

THE CORNERSTONE

St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church
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**DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC,
HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE WILL BE
FORTHCOMING VIA EMAIL.**

APRIL

April 12 Palm Sunday
April 18 Holy Pascha

MAY

May 10 Mother's Day
May 28 Ascension

JUNE

June 7 Pentecost
May 12 Father's Day

THE CORNERSTONE

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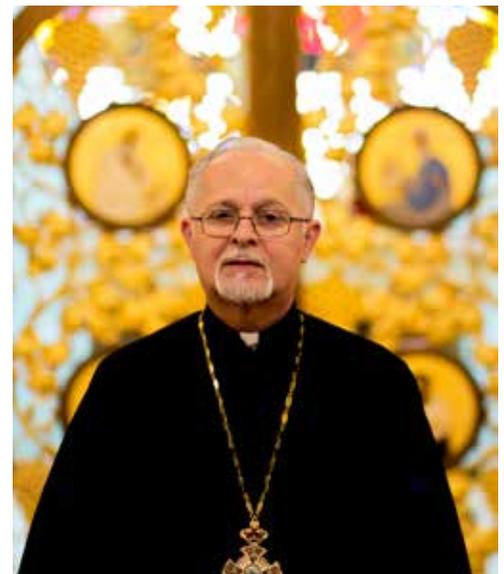
SPRING 2020

Remember the Needs of Others

Dear Elians,

I greet you and your loved ones with a holy kiss, praying that all are in the best of health and spirit as we draw near to the celebration of holy Pascha amidst the many trials which Coronavirus unleashed upon us.

We as Orthodox Christians are to be mindful of the faith which we hold in Christ, who for our sakes has overcome the world becoming the First born from the dead, victoriously ascending to his and our heavenly Father in the flesh, so that in him experience new life. We are to be reminded that "God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind", (2Timothy 1:7) so that we can make sound decisions in our action and interactions which will be pleasing to God. Therefore let us not be enslaved by the fear that paralyzes us so that we are afraid to live a normal healthy life, to worship God at home in our "little churches" until



we can gather together in our home of St. Elias, or to care for others. Rather let us strengthen our faith by prayer, and let us deny our inclination to think only of our needs but also of the needs of others. By practicing charity through giving alms, a helping hand, lending an ear, or a welcoming smile we can manifest the compassion of Christ. Living a life with such an attitude will propel us to a higher altitude closer to the warmth of the Eternal Son Jesus who through the

Continued on next page

Order of St. Ignatius

Submitted by Dona Savage



Let us commend all our lives to Christ... St. Ignatius said, "A Christian does not control his own life, but gives his whole time to God!"

Holy Spirit will inspire us to overcome the many hurdles, the many dark moments that challenge us as we all carry the ministry of the church forward. Let us remember the big rock that sealed the tomb was rolled away, and the darkness was overcome by light, sadness was replaced with joy, and despair was replaced by hope in Christ.

Beloved, Let us pray fervently that this evil virus be eradicated so that we can turn our attention to labor for the festival. The co-chairs Nabil Algattas and Rami Al-Khoury are working hard and let us all support them.

Blessing to you and your loved ones in the Resurrected Lord.

Fr. Elias Nasr



Metropolitan JOSEPH addresses new members of the Order of St. Ignatius, telling them of the importance of the organization.

Congratulations to our new members of The Order of St. Ignatius for the St. Elias Church, Syracuse, NY, Thomas Eassa, Rita Algattas, Victoria Hodge and Charles Shahin. May God grant them many years!

The Order embodies the four principles of humanitarianism, fellowship in Christ, love of the Orthodox Christian faith, and commitment to the Antiochian Archdiocese. These four principles equip the Saints (you and me) for the work of ministry. In its own uniquely effective way, the Order mobilizes the laity of this God-protected Archdiocese to accomplish vital ministry none can do alone.

Imagine the endless possibilities that can be accomplished when we, as ordinary people, combine our resources and change our gifts into something that is both meaningful and helpful to others who have need. Money is not necessarily the "root of all evil" for money in the right hands can be a tremendous source of good. There are many good reasons for EVERY Antiochian Orthodox to join. The following are just a few: If WE don't, who will? If Antiochian Orthodox Christians do not put their faith first, no one is going to do it for them; America needs Orthodoxy now more than ever before. The Orthodox faith is the candle that Christ lit 2,000 years ago; At least 70% of annual distributions are returned to the parishes via contribution to various departments serving our Archdiocese, such as Youth and Campus Ministry, Parish Development, Christian Education, and Summer Camp Scholarships; The Order donates annually to support

our retired clergy and their wives; The Order funds annual distributions to major projects outside our Archdiocese such as Project Mexico, Prison Ministry, IOCC, Teen Special Olympics, etc.; 100% support of the annual College Conference where our young adults gather for a week of prayer, learning, fellowship and witness to Christ as Orthodox Christians.

