



THE Message



SAINT MARK

SAINT MARK GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH · WWW.SAINTMARKBOCA.NET · 561.994.4822

FEB. – MARCH 2018



Lenten Focus: 10 Ways to Stop Gossip

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"Tools for Theosis," and Other Lenten Events

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2018 FESTIVAL SMASHES RECORDS!

We made it! The 2018 Saint Mark Greek Festival came to a close last week with record-breaking success!!! We express our deep gratitude to Joe Pores for chairing this year's Festival and to Dawn Riger for all of her efforts. We also thank the many volunteers who helped make this year's Festival the best it has ever been. While the Festival is our biggest fundraiser at Saint Mark, we know that the greatest blessing of the Festival is the bringing together of our faithful in the common goals of service, outreach and prayer. May God bless our Saint Mark family and allow us to continue witnessing the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Photo Highlights from the 2018 Greek Festival on the Back Page...

SAINT MARK: METROPOLIS CHAMPIONS!



This winter was a banner season for Saint Mark youth ministries. Our Men's basketball team took home the Senior Division Title, and 3rd Place (out of 41 teams) in Bible Bowl at the 2017 Metropolis Winter Youth Rally. A few weeks later our Syrtaki dance groups took home equally high honors at the 2018 Metropolis Hellenic Dance Festival. The Junior dance team (*pictured bottom right*) earned the bronze medal, while the Senior team (*pictured top right*) was awarded the top prize in their division.

Coverage from Both Metropolis Events on Pages 4 & 5...

The Message is an in-print outreach to the Orthodox Christian community of Boca Raton and the greater South Florida region. This publication aims to inform, edify, and serve as a witness to its readers of the Truth of Jesus Christ as confirmed in the Holy Gospel.

The Message is a ministry of:



Clergy:

Rev. Fr. Mark Leondis, Pastor
 Rev. Fr. Steven Klund, Associate
 Rev. Fr. Alexander Leondis, Protopresbyter
 Rev. Dn. John Christakis, MD
 Rev. Dn. Bryan Giusti

Office Staff:

Dawn Riger, Parish Administrator
 Ana Voicu & McKenzie Marsch

Church Maintenance:

Yosban Pazbalino & Alex Paleologos

Office Volunteers:

Sophia Hamrick, Marlene Buettner, Pres. Mary Leondis, Debbie Fread, Kay Poly, Kalle Andromidas

Parish Council: Girard Mitchell

Philoptochos: Niki Core

Choir: Virginia Barnes

Chanters: Art Poly, Ramona Bean, George Demopoulos

Ushers: Tim Sharp

Acolytes:

Tom Bean, Sean Gibson & Constantine Mukasa

Church School:

Helen Lang & Julie Vagelos

JOY: Despina Hantzaridis, Vivian Lazaridis, Erin & Rick Kontos

GOYA: Dominique Cultrera, Elaine Cotronakis, Lynn & Costa Athan, Angela & Girard Mitchell, Jim & Claudia Dovas, Nicole Pelekanos

Seniors: Diane Paterakis

Syrtaki:

Jenny Saiger & Tasia Christakis

Greek School: Anna Kaiser

Bookstore: Yvette Koutsoupis, Barbara Tasiounes, Stella Pores

Welcome: Elaine Zographus

Readers: Ted Vagelos

The Message: Fr. Steven Klund

Live Streaming:

Ted Vagelos & Nick Csakany

Audio: Tom Spiliopoulos



Recently the Saint Mark GOYA ministry took a trip up to Saint Augustine, Florida to participate in a spiritual retreat at OCMC headquarters and Saint Photios Shrine. One of our GOYANs, Baylee Brochu, was gracious enough to write the following recap of the weekend retreat.

Growing up in the Greek Orthodox Church, we learn a lot about Christ's teachings and how important it is to live a life filled with purpose. But sometimes, opportunities and experiences come along that drive this important message home better than any classroom lecture or textbook lesson. The OCMC Mission trip our GOYA group took to St. Augustine on Oct. 7-8, 2017, was one of those opportunities.

After one of our group discussions with Father Mark and the OCMC leaders, my friends and I were so inspired by what we talked about that

we looked at our leftovers from dinner in a new way. We intended to bring the food back to the hotel, but as we walked to the bus, we passed several homeless men on the streets of St. Augustine, and we were moved. These were God's children, and they were in need, and the leftovers suddenly seemed like they'd be wasted on us. We were so touched by the looks on their faces when we stopped and handed them the food.

During that weekend, I got to share some meaningful bonding time with my fellow St. Mark GOYANs. We had fun talks, had a great time at the beach, and we even got some homework done together. But what stuck with me, more than anything else, was what I learned, not just about our Orthodox faith, but the mission to give back, especially in the name of God. It was an experience I'll never forget.

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

The Oratorical Festival is coming up fast! While the speeches aren't given until the Spring, the best speeches are the ones that are started in the Fall. Get started today. This is an excellent opportunity to practice and perfect essential, public speaking skills.

