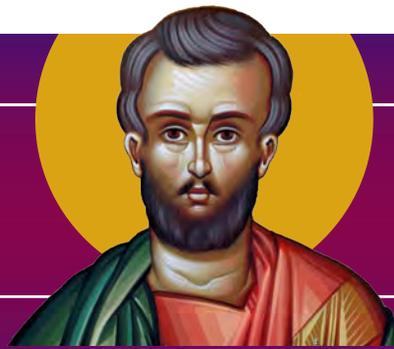




# THE Message



SAINT MARK

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

FEB 2017 & MAR 2017



Epiphany Celebration & GOYA News PAGE 8



Photo Highlights from the 2017 Greek Festival



BACK PAGE

**HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT**

BY KAREN BATSHAW

JOIN US! SATURDAY MARCH 4, 2017 - 7PM

Books will be available for purchase and signing. Reception to follow.

Honoring the brave souls who survived WWII



## THE ORDINATION OF DN. BRYAN GIUSTI

*"Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own...Forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 3:12-14*

On Sunday, January 8, 2017 Saint Mark was blessed to celebrate the ordination of Dn. Bryan Giusti, through the laying on of hands by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta. Dn. Bryan and his wife Cori have been faithful stewards of Saint Mark for many years, and Dn. Bryan has spent the majority of these years in service as our head acolyte. We pray that God will bless them both, and grant him a long and fruitful ministry!

Read Dn. Bryan's Ordination Remarks on Page 11

## SAINT MARK SUPPORTS THE PANAGIA CHAPEL



We were blessed to be joined by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios for the 2017 Epiphany Luncheon following the Ordination of Dn. Bryan. During the Luncheon Fr. Mark, Parish Council President Girard Mitchell, and Philoptochos President Pam Parent presented two checks in support of the Panagia Chapel at the Diakonia Retreat Center. The Diakonia Center has been serving as a key meeting place for our Metropolis for over a decade. His Eminence's vision is for it to become a central beacon of Orthodoxy for the entire southeast, and the Chapel is to be its cornerstone.

*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:



**Saint Mark**  
Greek Orthodox Church

**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 & Everaldo Valle

**Office Volunteers:**

Lynn Athan, Pam Parent, Marlene  
Buettner, Pres. Mary Leondis,  
Debbie Fread, Kay Poly,  
Kalle Andromidas

**Parish Council:** Girard Mitchell

**Philoptochos:** Pam Parent

**Choir:** Virginia Barnes

**Chanters:** Ramona Bean, Art Poly,  
George Demopoulos

**Ushers:** Tim Sharp

**Acolytes:**

Tom Bean & Constantine Mukasa

**Church School:**

Helen Lang & Julie Vagelos

**JOY:** Angela & Girard Mitchell,  
Despina Hantzaridis, Vivian Laz-  
aridis, and Erin & Rick Kontos

**GOYA:** Dominique Cultrera, Irina  
Giakouminakis, Elaine Cotronakis,  
Lynn & Costa Athan, Nicole Pelekanos

**Seniors:** Diane Paterakis

**Syrtaki:**

Tasia Christakis & Jenny Saiger

**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



## SAINT MARK OUTREACH COMMITTEE

.....  
**MARLENE BUETTNER**  
.....

“Ministry” is from the Greek word “diakonia,” meaning “to serve”. Our Pastors spend their lives in ministry but are not the only ones called into the Lord’s service. We as the Laity also have a responsibility to obey the Lord’s commands and follow His examples to bring others to Him. Fr. Mark and Fr. Steven appealed to parishioners to join them in a formalized Outreach Ministry Committee to explore ways to increase the witness of our Faith.

A small group of us took up the challenge. The first meeting was held just one week before our annual Greek Festival 2017. After prayer the meeting opened with a leading question: ‘How were you introduced to the Orthodox Faith?’ For the next two hours personal and powerful stories were shared. There were common threads in our testimonies. Our Faith had welcomed, encouraged, and embraced us as new believers, ‘cradle’ Orthodox, and lapsed Christians through hospital ministry, interfaith marriages, interfaith dialogue, religious education and evangelism, camp and youth ministries, college campus ministry and spiritual retreats which had personally impacted us.

Two big questions then arose: “Are we as Orthodox Christian believers equipped to spread the Word?” And, “What is the thing we want to be known for as Orthodox Christians?” i.e. how can we change the outside perception of the “church with the Greek festival”. Attendees and our two priests walked away elated about the possibilities that exist for impacting the community both within and without our church. “What a PHENOMENAL opening meeting!” was Fr. Steven’s first statement in the meeting notes sent to Committee members.

We had decided to sponsor an Outreach Booth at the Greek Festival. It was located in the Vendor’s

area. We captured the attention of passersby with an attractively organized table which held a display of materials; these included newsletters, pamphlets and give-aways from OCMC, IOCC, and Orthodox Prison Ministry; introductory books, pamphlets, and handouts on Eastern Orthodox Christianity; the Gospel, a censor and a cross. Four large Icons provided a background.

Business cards about our Introduction to Orthodoxy Class were handed out. We promoted the Church Tours and Lectures as did our volunteers at all Festival booths. We charged minimal fees for books, asked for a small donation, or gave them away to serious inquirers.

