

THE CORNERSTONE

St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church
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APRIL

- 2 7pm 3rd Akathist
- 7 6:30 pm 4th Pre-Sanctified
- 9 7pm 4th Akathist
- 14 6:30pm 5th Pre-sanctified Liturgy
- 15 7pm Little Compline - Canon of St. Andrew
- 16 7pm 5th Akathist
- 21 6:30pm Pre-sanctified
- 23 7pm Little Compline - Canon of Raising Lazarus
- 24 10am Lazarus Saturday Liturgy
- 25 Palm Sunday- Holy Week Begins
- 25, 26, 27 7pm Bridegroom Service
- 28 7pm Holy Unction
- 29 10am St. Basil Divine Liturgy
7pm Reading of 12 Passion Gospels

MAY

- 1 Holy Saturday 10am Liturgy
- 2 Pascha
- 1&2 10pm Pascal Canons
10:15pm Rush Service
11:00pm Divine Liturgy
- 2 11:00am Agape Service
Meat Preparation TBA

JUNE

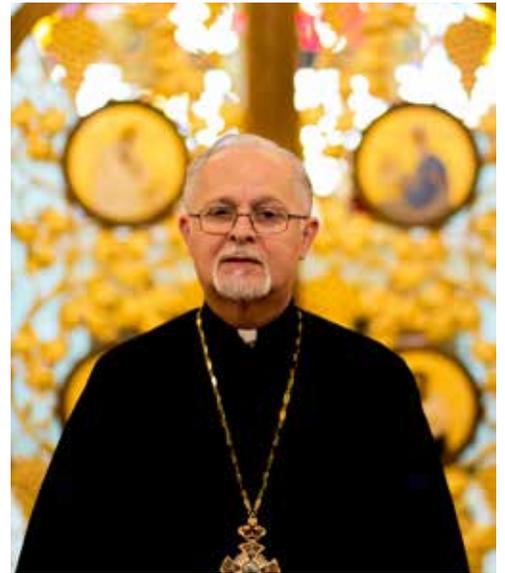
- 5 10am Baking Baklawa
- 9 6pm Ascension Evening Divine Liturgy
- 12 10am Baking Baklawa
- 19 Baking Graybeh

Spring 2021

Find Strength Together Through Faith

Dear Elians:

I greet you with a holy kiss, praying that our Lenten journey will be spiritually edifying and empowering to overcome worldly cares neither by denying them nor by suppressing them rather by leaving them at the mercy of Christ's Cross so that one can experience genuine transformation in the resurrected Christ.



Beloved dear to Christ, we have been living in this horrible Covid pandemic for over a year, our way of life has in many aspects changed and yet we who have hope must continue to keep our focus on Christ whose mercy will grant us strength and refreshment to carry on the challenges otherwise our life becomes empty, meaningless, and valueless. Negative attitude will lead not just to anger but also to anguish, frustration, depression and ultimately to the darkening of our spirit unto death. Christ beloved gave us the promise and "Lo, I am with

you always even to the end of the age." [Matthew 28:20]

Having him with us is the assurance of our empowerment by him, in him and through him that we can live a healthy, meaningful and joyful life even in the midst of the world tribulation; for our Lord himself said "in Me you may have peace , in the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world". [John 16:33] It is in this

Continued on next page

Find Strength Together Through Faith Cont.

understanding, that our faith will grow stronger, and the vision of our souls will be perfected in beholding the resurrected Christ.

Therefore as we continue in our Lenten journey let us all remain vigilant and with vigor immerse ourselves in intensive prayer, fasting, self-examination, repentance and almsgiving so that our souls will be embraced by the mighty arms of Christ. So again, let us place our cares before his cross and as we pray “let us commend ourselves and one another unto Christ our God”. [Divine Liturgy] Thus collectively we will experience the loving unity amongst ourselves as the true body of the resurrected Christ that cares and shares the burden of his church.

I extend the greetings and love of our Beloved Father in Christ Metropolitan Joseph and our Bishop Alexander to all of you and asking you to continue in your prayers and not to neglect your unselfish support for one another and your church that when the pandemic is vanquished we will all worship together.

May our Lord bless you and your family during this holy Season and may the Holy Spirit abound in your hearts.

In Christ,
Fr. Elias Nasr

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY, MARCH 21



Orthros of the Feast, Tone 4

On the first Sunday in Lent, we commemorate the decision of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787 A.D. upholding the use of holy icons in Orthodox worship. We also commemorate today the unity of Orthodox belief and the oneness of our Faith—across languages, continents, and centuries.

As the prophets beheld, as the Apostles have taught,... as the Church has received... as the teachers have dogmatized... as the Universe has agreed... as Grace has shown forth... as Truth has revealed... as falsehood has been dissolved... as Wisdom has presented... as Christ Awarded... thus we declare... thus we assert... thus we preach Christ our true God, and honor as Saints in words, in writings, in thoughts, in sacrifices, in churches, in Holy Icons; on the one hand worshipping and reverencing Christ as God and Lord; and on the other hand honoring as true servants of the same Lord of all and accordingly offering them veneration.