Saint Mark Oratorical Festival - March 4, 2018 after Liturgy

PARISH COUNCIL - GIRARD MITCHELL

On January 7, 2018, Father Mark administered the Oath of Office for the 2017-2018 Parish Council. The Affirmation of Office was conducted in the Sanctuary within the Divine Liturgy, as we all gathered as one body in Christ.

The twelve Council members met the Clergy on the solea where they placed their hand on the Gospel and affirmed their willingness to follow the teaching and traditions of the Orthodox Christian Faith and the regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Following the affirmation, the new Parish Council approached the Chalice as one body, and received the Holy Eucharist as a symbol of their unity in Christ. Following the Divine Liturgy and Epiphany Luncheon the Parish Council met in the Library to select their 2018 Officers (*listed to the right*).

Together with the other members of the

Council (Ramona Bean, Riad Boulos, Dominique Cultrera, George



Douglas, John Koutsoupis, Harry Mirabile, Bill Skoundridakis,) they will serve and represent the faithful of our Saint Mark family. We ask you to keep the Clergy and Parish Council in prayer!

- Girard Mitchell President
- Jim Dovas 1st Vice President
- Joe Pores 2nd Vice President
- Lynn Athan Treasurer
- Ted Vagelos Secretary

PASTORAL MESSAGE
Rev. Fr. Mark Leondis



My dear faithful,

Christ is among us; He is and shall always be!

As we prepare ourselves to enter this 40-day journey toward Holy Week and Pascha (Easter), I am truly thankful for the blessings that our Lord bestows on us (seen or unseen; known or unknown) daily. I thank our Lord for the faithful Clergy who surround our Holy Altar; for the Altar Boys who serve regularly; for the Choir and Chanters who offer their God-given talents to our Lord; for our Ushers and Welcome Committee who help keep order in the church; and for the hundreds of faithful who worship with us each and every Sunday. We are a Christ-centered, worshipping parish that places our focus on our Savior.

We have so many activities and events happening at Saint Mark, there is something for everyone. During the 40-day period, we are called to “slow down” on our activities and place a greater focus on Christ. We are called to attend the extra services of the Church (prayer); curbe the foods we intake and the things we watch (fasting); and offer ourselves to our fellow human (almsgiving).

These three pillars (prayer, fasting and almsgiving) are the mark of a Christian during this Lenten season. To truly experience Lent and Pascha, we must make a concerted effort to grow closer to Him through these spiritual disciplines.

I highly encourage you to become more active in your Faith during this Lenten period: forgive, fast, pray, help others and offer yourselves to your fellow human being. Become a more Christ-centered individual; one who not only “talks the talk” but “walks the walk.” Be the person that God created us to be and you will find true fulfillment in Him.

We are here to assist you on your journey toward Pascha and pray that you take advantage of the great tools of our Faith.

Father Mark

Blessed Lent!

The season of Great Lent is the time of preparation for the coming Resurrection of Christ. It is a chance for all believers to renew their devotion and commitment through increased prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (acts of mercy). Great Lent is a penitential time, but not a morbid one. We should joyfully rededicate our lives according to Christ and His teachings, and most of all, re-apply ourselves to the Great Commandment of loving God and our neighbors.

Saint Mark offers an array of opportunities to help us grow closer to God during this season. We encourage frequent participation in our services, as well as the Sacrament of Confession. If you are interested in participating in this blessed sacrament, call Dawn Riger at the Church Office (561 994 4822) in order to schedule an appointment with Fr. Mark.

February 19 - Clean Monday

It all begins on Clean Monday, February 19, 2018. We will once again be offering the Sacrament of Holy Unction at 5:30 pm. Before the service begins, Confession will be made available beginning at 3:30 pm. Call the office to schedule an appointment.

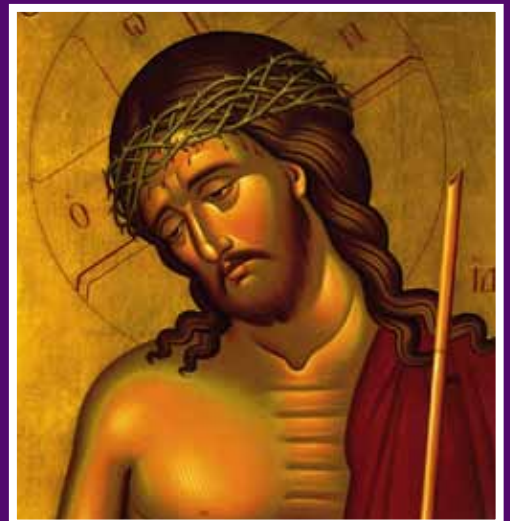
The other lenten ministries that we are offering are:

Wednesdays

- 5:30 pm - Synaxis: “Tools for Theosis” - Anthony M. Coniaris
- 6:30 pm - Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

Fridays

- 7:00 pm - Salutations to the Theotokos
Lenten Lesson to Follow
- 8:00 pm - Lenten Dinner



BE SURE TO PLEDGE FOR 2018

.....
you filling out your stewardship pledge envelope each and every year, we cannot exist. Everything we possess are gifts from God and they ultimately belong to Him. They are given to us — by Him. If you haven’t filled out your 2018 stewardship pledge envelope — please, do so today (they are located in the pews). “God loves a cheerful giver.” - (2 Cor. 9:7)

75% of the Saint Mark budget comes from Stewardship. Without

MEET THE TEAM

#2 - CHRISTO SKOUNDRIDAKIS

In his first year with the team, Christo impressed with his work ethic and clutch free throw shooting, making a game sealing free throw in the championship game!