First and foremost, The Order is a Spiritual movement of action by doing good works in the name of the Lord as we embrace a lifetime of commitment to God.

The Order welcomes all who are faithful to the Orthodox Church, at least 18 years old, and a member of good standing in the local parish.

From The Order of St. Ignatius-Ambassador Handbook



New members of the Order of St. Ignatius are inducted by Metropolitan JOSEPH during his visit to St. Elias in February.

March is Antiochian Women Month

During the month of March, the Antiochian Women have been your ushers, your Epistle readers and those offering wisdom during their sermonettes. Here is your opportunity to read some of what has been shared over the past few weeks.

DELIVERED BY MRS. RIMA NASR,
WITH CONTENT CONTRIBUTION
FROM DR. SONIA NASR.

Thank you Abouna for giving me the opportunity to share my faith with our St. Elias family.

I'd like to touch upon the theme of this first Sunday of Lent and walk us through the journey that got us to this point and where we're heading from here.

The goal is to meet our glorious Lord Jesus Christ risen from the dead and having opened the gates of paradise for us to return home to God the Father.

As we prepare for our journey we start with the Sunday of Zacchaeus and his burning desire to meet Christ. No crowds nor any challenges could stop him, and so is our case when we come to church eager to meet Christ through Holy communion and, even more, to be united with Him.

What we are reminded of next, on the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee, is that humility is the foundation of all virtues that cleanse our hearts. I humble myself, ask forgiveness from those I have sinned against, repent, and return to the Father. We learned that on the Sunday of the Prodigal Son.

We are then reminded that this same loving God who is all merciful and compassionate is also a fair judge. We will be judged for sure upon His second coming. We don't know when that is and we better be ready. So on meat-fare Sunday we abandon meat, establish peace with God's creation, and seek to start our journey of fasting, prayer, and acts of mercy. Lent is a journey of cleansing and purification and that starts by asking forgiveness from one another on cheese-fare Sunday, remembering the banishment of Adam and Eve from paradise because they did not obey God and did fast from eating the fruit of the tree of life. So we started lent earlier this week ban-



ished from paradise, and we need to find our way back to meet Christ.

This first Sunday of lent is the Sunday of Orthodoxy and the veneration of icons. We cannot witness if we are not true to our Master. We have to uphold our true faith, our Orthodoxy, and defend this faith, even if the whole world is against us. Venerating the icons is a testimonial of this true faith. They are our windows to heaven and the clouds of witnesses that St. Paul spoke about. Today's Gospel reading said "We have found Jesus Christ. Come and see..." And if you want to see Jesus, our God who became fully human, you can see Him in the icon.

In the year 787, the Seventh Ecumenical Council decided that icons should be venerated but not worshipped. However, in early 800s, the emperor of Constantinople was against the icons and had ordered that they be destroyed, burned, and stripped away from churches. He fell for the heresy of the iconoclasts who wrongly believed that honoring icons is like worshipping idols. The emperor died and his son Michael, the heir to the throne, was too young to rule, so his mother, Empress Theodora, ruled the Byzantine empire. In year 843 she assembled a regional synod that proclaimed that icons should be venerated. She led a procession to restore the icons in Hagia Sophia.

At the end of the service today we will do a similar procession to remember the restoration of icons in 843 and the teachings before of the Orthodox bishops who taught us to venerate icons, and we pass

on these teachings to our children and keep icons at our homes and all around us to pray for the saints to help us.

Very importantly, we are the living icons who were made according to the image of God and where The Holy Spirit dwells. We, the loveliest of God's creations, make Christ visible through our acts of love and mercy. Our distorted image is repaired when we "put on Christ" again, and fight evil through fasting, vigil, alms-giving, repentance, forgiveness, active participation in the sacraments, and of course prayer. This subject of prayer will come up next week in the theme of the second Sunday of Lent.

The second Sunday commemorates St. Gregory Palamas, who also defended the true faith and taught us about prayer. Like in The Lord's prayer, we converse with God, from the depth of our soul, whether privately at home, or in the community of the faithful at church. The fullest of this prayer is when we give thanks and glory to Him during the Eucharist and take the light and peace of Christ to illumine the world.

As you see, the first two Sundays of Lent are about cleansing of one's being and holding on to the true faith. The last two Sundays are about St. John of the Ladder and Mary of Egypt, two living icons of Christ who teach us about humility in the pursuit of Christ. Both teach us about burning the desires of the flesh and focusing the eyes of our souls on the light of Christ and living according to His teachings.

As for Mary of Egypt, she is a true icon of repentance who also desired God's grace and was able to turn her life around to holiness.