There was an overwhelming positive response by visitors/inquirers to our beautiful Sanctuary, the Lectures and our Outreach Booth. Two things in particular are noteworthy for success: friendliness i.e. a welcoming attitude, and the availability of priests (retired also), to answer inquirers’ theological questions.

Since the Festival outreach activities have rolled one into another. Inquirers from the Festival are attending the Introduction to Orthodoxy Class. On Sunday February 5, the IOCC ‘Souper Bowl of Caring’ fundraiser was handled by our GOYANS with speeches, a canned food drive and the use of soup pots for donations.

We are striving to be a recognizable voice in the community. May we be a catalyst for other Orthodox Churches to replicate what we have done. We are in our infancy but our First Fruits already are reaping results.



### ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ORATORICAL FESTIVAL

Saint Mark Oratorical Festival - March 5, 2017 after Liturgy  
District Festival - April 1, 2017 at St. Nicholas During District Lenten Retreat

TALK TO YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER FOR MORE INFORMATION

# PASTORAL MESSAGE

## *Rev. Fr. Mark Leondis*

My Dear Faithful,

I am a very optimistic person! I love to see the glass half full. Yes, there are times when I am down and I feel the weight of the world on my shoulders. But in those deepest, darkest times, I find my greatest strength in the Lord. In Nehemiah 8:10, we read “the joy of the Lord is my strength,” which offers us a basic principle for living in a good mood.

We do have many reasons to be in a good mood! Despite poor health, poor finances, poor grades, or poor performances . . . despite bad news, bad breaks, or even a bad, bad backache.

What can we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? The reason you can be in a good mood is the Gospel!

In the book *The Cross-Centered Life*, C.J. Mahaney writes, “The gospel is the life-permeating, world-altering, universe-changing truth. It has more facets than any diamond. Its depths man will never exhaust. The gospel is the good news that God did something for you that you could not do for yourself. Jesus sacrificed His life for you on the cross. He took the punishment for your sin, dying, and rising again to give you life. Once and for all God demonstrated that He was for you. He could not have said it any stronger.”

The Good News is the Gospel of Christ. No matter how difficult life can be, no matter how often we fall or recognize our brokenness, it is only through Jesus Christ that we can become whole. It is only through our Lord and Savior that we can experience completeness. And when you are at your lowest, recognize God’s will in your life. “The joy of the Lord is my strength.”

This Lenten Season, try a few of these tips to “kick-start” your spiritual journey toward the Resurrection:

1. Pray daily
2. Find 5 minutes a day of total silence (breath in “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God”; breath out “Have mercy on me and save me”)
3. Practice the ancient discipline of FASTING (in some way or another)
4. Practice gratitude: each day be thankful for something
5. Do one random act of kindness for someone daily

The “Good News” of our Lord does not erase all of our problems, but knowing that God is on our side and connecting with Him daily will definitely improve every aspect of our life. Make this Lent a journey toward growing and deepening your relationship with our Christ.

Faithfully,

*+ Fr. Mark Leondis*

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 27 - Clean Monday

It all begins on Clean Monday, February 27, 2017. 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:** “Journey Through Lent” - A Study of the Lenten Sunday themes
- 6:30 pm - Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

### **Fridays**

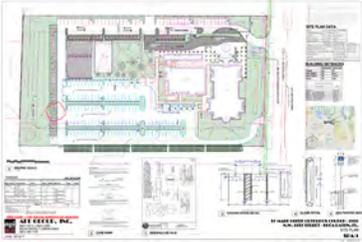
- 7:00 pm - *Salutations to the Theotokos*  
Lenten Lesson to Follow
- 8:00 pm - Lenten Dinner



**PARISH COUNCIL - GIRARD MITCHELL**

Dear Fellow Stewards,

On behalf of the Parish Council, I would like to thank you for a wonderful year. We were so blessed in many ways and I thank God to be able to assist our Clergy and serve Saint Mark as the Parish Council President once again. On January 22 we held a special Parish Assembly. I am pleased to report that the Parish Assembly agreed to move forward with Phase 1 of our Growth and Planning Committee's recommendation to create almost 70 new parking spaces and improve the grass parking at Saint Mark. We were overjoyed with the news that Nick and Eva Laskaris pledged the first \$200,000 toward this project. Over the next few months, you will hear the various opportunities that you can also donate to make this a reality. We will



work with our architect to not only add 70 spots, but to also improve the flow and add senior/assistance parking spaces

We held elections for this upcoming year, and the following were unanimously chosen as officers for the 2017 council:

- **Girard Mitchell** ..... President
- **Jim Dovas**..... 1st Vice President
- **Steve Giakouminakis**..... 2nd Vice President
- **Lynn Athan** ..... Treasurer
- **Joe Pores**..... Secretary

We welcome new Parish Council members Ted Vagelos and Harry Mirabile, who will join our team. We would also like to thank Peter Averkiou and George Mellides for their service. We look forward to a peaceful and blessed year of ministry on the Parish Council. If there is anything that we can do to better serve our parish, please do not hesitate to call anyone of us.