#1 - DEMETRIOS THEODOSSAKOS

Another first year player, Demetri won every opening jump ball during the 4 game run, & was the enforcer in the paint defensively.

#24 - ZACHARY COTRONAKIS

Zach provided senior leadership & poise. He was the team's 2nd leading rebounder with 8.3 rpg, and 75% fgm.

#13 - LUCAS COTRONAKIS

The 2017 rookie of the year did everything for us. He was 3rd on the team with 7.25 ppg & 8 rpg, and led us with 3.25 spg & 1 bpg.

#22 - ALEX LEONDIS

Alex averaged 13.75 points & 2.25 steals per game as our point guard. His 20 points vs ATL, and 19 vs Marietta led us to the finals.

#10 - ZACHARY SKOUNDRIDAKIS

Our Team MVP & senior captain led us with 13.75 points per game & none were bigger than his 23 vs Marietta in the semifinals.

#12 - DEVON CULTRERA

The "Rebound King," Devon paced us with 10 rpg! His all around game is best seen in his 4pts, 8 rb, 3 stl, & 3 blks vs Greenville in our 1st game.

#3 - JOHN DOUGLAS

The ultimate example of reliability, he was the only player who never missed a practice (or a Liturgy!), & He was our ROCK on our 3rd place Bible Bowl team.



..... WINTER YOUTH RALLY 2017 RECAP BY: ZACHARY SKOUNDRIDAKIS

During the Christmas break, nine GOYANs from Saint Mark participated in the annual Metropolis of Atlanta Winter Youth Rally. The event consists of basketball, volleyball, and Bible bowl tournaments, held in Atlanta, Georgia. This marked only the second year that a team from Saint Mark participated in the four-day event, and we were eager to improve upon last year's performance.

After a 4-2 record and a Final Four appearance in 2016, Saint Mark was able to field a basketball team consisting of five returning players, and three new ones. The team began preparing for the tournament in September, practicing for hours after Church every Sunday. All of the hard work that we put in, and our extensive preparation with Coach Fr. Steven during those Fall months would end up leading us to unbelievable success in the Winter.

The team's first win came in a tough test was against a Greenville team that we eliminated the year before in Overtime. Saint Mark made quick work in that opening game with a fifteen point win, and advanced to play the tournament hosts, Atlanta. Supported by an enthusiastic local crowd, Saint Mark had to endure both the screaming fans as well as a

SAINT MARK CHAMPIONS

20 17

strong Atlanta team (that made the finals last year) in a hard fought, double-overtime game! The Atlanta fans were so impressed with our character, they gave our team the nickname of "Classy Boca" due to the respect and sportsmanship we demonstrated!

The next day, our team faced Marietta in another tightly contested game that ended with a 44-43 Boca

victory on the back of an incredible three-point shot by Alex Leondis that sent us to the finals as time expired! The championship game was a rematch against that same hungry Marietta team that fought back to make it to the finals as well. Fortunately, our faith and determination guided our team and allowed Saint Mark to persevere to win our first ever WYR basketball tournament with a perfect 4-0 record!

Off of the court, the team from Saint Mark came together to earn a third place finish in the Bible bowl tournament as well! This was no small accomplishment considering we were one of 42 teams in the competition with questions ranging from the Old Testament to the Gospel of Saint Mark. Throughout the four-day event, our team never forgot the teachings of our parents and priests. We were honored to represent Saint Mark, and act as stewards of our Orthodox faith.



..... HELLENIC DANCE FESTIVAL 2018 RECAP BY: ZACHARY COTRONAKIS

Over Martin Luther King Jr. holiday weekend, two Syrtaki dance groups competed at the Hellenic Dance Festival, where the senior troupe earned a platinum medal and the junior troupe earned a bronze medal in their respective age groups.

The senior group, led by Anastasia Christakis and Jenny Saiger, danced suites from Lasithi and Rhodes. The suite from Lasithi was considered revolutionary by many at HDF, due to the fact that, in addition to showcasing a set of dances, it illustrated one woman reminiscing over the story of her life: meeting her true love, her marriage, the baptism of her child, and being notified of her husband's tragic death in the Battle of Crete. They were awarded the Platinum medal, the highest honor, in the Senior category for their creativity and execution.

The junior group, instructed by Evangelia Profylienios and Nicholas Cucuras, danced suites from Naoussa and Kozani. In the suite from Kozani, the men of the group dressed as momogeri, men who would dance around people's houses to give good luck on New Year's Day. This satirical ritual that was portrayed by the

S A I N T M A R K
CHAMPIONS
 20 HELLENIC DANCE FESTIVAL - ORLANDO 2018 18
 look listen love

group dates back to ancient times. The troupe was awarded the bronze medal in the Advanced Junior category.

