Alchammas 2/26
- Samir Artoul 2/2
- May Asaly 2/15
- Ivana Awayjan 2/27
- Joseph Azzam 2/15
- Maryse Benjamin 2/17
- Matt Beyrooty 2/22
- Sarah Chade 2/17
- George Chala 2/6
- Vladimir Chendler 2/3
- Randy Dabbah 2/18
- Samira Eissa 2/1
- Kevin Fortuna 2/22

- Jamie Hanna 2/13
- Gellan Kashou 2/20
- Sammy Khamis 2/17
- Diana Khamis 2/19
- Charlotte Khoury 2/15
- Amanda Khury 2/12
- Simon Kishek 2/2
- Adel Munayyer 2/13
- Danice Najjar 2/22
- Lori Nour 2/10
- Tanya Richards 2/2
- Rebekah Rodriguez 2/16
- Mae Sakhel-Qushair 2/12
- Nuha Qushair 2/10
- Tammy Qutami 2/25
- Robert Ranney 2/14
- Kimla Ranney 2/24
- Paula Rodriguez 2/6
- Najib Saadeh 2/18
- George Saba 2/2
- Siham Saba 2/10
- Yacoub Saba 2/17
- Nabeel Salameh 2/16
- Daniel Scholl 2/10
- Sebastian Skaff 2/6
- Michael Souri 2/25
- Andre Terzian 2/25
- Brenda Tax 2/13
- Melanie Tierney 2/22
- Tina Tomeo 2/19

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

- Tony & Maryse Benjamin 2/23
- Fr. Patrick & Nina Irish 2/6
- Antoune & Mayssoun Khoury 2/10
- Ramzi & Randa Salameh 2/14
- Don Jr. & Penny Skaff 2/14

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**

Turn your shopping list into fundraising

- **Discover new earning opportunities every day**
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- **Easily browse brands offering bonus earnings**
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*The Apostle is a monthly newsletter of St. Mark Antiochian Orthodox Church. **Parish Organizations are to submit articles by the 15th of the month to the Church office (949-851-8933)***

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IRVINE, CA 92614
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