In His service,  
Girard Mitchell - *Parish Council President*

**PHILOPTOCHOS - PAM PARENT**

2017 has begun with a flurry of activity for Philoptochos. We started the month with our annual Epiphany Luncheon, made especially significant with the ordination of Bryan Giusti as Deacon John. A visit from our Metropolis, His Eminence Alexios was a highlight of the event. Over 300 people attended this ever-popular luncheon. We are thankful to our many sponsors, including the Orfanos family who donated all the food and preparation, Helen and Lou Nicozisis for their generous donation of wine for every table, Athena and Richard Economou who donated the champagne, and an anonymous donation of all our desserts. Special thanks to Ermione Tasiounis who baked koulourakia for everyone. These generous donations make it possible for Philoptochos to donate the proceeds to our many charities. As always all proceeds from the sale of our vasilopita go to Saint Basil Academy.



We were treated to a performance by the Greek School of the Kalanda, and appreciate so much the support we received from our GOYA, AHEPA and Parish Council members who assisted in serving the food and wine. Of course we are especially grateful for our amazing women who organized, set up and cleared for this event. It was truly a Saint Mark team effort!

January would not be complete without our Saint Mark Festival. The women of Philoptochos lovingly baked thousands of pieces of pastry to sell at the Festival. Then we turned around and volunteered to sell all those pastries. Thanks to all who participated in support of our church.

Even amidst all our efforts in preparation for the festival, we did not neglect our duties to the Caring Kitchen. Our women found time to gather there on January 19th to prepare and serve lunch to some of

the most needy folks in Delray Beach.

This year is an election year for Philoptochos. If you are interested in offering your time and talent to our wonderful organization, you must be a current steward of Saint Mark, a member of Philoptochos and have attended at least four meetings in the last year. Please contact Sandra Gibson at 561 859 5895, or Thelma Constantinou at 561 495 2645 if you wish to run for our board. Elections will be held in May.

Each year we give an accounting of how the money you so generously donate to Philoptochos is spent. Below is a list of the organizations and charities supported by Philoptochos of Saint Mark:

**SAINT MARK COMMITMENTS:**

- Saint Mark Church
- Saint Mark College Scholarship Program
- Saint Mark Adult Continuing Education Program
- Saint Mark Greek School Scholarship
- Saint Stephen Camp Scholarship
- Saint Mark Festival
- Benevolent Fund

**LOCAL COMMUNITY:**

- Caring Kitchen
- Feeding Children Everywhere
- Family Promise
- Boca Helping Hands

**METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA COMMITMENTS:**

- Diakonia Center
- Saint Stephen's Camp
- Panagia Chapel
- Clergy Education

**NATIONAL COMMITMENTS:**

- Academy of Saint Basil
- Cancer Fund
- Emergency Fund
- HCHC Scholarship Fund
- OCCM
- Retired Clergy Association
- Social Services
- UNICEF
- Autism Assistance Fund
- Ecumenical Patriarchate
- General Medical Fund
- Sisterhood of Presbyteres
- IOCC
- Saint Nicholas Shrine
- Support a Mission Priest

# TWO PLATES, NOT ONE

FR. ANTHONY COINIARIS

*This past November, all of our faithful were asked to submit a 2017 Stewardship Pledge Envelope. Many have already done so, and on behalf of the Stewardship Committee, I thank you. Stewardship is our response to God's love in our lives, and at Saint Mark, we have much to be thankful for. I came across this article by Fr. Anthony Coiniaris that I wanted to share with you about stewardship. It is truly inspirational. If you have not filled out your 2017 envelope, please do so today. Let Fr. Anthony's words inspire your giving of time, talent and treasure. Our Stewardship Committee is working hard for Saint Mark and we thank you for your generosity and love. - John Koutsoupis*

Someone said one Sunday during the offering, "Here we go again! There's always a plate."

The person was right in one way and wrong in another. There is not one plate-but two! One plate is man's; the offering plate that is passed to us every Sunday. The other plate is God's. And that is the paten, the "diskos", the plate that carries the Precious Body of our Lord during the liturgy. Two plates --- not one!

God gives first. He gives us our body, mind, life, health, talents. On the paten - the plate of God's mercy, He gives us Himself as the Bread of Life, the manna from heaven. He gives forgiveness, strength, courage. He gives victory over sin and death. He gives eternal life. "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which he lavished upon us" (Eph.1:7-8). God gives. He lavishes upon us the riches of His grace. That is the meaning of the first plate-the paten.

The second plate which is passed every Sunday - the offering plate - represents our response to the first plate. We are invited to give in gratitude for God's generosity, for His limitless forgiveness and mercy. The emptiness of the offering plate represents the aching needs of the world which we are called upon to assist.

It represents also the great spiritual hunger that exists in the world -- the God-shaped vacuum in every heart that only Christ can fill.

We give, but He gave first. Two plates - not one! However much we give, it will never be more than just a minute fraction of what we receive from Him.

There's always a plate! Indeed there is! Not one but two. First God's, then man's.