In the middle of the fast stands the cross, the tree of life, reminding us that the journey of Lent is a voluntary crucifixion of our desires and passions so we may defeat evil, follow Christ to death and also rise with our glorious Lord.

As we continue our journey of "bright sadness" towards the empty tomb of our Savior let us remember to be imitators of Him who "emptied himself" taking our form, so we might also become divine like Him, through His grace. Ultimately, this is our journey from cleansing to illumination to theosis. May God bless you during this holy season and always.

VIOLETTE HUMSI

My sermonette is about Mary and Martha.

“As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her”.

Mary chose listening to the teachings of

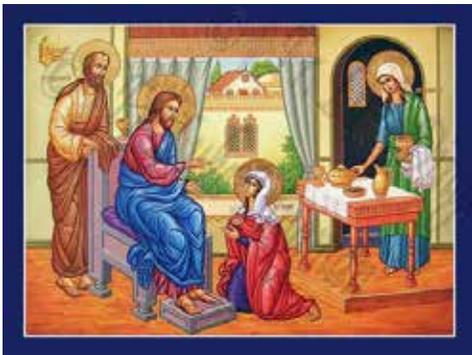
Jesus over helping her sister prepare food. Jesus responded that she was right because only one thing is needed, “one thing” apparently meaning listening to the teachings of Jesus. This goes in line with words by Jesus that “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” (Matthew 4:4), and The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life, meaning eternal life.

Two different verbs describe her distress: “worry” and “distract”.

Distress, worry and distract.

How many of us aren’t facing these three emotions? In general and more so nowadays?

When I chose to talk about Mary and Martha, it was before we were seriously hit by the covid-19 situation. But how appropriate it is now to tie these two together. How many of us are like Martha busy with the futile and superficial (myself included)? I’m not



gonna go over the examples of what keeps us busy and away from the core. We all know what they are: our looks, our belongings, our properties etc... Yet Jesus has said: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” And that’s what really matters.

The word of God is the number one nutrient we seriously need. The rest is fluff and we allow the fluff to consume us and we live as such consumed by our material needs.

If you have Christ and God at the center of your life then you shouldn’t worry and stress. We should trust that we are in the good hands of our Lord. When we’re scared we need to remember that it’s the devil pulling us away from God and Christ.

Covid-19, perfectly timed with the lent-en season, reminds us of what we really need— to slow down, to realize what really matters: our families, the people we love, our health and making time and ways to share with those in need.

The health situation is here to remind us that we need support and health more than we need to accumulate food and toilet paper. We will not starve, but we are aware of people who might: the underprivileged, the elderly ...

This big health situation is nothing but a tiny tiny virus that’s reminding us that we’re all in this together.

No one is better.

Money isn’t the answer.

We have just learned that Prince Charles got the virus. The future king of England! In the eyes of God we’re all equal and all the fluff and material belongings don’t help much.

Have we found a way to stop accumulating goods and to start sharing with the needy instead?

My sermonette is about Mary and Martha and it’s up to you to decide which one you want to be.



President Gloria Dayeh reads the Epistle during Antiochian Women Month.

Antiochian Women Prayer

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

O Christ our God, we are all pledged to serve Thee with our whole being. Help us to continue to work for Thee through our Church without seeking praise, without seeking personal gain, without judging others, without a feeling that we have worked hard enough and now must allow ourselves rest. Give us strength to do what is right and help us to go on striving and to remember that activities are not the main thing in life. The most important thing is to have our hearts directed and attuned to Thee. Amen.

Metropolitan JOSEPH Celebrates Divine Liturgy at St. Elias February 23, 2020



Please donate your new or used technology devices to help our patients communicate with their loved ones.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the state mandated visitation restrictions, Crouse Health has a significant number of patients who are not allowed visitors at this time. We also have NICU families, living both locally and at great distance, who can only have one parent visiting at a time. FaceTime, Zoom and other technology platforms will help our Little Fighters bond with their parents.

To contribute one or more devices, contact the Crouse Health Foundation at CrouseFoundation@Crouse.org or 315-470-7702 to arrange for pick-up, drop off or shipping information.

In addition to hardware donations, financial donations have always played a critical role in furthering the mission of Crouse Health. Now, more than ever, it is crucial to the continuity of the hospital's work.

Your support will provide our heroic physicians and staff with the tools they urgently need to care for our families, friends and neighbors during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please make a gift by visiting <https://www.crouse.org/give/donatenow/>.

We are in need of the following devices so that we can help more patients "visit" with their family and friends:

- iPhone 4 or later generations
- iPad Pros
- iPad Minis
- iPad 2 or later generations
- iPod touch 4th generation
- Amazon Kindles
- Any Android device that has a front facing camera
- Both new and used devices will be accepted (the latter will be sterilized and restored to factory settings).