Both groups had costumes created by award-winning designer Mrs. Anastasia Theodore, who has overseen Syrtaki costumes for over 15 years.

This marks the third time where Saint Mark earned the highest honors

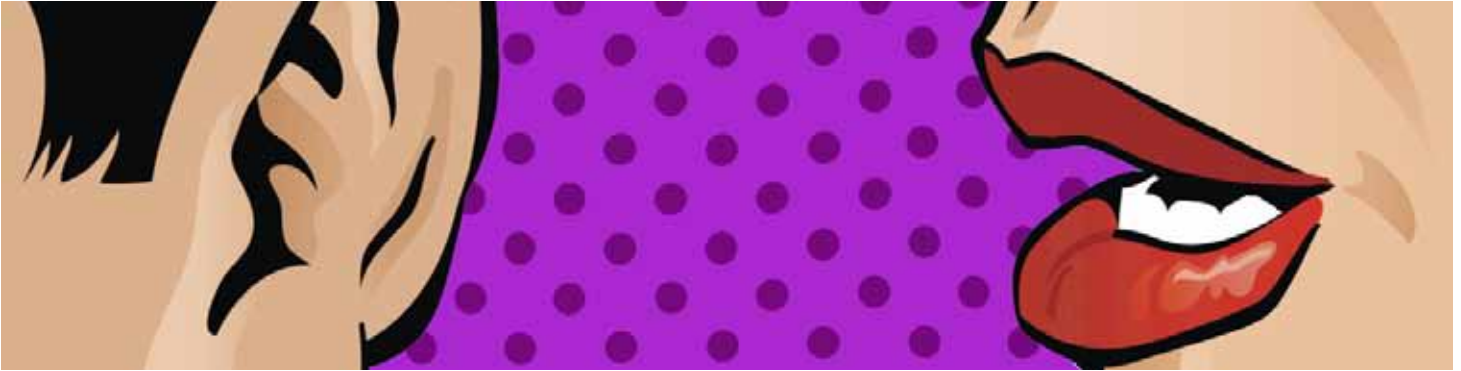
at HDF. Zachary Skoundridakis, a Syrtaki dancer, had this to say: "It's a blessing. The achievements of both groups truly represent the countless hours of hard work that these teams have put into our performances. None of this is possible without the help of our teachers and costume designers, who take time out of their busy schedules to put us in a position to succeed at these events."

Along with the competition, there were two parties to end each night, where the dancers and instructors alike could set aside competition and have fun while building friendships set to last a lifetime.

Overall, the weekend was successful and memorable. The Saint Mark GOYA upheld the reputation of "Classy Boca" that was coined at the Winter Youth Rally, just two weeks prior, and will continue to build upon it for years to come.

10 WAYS TO STOP GOSSIP

LENTEN FOCUS – RESPECT THE REPUTATION OF OTHERS



.....
CLEAN MONDAY - FEBRUARY 19
.....

Have you ever really stopped to consider how ugly gossip is?

Working in school, family and parish life you experience time and again how colossally stupid, destructive and therefore sinful gossip can be.

The reason gossip is stupid is because it almost invariably deals in half-truths.

A person gets one side of the story and one portion of the truth, then draws the wrong conclusion and tells another person.

The lie becomes exaggerated and is spread further.

Before long, innocent people are drawn into a maelstrom of gossip, innuendo and downright lies.

Here's an example. One day I was walking across the parish campus and asked a person what they thought about the plans to build a new church and wondered where we would put the parking.

I waved to an expanse of ground and said, "We could put parking here."

"But we would have to cut down the trees!"

"Yes, I suppose we would."

Two days later the gossip made it around the circuit and back to me when someone confronted me and said, "I hear you are going to cut down all the trees on our campus! How dare you!"

Now all of this would be laughable and sad if it were just a group of sad old ladies (of any age and of both genders) who had nothing better to do that prattle and gossip away.

The problem is, it is much more destructive than that.

Gossip destroys people's reputations. It destroys people's marriages. It undermines

the Lord's work. It spreads hate and fear.

Gossip is like a hideous cancer. You cut it out in one place and it comes up in another.

So here are some ways to stop gossip:

1. Believe nobody and believe everybody. In other words, believe what the person has told you. They really do think what they have said is true and from their perspective it is true. However, remember there is always, always, always another side to the story. Therefore do not believe them. Stop and bite your tongue.

2. Gather all the facts. Don't take anybody's word for it. Find out what really happened from as many people as possible.

3. Go to the source. For goodness' sake, have the courage and grace and common sense to go to the source. If Mildred gossips about George, go straight to George to find out the facts.

4. Give everyone the benefit of the doubt. Believe the best, not the worst. If you hear something bad about someone, imagine why they did that thing (if they really did) and what their good motivations might be.

5. Shut up. You don't have to talk and tell everybody everything. Even a fool is accounted wise if he keeps his mouth shut. Talk half as much as you listen.

6. Challenge the gossip. Don't believe it—and say sweetly to the person, "Do you really know if this is true?"

7. Challenge the gossip harshly: "What you're telling me is filthy, destructive gossip! I refuse to believe it and I think you should keep your mouth shut!" (P.S. They won't like that.)