The God who came to us at Bethlehem continues to come to us today. He comes to us through that first plate, the

paten which symbolizes His total giving to us. He comes through the Sacrament of Baptism to bestow upon us the holy kiss of His love, to call us His very own. He comes through the Sacrament of Chrismation to fill us with His presence, to make our bodies temples of His Holy Spirit. He comes through repentance and the Sacrament of Confession to cleanse us of sin, to restore in our souls "the peace of God that passes all understanding." IN every liturgy He comes to us as the Word of God, bringing words of eternal life through the Scripture readings and the sermon. Through the Sacrament of Communion He comes to be born again and again in the shabby stables of our hearts. He comes constantly through prayer. He blesses our marriages as He did that in Cana of Galilee. He stands by our sick bed, laying His healing hand upon us through the prayers of the priest. He comes again and again in so many, many ways through the many ministries of His Church. He comes with healing and forgiveness; He comes with strength and guidance. He comes and when He comes, as the Bible says, "the blind see, the lame walk, and the prisoners are set free."

Every year at this time as we are invited to renew our weekly stewardship pledge, we are challenged to re-consider prayerfully our weekly gift to Him Who is God's Great Gift to us. It is through our gift that God will be able to continue His forgiving, healing, liberating, empowering, transfiguring, loving ministry through the Church. For God, Infinite though He be, has chosen to work

through us, through our gifts, to continue His saving work in the world today.

Many of us are careful to set aside funds for our retirement IRAs, 401(k)s, etc. Yet how long will these last? - Ten, maybe twenty years? The question is:

*What are we setting aside for our eternal future?*

*What are we investing in God, in eternity?*

*How many of us who are quite well-to-do on earth (and most of us Americans are) may end up paupers in heaven?*

*Give as you would if an angel  
Awaited your gift at the door.  
Give as you would if tomorrow  
Found you where giving was over.*

*Give as you would to the Master  
If you met His loving look.  
Give as you would of your substance  
If His hand your offering took.*

For, it is indeed His hand! The tray in which we place our offering every Sunday is not a tray but His hand -- the nail-pierced hand of my Savior "Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

## BE SURE TO PLEDGE FOR 2017

75% of the Saint Mark budget comes from Stewardship. Without 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 2017 stewardship pledge envelope - please, do so today (they are located in the pews). "God loves a cheerful giver." - (2 Cor. 9:7)

# HOLY & GREAT LENT

## AS BASIC TRAINING FOR OUR SPIRITUAL LIVES

.....  
REV. FR. PETER CHAMBERAS  
.....

What began in the early life of the Church as a brief period of several days to prepare for the annual celebration of the Christian Pascha was soon extended to a whole week in the various regions of the early Church. By 325 AD, the time of the First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, the Paschal Lent had already become a period of forty days, and a reminder of the forty day fast of Moses, Elijah and of Jesus himself. During this early period, the persecutions against the Church were usually sufficient to sustain a high moral and spiritual standard among the faithful who had entered the Church through Baptism and lived a new life in Christ. After the persecutions ended in the 4th century, however, the very large numbers of people, coming to the Church, needed to be instructed, guided and formed in the Christian way of life. The usual period of two or three years of such training was intensified during the period immediately before their Baptism on Holy Saturday before Pascha. These pastoral needs of the Church brought about an even further augmentation of the Paschal Lent by adding four additional pre-Lenten weeks to the existing six, and setting Holy Week apart as a separate and distinct liturgical cycle. This gradual evolution of Holy and Great Lent over centuries brought it to its fullest development as we know it and practice it to this present day in the Orthodox Church.

From the very beginning Great Lent took on an added significance for the Catechumens who were going through the final preparations for Baptism. For those already baptized, the strict rules of fasting and the spiritual disciplines that had been extended for the benefit of the new Catechumens, were now also being embraced and practiced by all the faithful, as a way of renewing each year their own previously made commitment to the Christian way of life, but also as a way of demonstrating solidarity with and encouragement to the new converts and catechumens who were still in the process of preparing to become Christians.

Today as we struggle to live out our Christian life in a deeply secularized society, with many distractions and even aggressive oppositions, Holy and Great Lent can indeed serve as a basic training ground for our

spiritual life. The long and proven experience of the Church, together with the abundance of divine grace available within her, can certainly help us to recover, to restore, to reinvigorate our Christian way of life and live it authentically.

Possessing deep insight into human nature and its difficulty in making rapid changes, the Church leads us gradually through the pre-Lenten season and announces to us the joyful themes in the liturgical life of the Church, which can patiently lead us out of our brokenness, our alienation, and sinfulness, and step by step lead us into the profound mystery of true repentance and transformation, into true humility and love for God, for our fellow human beings, for God's beautiful creation. These are the themes of the four pre-Lenten weeks, when we open that extraordinary book of the Orthodox Church, the Lenten Triodeon, which contains this entire sacred tradition of the Orthodox Church up to the eve of Pascha. When we participate in these services of worship and hear their messages, we learn to avoid self-righteous prayer that is rejected by God and learn to pray humbly and contritely with a deep sense of repentance that is pleasing to God. In time, we become, once again, aware how far we may have wandered from our Father's

home, and how we need to come to our senses, like the prodigal son, and return to our loving Father. We also learn that God's unconditional love will also exercise in the end a righteous judgment upon us, which will be based upon our authentic and personal love for the human persons we may encounter in our life. In the fourth week before Lent begins, we are reminded of Adam, expelled from Paradise and lamenting his great loss.