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY



April

Saher Zawaideh & Lana Hazou	9
Habib & Milia Alamir	13
Edward & Nuhaila Wazen	22
James & Hilda Khammar	28

May

John & Simona Tadros	2
Nader & Gada Jiries	3
Mohammad & Nawal Tadros	3
Musa & Basma Shamma	5
Soubhi Azar & Nour Warde	13
Bob & Kathy Fedrizzi	15
Stefan & Eleni Kontopoulos	26
Nader & Yvonne Atallah-Yunes	27
Gary & Debra George	27

June

Nicholas & Yvonne Abdo	3
Nader & Heather Awwad	5
Munjed & Jane Essi	7
Faris & Lisa Sousou	8
Shibel & Anna Jabaji	10
Jeurje & Suha Alamir	14
Nabil & Annette Habayeb	18
Sameer & Nadima Alamir	22
George & Georgette Mtanos	23
Edward & Shirley Sabbagh	25
Andrew & Chrystal Mullen	29

Memory Eternal

Nadim Nasser Jan 18, 2020
Fahed Jiries January 31, 2020

Sunday of Orthodoxy

This is the Faith of the Apostles, this is the Faith of the Fathers, this is the Faith of the Orthodox, this is the Faith which has established the Universe.

- Confession of faith of the Day of Orthodoxy

Father Elias and Deacon Nicholas lead the Sunday School children in the procession in celebration of the Sunday of Orthodoxy!



Thought for the day!

Live in gratitude, and you will never be disappointed. See that your afflictions are not there to punish you, but to purify you and cleanse you of the delusions of this world. You all are being prepared each day for great things. Be wise, and prepare for the future, but do not be worried about it. Be prudent, but not obsessed. The man who constantly worries achieves nothing but stress and anxiety. Instead, pray and draw close to God. Believe that He will help you, and suddenly, you will see how He has already.

+ Archbishop JOSEPH



BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS



April

Rima Nasr	1
Rajeh Makhoulf	4
Elias Sawalha	6
Antoine Azar	8
Stephen Nickolas	10
Jeurje Alamir	11
Suhail Ashkar	11
Issa Dannoun	11
Clair Abdo	14
Vicki Shehadeh	15
Yara Alamir	16
Rajai Fashho	17
Razan Fashho,	17
Simon Azar	18
Andre El-Amir	20
Grace George	20
Mary Kammar	20
Natalie Rott	20
Anthony Abboud	21
Larry Nasser	23
John Mitrzyk	24
Helen Rezak	24
Suleiman Dayeh	26
Gabriel Elias	28

May

Sami Khoury	1
Sana El-Amir	3
Sam Azar	5
Thomas Eassa	5
Khader Fashho	5
Mayjon Ghrayyeb	5
Elias Abboud	6
Mahfouz Abu-Manneh	6
Roy Nasr	6
Joanne Craig	7
Joseph Jacobs	8
Nada Tadros	9
Violette Humsi	10
Layla Soto	10
Nour Warde	10
Lina Abu-Manneh	13
Nimer Shehadeh	14
Robert Tadros	14
Cindy Abdo	15
Maria Khalifeh	15
Jabra Tarazi	15
Naya Zawaideh	15
Mary Tawil	16
Rana Madden	19
Mary Abdulky	20
Solomon Dayeh	21
Aliah Mahshie	21
Mohammad Tadros	21
Tawil Laurie	21
Jihan Khoury	22
Sydney Dash	23
Roene Nasr	23
Nicholas Sauro	24
Suhail Awwad	27
Alaina Craig	27
Ramy Guindy	28
Charles Kammar	28
Nadine Savage	31

June

Elias Gantos	1
Isabella Furbeck	3
Douglas Monsour	3
Marc Jabaji	4
Salwa Makhoulf	5
Georgette Mtanos	5
Zouheir Totari	5
Tonya Warner	5
Nabil Habayeb	6
Ramzi Khairallah	6
John Tadros	6
Grace Khairallah	7
Lila Habayeb	8
Cailie Urbas	8
Naya Alamir	11
Anna Jabaji	11
Nicholas Abdo	12
Tony Caporizzo	13
Sameer Alamir	14
Sammer Essi	14
Nabila Nasser	14
James Khammar	15
Basma Shamma	15
Shukri Dayeh	16
Neil Khammar	18
Diane Sopp-Sauro	19
Hilda Dannoun	20
Andrew Eassa	20
Habib Alamir	21
Helen Abdo	22
Abraham Gabriel	23
Mazen Makhoulf	23
Rajeh Makhoulf	23
Alexander Eassa Jr.	25
Christopher Mtanos	27
Karen Gabriel	29

Parishioners- If you have not been receiving email from St. Elias and would like to, please give your current email to Dona Savage.

Also, if you have moved we need to update your address and phone number. We are attempting to update our database.