8. Fix your eyes on the truth. Why waste your time in silly, useless gossip?

9. Focus on others. Do you know why you like gossip? Because it makes you feel superior. You gossip negatively about others because you think you're better than them. So you would poison and destroy their lives to make yourself feel good for a moment. Yuck.

10. Pray for the persons involved. Just offer up an "arrow prayer": Lord Have Mercy.

May the Good Lord Deliver us from gossip. AMEN.

2018 LENTEN LESSONS



SYNAXIS

Wednesdays in Lent before
Pre-Sanctified Liturgy (5:30 PM)

Focusing on:

"TOOLS FOR THEOSIS:
BECOMING GOD-LIKE IN CHRIST"

By Anthony M. Coniaris

SUPPLICATIONS

Fridays in Lent - 7 pm

(Lenten Suppers to follow)

LOOK OUT FOR THESE SPECIAL EVENTS COMING THIS LENT!!!

SAINT MARK PARISH RETREAT - "TOOLS FOR THEOSIS"

On March 2-4, the Saint Mark Family will be hosting an Adult Retreat for our faithful. The theme of the retreat will be "Tools for Theosis" and will feature Mr. Dan Christopoulos (*pictured below*), as the Retreat Master. If you are interested in growing in your personal faith, this retreat is for you. It will help you better understand the tools necessary to live a life for Christ. The retreat schedule is as follows:

Friday, March 2

7:00 PM Salutations to the Theotokos
Opening Talk

Saturday, March 3

9:00 AM – 12:30 PM
Tools for Theosis

Sunday, March 4

Guest Homilist/Liturgy



Dan is a native of Cheyenne, Wyoming and received a B.S. in Sociology from the University of Wyoming in 1979, where he was an All-Conference place kicker in football, and played in the 1976 Fiesta Bowl.

After receiving his Master of Divinity from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in 1983, he participated in parish ministry for 15 years. During that time he spent almost three years in the mission field in East Africa, and served in various communities in the United States as well as assisting to establish the Archdiocesan Office in Hong Kong.

He has also received a Masters in Social Work and managed several federal grants in the health field. He currently is the U.S. Country Representative for International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), having worked for the official humanitarian relief agency of Orthodox Christians in the United States since 2001. He is responsible for managing all aspects of IOCC's humanitarian activities in the United States, ranging from emergency response to development programs.

Dan has taught classes at the high school, junior college and university levels, as well as served as a consultant for governmental and non-governmental organizations. He and his wife Patty reside in Minneapolis, where she manages Light and Life Publishing Company.

Tools for Theosis a Light & Life® Retreat

St. Mark Greek Orthodox Church
Boca Raton, Florida

Sat. March 3, 2018
9 am – 12:30 pm

Book by Anthony M. Coniaris – Presenter Dan Christopoulos

SAINT MARK SPEAKER SERIES PRESENTS

Conversations with the American School

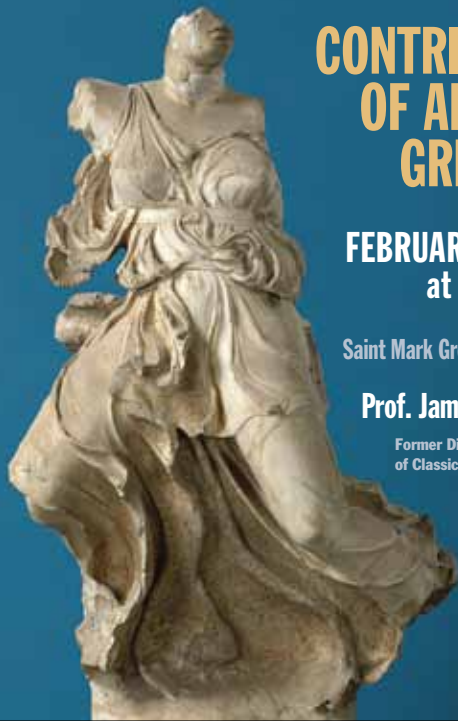
CONTRIBUTIONS OF ANCIENT GREECE

FEBRUARY 24, 2018
at 7 pm

Saint Mark Greek Orthodox Church

Prof. James C. Wright

Former Director, American School of Classical Studies at Athens



AMERICAN SCHOOL OF CLASSICAL STUDIES AT ATHENS



St. Mark Greek School Trip to Tarpon for Greek Independence Day Parade



March 17,18, 2018
Depart St. Mark
Saturday 7:30 am
Return Sunday 10pm

Trip includes:
Bus ride, LEGOLAND,
Hotel, Brunch, Parade,
Pizza Sunday night

7am: Arrive St. Mark
7:15am: Bus leaves promptly
10:30am: Arrive LEGOLAND (food on your own)
4pm: Meet at the bus to depart LEGOLAND
6:30pm: Arrive Fairfield Inn, Marriott near Tarpon Springs
7:30pm: (optional) Leave to go for dinner on your own at Sponge Docks
10pm: Bus departs to go back to hotel
9:45am: Bus departs hotel to head to church
12pm: (after church we will provide spanakopites and donuts and waters)
Parade immediately to follow
4pm: Depart Tarpon Springs
6pm: Arrive at Pizza Hut (pizza and sodas included)
10pm: Arrive back at St. Marks.