By now we know that man was created for Paradise, for knowledge and communion with God. Sin and disobedience can exile us from this blessed life and our existence on earth can become an exile from God. At the beginning of Lent we are like Adam, standing outside of Paradise. Christ, the Savior of the world, opens the door of Paradise to everyone who follows him, and the Church, by revealing to us the beauty of God's Kingdom, makes our life a pilgrimage toward our heavenly Fatherland. On the Sunday of Forgiveness, we offer and receive forgiveness, and with a contrite and humble heart, make the transition into the "bright sadness," into the "glad grief" of Holy and Great Lent.

One who has taken seriously to heart, to mind and to body the pre-Lenten preparations, will be well trained and ready to continue the journey to the very end, with renewed effort and zealous dedication to the potential realities of the spirit, to that hidden "thirst and hunger" for God that is once again beginning to surge up from the depths of our soul. The first three days of Holy and Great Lent are crucial; getting through the first three days bodes well for the rest of the season. The first challenge is of course to keep a strict fast on Clean Monday, to spend the day in spiritual retreat from the world, to pray, to read Sacred Scripture, to attend worship services, and prepare to receive Holy Communion at the Pre-sanctified Liturgy offered on every Wednesday evening of Lent. The par excellence Lenten prayer to repeat often throughout Lent is that of St. Ephraim the Syrian: "O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, faint-heartedness, lust of power, and idle talk. But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to your servant. Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own faults and not to judge my brother. For you are blessed unto the ages of ages. Amen." This brief prayer, with its negative and posi-

### 2017 LENTEN LESSONS



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

SUPPLICATIONS &  
LENTEN LESSONS  
Fridays in Lent - 7 pm

March 3: Jennifer Rice  
(OCMC Missionary Candidate)  
March 10: Fr. Alexander Leondis  
March 17: Fr. Jim Moulketis  
March 24: Fr. Steven Klund  
March 31: Fr. Mark Leondis

(Lenten Suppers to follow)

# OUR COMMUNITY REGISTRY

FEBRUARY 2016 – JANUARY 2017

tive elements, serves as a “check list” for our personal effort in reviving our spiritual life and acquiring true and authentic repentance.

In the long journey of the six weeks in Holy Lent, the Saturdays and Sundays at the end of each week serve as a special “stopover,” as if anticipating the goal of Pascha, because they are Eucharistic days with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, and the strict ascetic fast is somewhat suspended by adding olive oil and wine to the cooked meals of these days. By the third week we may have become weary, and the Church lifts up for veneration the Holy Cross, to remind us of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ: “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mk8:34). Thus refreshed and encouraged the faithful continue into the second half of Great Lent, inspired by the ascetic St. John Climacos of Mt. Sinai, the author of the spiritual classic *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. On the fifth Sunday it is St. Mary of Egypt who is presented as an extraordinary example of profound repentance that transforms her former life of sinfulness into one of holiness.

During the first half of Great Lent the focus is on what we can do, with the grace of God, to bring about a revival of our spiritual life. During the second half of Great Lent, and particularly during the sixth and last week of Lent – the Week of the Palm – the focus is on what the Lord Jesus himself is about to do for our salvation, as he proceeds to Bethany to raise his friend Lazaros, and then to Jerusalem for his own voluntary Passion. This entire final week serves as a spiritual contemplation on the forthcoming encounter of Christ and death, as he goes to Jerusalem to put death to death. Holy and Great Lent comes to an end on Friday; the Saturday of Lazaros and Palm Sunday serve as an interlude before the Holy and Great Week.

Our challenge each year is to take Holy and Great Lent seriously and to make an honest effort to participate humbly and devoutly to all that the Orthodox Church has to offer during this blessed season. Even if our participation is partial and limited, one thing is indeed certain: we will not be disappointed; for our small and humble effort will be blessed and multiplied one hundred fold by the grace of our loving God and Savior Jesus Christ. His own Passion led, once and for all time, to his glorious Resurrection. Our own arduous yet humble journey through Holy and Great Lent will lead to a wonderful renewal of our own personal life in Christ, which began with our Baptism and which is renewed each year through Holy and Great Lent in the Orthodox Church.

## BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST

- Jan 2** – John Maximos Christakis  
*Child of: George & Christy*  
Godparent: Jeremy Christakis
- Feb 20** – Stefan Frank Greco  
*Child of: Jeff & Jasna Greco*  
Godparent: Aleksandar Predolac
- Feb 27** – Robert Clinton Santana  
*Adult Baptism*  
Godparent: Mike Koulianos
- Feb 28** – Athena Raven Morales  
*Child of: Ernesto Giovanni Morales & Alexandra Lindhom*  
Godparent: Stephenie Tsangarakis-Brady
- Feb 28** – Hunter Ariadni Skipper  
*Child of: George & Artemis Skipper*  
Godparent: Thomas Bean
- Mar 05** – Lucia Pierce  
*Child of: Jason Pierce & Jenica Welch*  
Godparent: Alexander William Rangos
- Mar 06** – Kostandino Chalvadakis  
*Child of: John and Eleni Chalvadakis*  
Godparent: Harry & Constantina Mirabile
- Apr 16** – Ryan Vucetic  
*Child of: Dusan & Chistine Vucetic*  
Godparent: Dejan & Michele Nesic
- Apr 17** – Alexis Buchakjian  
*Child of: Alexis Buchakjian*  
Godparent: Charles J. Buchakjian
- Apr 30** – Paul Frank Montone  
*Adult Baptism*  
Godparent: Nicholas & Valia Tratores
- May 21** – Francesca Intagliata  
*Child of: Anthony & Kristi Intagliata*  
Godparent: Elaine Theorides
- July 12** – Panayiotis Doukides  
*Child of: Theodore & Agelika Doukides*  
Godparent: Harry & Constantina Mirabile
- Aug 8** – Jaelyn Patsalos  
*Child of: Louis and Khami Patsalos*  
Godparent: Efthymia Copulos
- Aug 20** – Cody Firehock  
*Child of: Kurt and Candice Firehock*  
Godparent: Melissa Tropeano
- Sept 03** – Joseph Mirabile  
*Child of: Harry & Constantina Mirabile*  
Godparent: Yianni & Eleni Chalvadakis
- Sept 03** – Evangeline Kanarios  
*Child of: Angelo & Olympia Kanarios*  
Godparent: Thomas & Helen Economy

## CHRISMATED INTO CHRIST

- Apr 10** – Devin Smith  
Sponsor: Theodore & Angelika Doukides
- Jan 22** – Donald Russell Detwiler  
Sponsor: John Koutsoupis

## MARRIAGES

- Mar 11** – Robert Santana  
& Alexandra Elizabeth Economou  
*Koumbaroi: Mike and Stephanie Koulianos*
- May 28** – Quirino D’Alessandro &  
Constandina Alexie Mosiella  
*Koumbara: Constance Petrides*
- July 8** – Jeniel Parmar &  
Kyle Gerakopoulos  
*Koumbaroi: Alec Gerakopoulos & Alexandra Bettina*
- July 16** – Garrett Thomas Diamantides  
& Jessica Marie Scheuring  
*Koumbaroi: Nicholas Diamantides & Leigh Clarke*
- July 23** – Chris Vlachos & Katerina Koroniotis  
*Koumbaroi: Elizabeth Koroniotis & Natalie Koroniotis*
- Oct 3** – Stephen Allen Rentz, Jr.  
& Emily Sherman  
*Koumbaroi: Gerry & Georgia Carigan*
- Nov 21** – Christopher Donn Welling  
& Kristina Frances Havelos  
*Koumbaro: Paul Muchulas*
- Dec 3** – Delano Shiva Persad Lalla  
& Pamela Ramona Sutton  
*Koumbaroi: Nicholas E. Roussakis & Betty Baril*

## FALLEN ASLEEP IN THE LORD: MAY THEIR MEMORY BE ETERNAL!

- Feb 17** – Mary Orphanides
- Apr 07** – Stella Linardopoulos
- Apr 24** – Solon J. Chris
- May 20** – Kathryn Pappelis
- May 26** – George J. Regas
- June 27** – Harry P. Diamandis
- Aug 27** – Maria Garda
- Sept 09** – George Copulos
- Sept 19** – Sotirios Contos
- Sept 20** – Emanuel Mike Moraitis
- Oct 08** – Ida M. Vias
- Nov 28** – Vivian Jenetopulos
- Dec 07** – Jason Matthew Breger
- Dec 15** – Mary E. Klotsas
- Jan 05** – Stefanos J. Hadgigeorge
- Jan 19** – Nicolaos George Nicolas
- Jan 24** – Demetrios Koutsouris
- Jan 24** – Peter Zivanovich

## GOYA - LEADERSHIP TEAM

Over the winter things started heating up for our GOYA. The days following Christmas we took a group to the Winter Youth Rally in Atlanta. Our boys basketball team made the final four and finished with a record of 6-2 for the weekend. Our girls volleyball team, however, did even better by finishing in 2nd place! Days later, on Saturday January 7 we had over two dozen GOYANs and their families travel up to West Palm Beach for the annual Epiphany Celebration and Cross Dive presided over by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios. Afterwards our GOYANs spent the afternoon playing paintball with the youth groups from the other parishes in the district. Finally to round out January, many of our GOYANs served as food runners at our Greek Festival take-out line.



## 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 5, 2017 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 April 1, 2017 as part of our District GOYA Lenten Retreat at Saint Nicholas in Ft. Pierce. 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!