COST PER FAMILY IN 1 ROOM
Family of 2: \$300
Family of 3: \$350
Family of 4: \$400
Family of 5 \$450



JOY - ERIN KONTOS

Christmas Caroling, led by Fr. Steven, has become our favorite JOY outing of the year. Visiting dear friends in our church community and sharing in Christmas carols was an experience enjoyed by all. Afterward, the Zaparegos home was filled with fun and fellowship, as we were treated to a festive spread of pizza, desserts, and hot chocolate. The children shared in a finale of Christmas favorites for all the parents to enjoy at the end of the day. Our JOY families truly appreciate the generous hospitality shared by Maro, Sammy, Eireni, Stamatia, and Gabriella. Thank you to all who joined and helped us spread Christmas JOY!



Coming up next for JOY is a park play date at Patch Reef Park on February 17 immediately following that morning's Saturday of the Souls Divine Liturgy Liturgy (9 am). Email ErinKontos@hotmail.com for details.



FOR EVERYTHING SAINT MARK



FOLLOW @SAINTMARKBOCA ON
FOR ALL NEWS ON GOYA, JOY AND MORE



SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

PAN-ORTHODOX VESPERS
FEBRUARY 25, 2018 - 5 PM

Saint Matrona Russian Orthodox Church
113 South Federal Highway, Dania Beach, FL 33004
(305) 965-6037

Followed by a lenten reception in the Fellowship Hall
- & -

A Pan-Orthodox Youth Icebreaker and Discussion:
"This Too Shall Pass"

Led by Fr. Steven Klund - Saint Mark Greek Orthodox Church

*A closer look at Christ's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane,
and how we align our wills with the Will of the Father.*



ORATORICAL FESTIVAL - JOANNE LINDHOLM



Participating in the Saint Mark Oratorical festival is an excellent opportunity to develop and perfect your self expression of our faith, and your public speaking talent! The Saint Mark Oratorical Festival is March 4, 2018 immediately following the Divine Liturgy. The top two finishers in both the senior and the junior division will advance to the District level to compete on March 10, 2018 as part of our District GOYA Lenten Retreat at Saint Sophia in Miami. You can find this year's topics included below. Please see Mrs. Helen Lang, Mrs. Julie Vagelos or your Church school teacher for more information!

2018 Junior Division Topics (Grades 7-9)

1. In John 15:13-15, Jesus teaches about friendship to His disciples. Discuss the importance of friendship in your life.
2. Choose a parable from the Gospel of Luke and discuss how it speaks to our contemporary life.
3. Talk about a time and circumstance when you were in awe and wonder – where you sensed the majesty of God.
4. Discuss how prayer, fasting, serving others, or study of Orthodoxy assists you with your relationship with Christ and the Church.
5. In Mark 2:1-12, four men remove a roof in order to bring a paralytic to Jesus to be healed. How inventive are we in bringing people to Jesus for healing?

2018 Senior Division Topics (Grades 10-12)

1. People often say, "It felt right" in order to explain their decisions. How many of our decisions factor in not only our feelings but also the will and commandments of God?
2. Christ's disciples made the commitment to follow Him without knowing what the outcome might be. What does it mean to follow Christ today?
3. How can we have religious conversations on social media in an age of trolling?
4. Christ said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Mark 4:9). The Lord said this with reference to the way we hear the word of God. What is our response?
5. Our lives are saturated with violence, not only in terms of the proliferation of war and terrorism but even as entertainment through movies and video games. In such an environment, how can a Christian cultivate virtues that lead to empathy, peacemaking, and self-sacrifice?

EPIPHANY CELEBRATION 2018



2018 brought with it plenty of reasons to celebrate at Saint Mark. Our annual Epiphany Luncheon took place on January 7, where we honored our ministry leaders and volunteers in front of 300 seated guests. The next week on January 13, we took part in the District Epiphany Celebration with His Grace Bishop Sevastianos of Zela. Our own Demetrios Theodossakos (*left*) represented Saint Mark in the 2018 Cross Dive.

BOOKSTORE - YVETTE KOUTSOUPIS

The Saint Mark Bookstore is restocking our shelves following a very successful 2018 festival season! One new addition are our “2018 Orthodox Calendars” that are slightly different than the standard calendars from the Archdiocese. These calendars focus more on some of the living Orthodox traditions including recipes and crafts that are very simple and can be enjoyed by all ages, young & old. It’s style is very clear and it makes a very nice gift for all to love. It’s exciting to see what the next month’s page has to offer. There is a copy of one such calendar hanging in the bookstore front window now for all parishioners to preview. Each calendar costs \$15 and all funds will benefit Saint Mark.



NEW CHOIR LOFT RENOVATIONS - VIRGINIA BARNES



The choir is truly grateful to our Clergy and the Parish Council for making some amazing changes in the

choir loft possible. The planning, financial support, and physical labor required shows how much the Saint Mark Family loves its choir.

First, the choir rows were raised by at least 18 inches and one more full row and a director’s area were created. Now, everyone in the choir can see down into the sanctuary and feel more a part of the congregation. This change also improves the sound we are able to produce, because now everyone’s voices are not blocked by the front wall. Best of all, there is plenty of room for at least twenty singers! Next, the back and side walls were built up. This also funnels the sound more effectively down to the sanctuary. Last, iPads have been purchased for the choir. Now the Divine Liturgy will be stored in iBooks, and the changes can easily be made and shared, rather than the waste of photocopies, which also has been very time consuming. This achieves the choir’s goal of being paperless. We are now a “Green” choir! All of these changes are so exciting for the Saint Mark choir members because it helps us take things to the next level. We thank you all for your support!



PHILOPTOCHOS - NIKI CORE

The final months of 2017 were an eventful time for our Saint Mark Ladies Philoptochos. We started the Ecclesiastical year by responding to the victims of Hurricane Irma, which included many members of our own community. Coffee hour donations for the three Sundays in September allowed us to send a check for disaster relief to IOCC for \$2,544 (in addition to 26 gift cards totalling nearly \$1,000 that were collected at our opening meeting). Next we held the annual Men’s Culinary event, with the first-prize gold catalas going to Girard Mitchell and Bill Johnson this year. We thank Fran Papamichael, Ted Vagelos, and all the outstanding chefs and volunteers for a truly fun-filled evening.

Our December meeting was held at Rafina Restaurant for the first time, and the holiday spirit definitely filled the room. Kathi Sharp chaired the event, and we thank her for making it a memorable evening, and kudos to the restaurant staff for providing a wonderful dining experience. The end of the year gave us a chance to review the budget and make adjustments for 2018. In 2017 we made generous contributions to local, national and international organizations, including the following: IOCC, OCMC, OCN, Scholarships, Children’s Medical Fund, Middle East Christian Relief, and Medical Relief for Lesvos. Over \$48,000 was distributed, which includes \$9,000 in our Chapter Community Commitments (local), \$2,615 in mandatory Metropolis Commitments and \$9,260 in National Commitments.

Our kick-off event for 2018 was the Epiphany Luncheon, and we thank Co-chairs Pam Parent and Suzette Johnson and their many dedicated committee members who worked tirelessly both Saturday and Sunday to make this our most successful Luncheon ever. Our Greek School children sang the Kalanda to our 300 guests as we chased out the old year and rang in the new. The winner of the 50/50 raffle, Pat Anthony, generously gifted her winnings back to Philoptochos. Thanks so much to the GOYA who helped serve meals and to Parish Council and AHEPA members who stepped in when needed. It was truly a team effort. We are very fortunate to have generous sponsors for this event and are sincerely grateful to the following for their donations: the Orfanos family for providing the delicious meal; Louis and Helen Nicosis for the wine at each table; Richard and Athena Economou for the mimosas; and to an anonymous angel who provided a beautiful plate of pastries at each table. Through our Vasilopita sales we were able to donate over \$1000 to Saint Basil Academy.

Besides our two main fundraisers (the Men’s Culinary Event, and the Epiphany Luncheon) there are a few other projects that are additional sources of revenue: koliva (\$125) and coffee hour sponsors (\$150) are two examples. Coffee hour sponsors are done for memorials or for other special occasions (birthday, graduation, etc.) Please contact the Church Office for more information; there are specific guidelines to follow as determined by church policy.

During January, Philoptochos ladies were busy getting ready for the Festival pastry booth. This year they baked over 6,500 koulourakia, finikia and kourambiedes. In February, mark your calendar for the Membership Tea (General Meeting) on February 12 and the Lenten Dinner on February 23. During Lent we will once again be collecting for Dress for Success. They have requested that we not bring clothing but instead provide accessories, such as shoes, handbags, and other accessories. We have a busy few months ahead, and I hope you will join the over 200 members of Philoptochos to support our many worthwhile charities.

2018 GREEK FESTIVAL SPONSORS - THANK YOU ALL!

We would like to offer our most heartfelt appreciation to all of our benefactors and sponsors who supported the 2018 Saint Mark Greek Festival. The annual festival is quite an ambitious event, and it would not be possible without the assistance from our faithful parishioners. Thank you!

Festival Sponsors

Yianni Agelopoulos It's All Greek
 Yianni Agelopoulos & Paul Tzikas.. Rafina
 Mark Christakis Mark Christakis Realty
 Maria Karaloukas Jimmy the Greek
 Lambros & Sandra Kokkinelis Gyroville
 Paul Manolakos Marathon Groceries
 Peter & Helen Politis..... Mr. Green's Produce
 Joseph & Stella Pores..... Call 4 Health
 David & Maria Tadros Tadros Litigators
 Sophia & John Theodore Taverna Kyma

Festival Offerings

Rick & Erin Kontos Bread
 George Melides Butter
 Harry & Constantina Mirable..... Honey
 Alexa Nanos Spices
 Art & Kay Poly Ouzo and Nuts
 Chris Rodis In Honor of the Clergy
 and their Families
 Jerry & Joanne Scheller Pork
 Tim & Kathy Sharp..... Golf Cart Rentals
 David & Maria Tadros Milk