### WHAT'S COMING UP FOR GOYA...

- FEB. 19 - OFF-THE-WALL TRAMPOLINE CENTER (11:00AM)
- MARCH 15 - GOYA HANGOUT @ SAINT MARK (7:30PM)  
(FIRESIDE CHAT WITH CHIPOTLE)
- APRIL 1 - DISTRICT LENTEN RETREAT @ FT. PIERCE (9:00AM)

 Instagram FOR EVERYTHING SAINT MARK     
**FOLLOW @SAINTMARKBOCA ON**  
**FOR ALL NEWS ON GOYA, JOY AND MORE**




### 2017 Junior Division Topics (Grades 7-9)

1. The opening petition of the Divine Liturgy is "In peace let us pray to the Lord." What is this peace, and why do we need it to begin our prayers?
2. St. John Chrysostom said, "Our alms are judged not by the measure of our gifts, but by the largeness of our mind" (#52 on Matthew). Discuss how even small acts of kindness and generosity can make a difference.
3. Discuss the role of bread and its symbolism in the Bible and the life of the Church.
4. The Orthodox Church venerates saints and martyrs every day. Talk about a saint whose life inspires you to be a better Orthodox Christian.
5. Explain why the Orthodox Church focuses more on the resurrection than it does on the passion and suffering of Christ.

### 2017 Senior Division Topics (Grades 10-12)

1. The gap between the rich and the poor in the United States and worldwide is arguably wider than it has ever been. How should we as Orthodox Christians address such terrible financial inequality?
2. Although many people diet for health or vanity, the discipline of fasting is found in many religious traditions. What is the difference between dieting and fasting, and why is it important?
3. Psalms are an integral part of matins, vespers, and many other Church services. Talk about a psalm that impacts or influences your life.
4. The Lord commanded us not to create idols (Ex. 20:4), yet people continue to do so. Discuss the kinds of idols people make or worship today and the response that an Orthodox Christian should have when confronted by them.
5. Jesus said, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). When no political party represents genuine Christian teaching, how does an Orthodox Christian navigate political conversations and make political judgments?

## SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

PAN-ORTHODOX VESPERS  
MARCH 5, 2017 - 5 PM

Saint Philip Antiochian Orthodox Church  
4870 Griffin Road, Davie, Florida 33314  
[www.saintphilipflorida.com](http://www.saintphilipflorida.com)

Featuring Guest Speaker: Fr. Jim Katinas  
*Saint Demetrios - Ft. Lauderdale, Florida*

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

A Pan-Orthodox Youth Icebreaker and Discussion:  
"The IMAGE of GOD"



## DISTRICT METROPOLIS MEETING - MARCH 9 @ 6PM



All our faithful are invited to attend a District Metropolis Meeting at Saint Mark with Metropolitan Alexios and leaders from the Metropolis. Each District priest, PC President and one representative will be at Saint Mark that evening, along with the Saint Mark Parish Council and Ministry leaders. A Metropolis presentation, Q&A session and light refreshments will be on the agenda.

## 2017 SAINT MARK FESTIVAL

On behalf of the faithful stewards of Saint Mark, we express our deep gratitude to Parish Council Members Joe Pores and Steve Giakouminakis for co-chairing this year's Festival. We also thank the many volunteers who work tirelessly to make this year's Festival one of the best ever. As to date, it was the second highest grossing Festival ever (second to last year), despite the rain and cold front on Sunday. While the Festival is our biggest fundraiser at Saint Mark, we know that the greatest blessing of the Festival is the bringing together our faithful and building up the Body of Christ through fellowship, outreach and prayer. May God bless our Saint Mark family and let us continue to be focused on the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



## GREEK LANGUAGE SCHOOL



What a busy start to the New year! The Greek school children performed New Year's Kalanda during the Vasilopita luncheon.

January, we had an artoclasia, and some children read in celebration of the Three Hierarchs. Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom are patron saints of the Hellenic Letters and the Hellenic schools. These Holy Fathers acknowledged the church as the Church of God, they also taught that the church is a place for healing and renewal. They were great teachers and theologians directing people to the church. Finally, they were recognized in their use of the Greek language and the thought for the message and mission of the Church and the Gospel of Christ. There is a great article by Demetrios J. Constantelos on this topic that can be found on the Archdiocese's website ([www.goarch.org/ourfaith](http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith)) and I encourage all of you to read.

Our month came to a great conclusion with the children performing dances at the Festival. Many thanks to Irina Giakouminakis who taught the children.

We are looking forward to a busy spring.



## AHEPA / DOP - TIM SHARP



AHEPA Chapter 487 has had another banner year so far with respect to membership and exciting activities and events. Since September 2016 we have initiated or reinstated 15 new members.



Each month we have interesting speakers at our fellowship dinners such as Saint Mark parishioner Tom Bean who gave us an informative presentation on Florida Power & Light and how they have moved to cleaner natural gas and are increasing the amount of renewable energy sources such as solar.

Finally, we are proud to announce a very special AHEPA & DOP event coming up. Following the AHEPA and DOP dinner meeting on April 6, we will be putting together 10,000 meals for needy children and families in the greater Boca Raton area. This is the same program that was sponsored by Philoptochos last year and due to its resounding success the AHEPA-DOP are bringing it back for an encore performance. We need about 40-60 volunteers to assembling these meals in the approximate one hour time period and will be soliciting support from the all Saint Mark faithful, friends and family. For more information or if you would like to volunteer, please contact Mr. Frank Rekas at 954-253-5508 or by email at [frank.rekas@gmail.com](mailto:frank.rekas@gmail.com).