SAINT MARK **Mommy + Me** TUESDAYS @ 10AM (BI-WEEKLY)

Our 2018 Mommy+Me classes are now underway! Every other Tuesday at 10 am at Saint Mark, our parents and their children gather in the Church to light candles before heading next door to our "early education classroom." There we have a short prayer service in front of a child-sized iconostasis. The class continues with story-time, music, crafts and



free-play time. During the play time, the parents are led by Fr. Steven in a spiritual discussion about parenting with Orthodox values in a modern world. Registration is only \$25 for the spring semester, and the first class is free! If you are interested in joining "Mommy + Me" please email us at of-

fice@saintmarkboca.net or call us at 561-994-4822 for more details.

"WIRING PARTY" AT SAINT MARK



We have been re-wiring the Church campus (Sanctuary, Hall, Administration Building) for an overall upgrade to our Wifi and security systems. A dedicated team, led by Ted Vagelos, Nick Csakany and Patrick Ramsden, have been working to complete the project. We give thanks to our Lord for these dedicated individuals who are saving our Church so much money by doing the work themselves.

AHEPA / DOP - TIM SHARP

Join us at our annual Valentines Dinner Dance at the beautiful Benvenuto Restaurant in Boynton Beach. You will enjoy a complementary open bar and Hors d'oeuvres outside in the courtyard, followed by a delicious three course dinner, accompanied by live entertainment from Demetri and the Islanders. We also have a couple of additional surprises you won't want to miss.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the educational, Hellenic and philanthropic efforts of the AHEPA Chapter including scholarships for local high school and college students, support to our Saint Mark ministries, other local Boca Raton charities, as well as providing meals for needy families and children in our area.

You can purchase tickets in the church fellowship hall after Liturgy each week or conveniently purchase them on line. Simply visit:

www.EventBrite.com and then search "AHEPA Valentine"



AHEPA Boca Raton Chapter 487 Annual Valentines Dinner Dance

February 16, 2018 - 7:00 PM

**Benvenuto Restaurant
 1730 N. Federal Highway
 Boynton Beach, FL**

**7:00 PM - Complimentary
 Cocktails & Hors' d'oeuvres
 8:00 PM - Dining, Dancing,
 Unlimited Wine & Cash Bar**

Music by Demetri & the Islanders

**\$90 pp Check, Cash
 or \$95 Credit Card
 Proceeds Support
 AHEPA Scholarships &
 Other Educational,
 Hellenic & Philanthropic
 Projects**

Reservations
Tim Sharp (561) 213-1016
timsharp1958@gmail.com
Or register/pay online at:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ahepa-valentines-dinner-dance-tickets-41919679891>

2018 HOLY WEEK SERVICES



4/1/18	PALM SUNDAY	BRIDEGROOM SERVICE	6:30 PM
4/2/18	HOLY MONDAY	BRIDEGROOM SERVICE	6:30 PM
4/3/18	HOLY TUESDAY	BRIDEGROOM SERVICE	6:30 PM
4/4/18	HOLY WEDNESDAY	HOLY UNCTION	5:30 PM
4/5/18	HOLY THURSDAY	LITURGY OF LAST SUPPER 12 GOSPELS	9:00 AM 6:30 PM
4/6/18	HOLY FRIDAY	ROYAL HOURS APOKATHELOSIS LAMENTATIONS	9:00 AM 3:00 PM 7:00 PM
4/7/18	HOLY SATURDAY	DIVINE LITURGY RESURRECTION VIGIL PASCHA DIVINE LITURGY A LIGHT MEAL TO FOLLOW IN THE HALL	9:00 AM 11:00 PM 12:00 AM
4/8/18	PASCHA/EASTER	AGAPE VESPERS	12:00 PM

PASCHA (EASTER) CARD, EASTER LILIES AND HOLY WEEK ITEMS

If you would like to sign up for the Pascha card, donate an Easter lily in memory or honor of a loved one, or make a donation toward an item for Holy Week, please complete the following form, remove and return it in to the office (or by email: office@saintmarkboca.net).

Easter Lilies - \$25

In Memory of: _____ In Honor of: _____

Saint Mark Easter Card - \$25

Names as you would like them to appear: _____

HOLY WEEK AND PASCHA DONATIONS

Many parishioners ask to donate for Holy Week/Pascha items.

If you are so inclined, please fill out the form below and stop by the table in the hall.

Unction Supplies (oil, cotton balls, bags) - \$30

Floral Wreath (Thursday evening) - \$275

Holy Friday (Sheet for Christ's body) - \$40

Flowers for the Iconostasis - \$125

Charcoal - \$50

Palms for Palm Sunday - \$180

Rose Water/Rose Petals - \$75

Case of Communion Wine (Commandaria) - \$140

Box of Charcoal - \$25

Box of Incense - \$30

Paschal Candle (Priest) - \$100

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____ Total: _____



SAINT MARK
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
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