Here are some of the upcoming events on our calendar:

- **February 17th** – Valentines Dinner Dance at Benvenuto in Boynton Beach at 7pm.
- **February 26th** - Coffee hour sponsorship and AHEPA LIFE member recognition on
- **March 2nd** – Next dinner and fellowship featuring Saint Mark Parishioner, AHEPAN and author Dr. Stephen Silva who will talk about his book
- **April 6th** – Dinner and fellowship, with the Daughters of Penelope, we will be preparing 10,000 meals for Feeding Children Everywhere.

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

Our 2017 Mommy+Me classes are now underway! Over a dozen parents came with their children for our special Valentine's class. 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 [office@saintmarkboca.net](mailto:office@saintmarkboca.net) or call us at 561-994-4822 for more details.

# 2017 HOLY WEEK SERVICES

PALM SUNDAY	BRIDEGROOM SERVICE	6:30 PM
HOLY MONDAY	BRIDEGROOM SERVICE	6:30 PM
HOLY TUESDAY	BRIDEGROOM SERVICE	6:30 PM
HOLY WEDNESDAY	HOLY UNCTION	5:30 PM
HOLY THURSDAY	LITURGY OF LAST SUPPER 12 GOSPELS	9:00 AM 6:30 PM
HOLY FRIDAY	ROYAL HOURS APOKATHELOSIS LAMENTATIONS	9:00 AM 3:00 PM 7:00 PM
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
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 stop by the table in the Fellowship Hall following the Divine Liturgy.*

## 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.*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unction Supplies (oil, cotton balls, bags) - \$30 | <input type="checkbox"/> Floral Wreath (Thursday evening) - \$275     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Holy Friday (Sheet for Christ's body) - \$40      | <input type="checkbox"/> Flowers for the Iconostasis - \$125          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charcoal - \$50                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Paschal Candle (Priest) - \$100              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rose Water/Rose Petals - \$75                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Palms for Palm Sunday - \$180                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Box of Charcoal - \$25                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Easter Lilies - \$25                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Box of Incense - \$30                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Case of Communion Wine (Commandaria) - \$140 |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Saint Mark Easter Card - \$25                |

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_ In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

Names as you would like them to appear: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Total: \_\_\_\_\_



## THE ORDINATION TO THE HOLY DIACONATE OF

# *Dn. Bryan Giusti*

**O**n Sunday January 8, 2017 Rev. Dn. Bryan (John) Giusti was ordained to the Holy Diaconate, by His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta. This was the culmination of a weekend-long celebration, consisting of the Theophany of Christ and the blessing of the waters on Friday, and the West Palm Beach Epiphany Celebration and cross dive on Saturday. Following the Divine Liturgy our Saint Mark Philoptochos hosted another beautiful Epiphany Luncheon,



during which time His Eminence lead us in the cutting of the new year Vasilopita. Included below are Dn. Bryan's remarks in anticipation of his ordination from the service on January 8, 2017:

Your Eminence Metropolitan Alexios,

In the first book of Timothy, Chapter 3, Saint Timothy ascribes the role of the deacon and the necessary qualifications. While I will never feel worthy to live up to those qualifications, by the help of the Holy Spirit through

prayer, fasting and reading of Holy Scripture — I pray to be worthy of this Holy Office.

I fall and I get up; I struggle yet persevere. I strive to pick up my cross and follow Christ — not always successful — yet I persevere. Understanding that this life is a temporal existence and that I am traveler on a spiritual journey following the one who called me into existence, I find delight to serve Him on assist His Holy altar.

I thank my beloved wife, Cori, who introduced me to the Orthodox faith. Her love, continual support and encouragement has been the greatest blessing of my life.

I thank Fr. Mark — for his guidance, encouragement, and for challenging me in Orthodox growth and spirituality. As well as Fr. Alexander for his amazing knowledge of the Orthodox Church, and Fr. Stephen for his friendship and encouragement.

I would like to thank Deacon John and Stephanie for being my Big brother and Big Sister — your friendship is truly a gift from Heaven.



I want to thank my brothers in black robes and all the countless altar boys I have served with. It has indeed been a true blessing to offer my service to God through the Divine Services.

And now Your Eminence, with fear and trembling, I ask for your paternal prayers and blessings as you ordain me to the Holy Diaconate.

### ON THE HOLY DIACONATE

The ministry of the diaconate has been an essential part of the Orthodox Church since the time of Christ until the present day. The history of the office began shortly after Pentecost. According to the Book of Acts, the first deacons in the church were selected by the Holy Apostles themselves to assist them ministering to the widows and others among the faithful in need. Rev. Dn. John Chryssavgis writes “the role and function of the deacon is one of service--always in the context of love and concern—within the community.” We read of the deacon’s primary function to “serve” in the Gospel. At the Last Supper the disciples asked the Lord who would be considered the greatest. Christ answered them: “he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs, as he who serves...Yet, I am among you as the one who serves.” (Luke 22:26-27) In his humility, Christ then is the first deacon or minister, “one who serves.”



**SAINT MARK**  
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