Today hath appeared, a day full of joy, because the splendor of true doctrine shineth forth brilliantly, and the Church of Christ now sparkleth, adorned by the elevation of the Icons of the saints and their illustrating pictures, and believers attain there a unity rewarded of God.



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.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY!



In England, when people bow before the queen, they do so out of respect, but it does not imply any repentance. But when we bow before Christ, it means that we are ready to empty ourselves from an evil mind, from any evil thought or act, or any evil thing in our lives.

+ Archbishop JOSEPH

SAINT IGNATIUS
 DE COEBOURNE
 OF ANTIOCH



THE ORDER OF ST. IGNATIUS

Everything you need to know about The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch!

Submitted by Dona Savage-

In January 1975, of Thrice Blessed Memory Metropolitan PHILIP saw the need to study the possibilities of a new organization that would challenge the laity of the Archdiocese to a new dimension of service.

A small committee was organized under the Chairmanship of Albert Joseph and was composed of Ernest Saykaly, Robert Andrews, Robert Laham, Theodore Mackoul, Archpriest Paul Schneirla and Archpriest Antony Gabriel. During the Archdiocese Convention held in Louisville, Kentucky, in July 1975, a preliminary report was filed at the General Assembly. The Metropolitan accepted the findings of the report and by the Archdiocese Convention held in 1976 in San Francisco, CA, the provisional chairman, Albert Joseph, was installed and the first inductions to the Order took place.

It was during the Patriarch's historic trip that the newest Archdiocesan organization was called into being and was given his Apostolic blessings. The first officers and chaplain were formally installed and many new members were inducted at the Washington Archdiocesan conclave in 1977. Ever since his Beatitude, Partriarch ELIAS IV, of Thrice Blessed Memory, and our beloved primate, of Thrice Blessed Memory Metropolitan PHILIP, formally blessed and inaugurated The Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch, an unprecedented number of lay persons were awakened to their global Archdiocesan responsibilities and scores of earnest women and men have come forward to join The Order.

From a handful of dedicated and

devoted women and men, The Order has grown to thousands of members and continues to grow daily. The projects of The Order continue to attract Antiochian Orthodox Christians from all over North America to join this productive ministry. Members of The Order come from all walks of life: secretaries, executives, factory workers, hospital personnel, home managers. Some members are young, some are senior citizens, some have young families and some have grandchildren. All share a common love for Christ and his Church and a common belief that through The Order they can collectively assist our Archdiocese in performing Christ's work.

By the Grace of God, the growth of The Order has contributed, since its inception, over \$25 million to many worthwhile Archdiocesan departments and projects and outside our Archdiocese such as: Missions and Evangelism, Youth Ministry, Camp Scholarships, Antiochian Camps, assistance to married seminarians, the Antiochian Village, Heritage Museum and learning Center, retired Clergy housing Allowance, the College Conference, Christian Education, the Special Olympics, Project Mexico, the Chinese Translation Project, Holy Trinity Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Montreal Ladies Aid Society, Flood and Earthquake Relief, the International Orthodox Christian Charities and many, many more.

"We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give"

St. Elias Middle Eastern Festival

2021 FESTIVAL IS ON THE CALENDAR!

The Parish Council and its festival committees have already begun preparations for our ____ Annual Middle Eastern Festival, scheduled for July 9 - 11. Due to the success of last year's drive-thru-style system and the uncertainty of restrictions due to COVID19, this year's festival will run the same as last year's, but with an additional day!

All are welcome and encouraged to participate again this year. Please review the cooking schedule and also think about how your talents could benefit our Festival and ultimately St. Elias.

Sponsorship opportunities will be announced soon as well as the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets!

Top prize in \$5000 cash!



"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

DATE	ITEM
March 20	Making the Kaak
May, date TBD	Chicken and meat marination
May 29	Ghraybeh
June 12	Chocolate Baklava
June 26	Pistachio Baklava
July 03	Garlic Paste
July 05	Falafel
July 05	Hummus
July 06	Bread preparation
July 08	Tabbouleh (morning shift and evening shifts)
July 09 – Festival Day	Zalabieh making

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN MONTH SERMONETTE

by Nujoud Makhlouf

Today is Forgiveness Sunday and it is also the beginning of our Lenten journey. In the start of Chapter 18, in the Gospel of Matthew, Peter asks our Lord how many times should we forgive our fellow brothers and sisters, seven times? In response, Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

Jesus's answer to Peter demonstrates that there is no limit to the amount of times we forgive one another. In our daily Lord's Prayer we say, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." The Lord continues tell another more important parable about forgiveness to the disciples. This parable teaches us WHY forgiveness is so important. The Lord said: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants."

When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him 10,000 talents which is equivalent to 150,000 years' wages! As he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, "Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." Out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

But that same servant came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him only 100 denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, "Pay what you

owe." So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." He refused and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.

When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his lord delivered him to the torturers, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.

This parable has a deeper meaning beyond forgiving debts. Its not about money, but about forgiving sins. We are the servants of God, our heavenly king. Through our repentance and prayer, our heavenly King forgives our sins, no matter how many we have committed. Our Lord forgives us with true compassion and love; there is no limitation to the Lord's forgiveness.

Our spiritual heart works very much like our heart works physically. Our heart only works because of its circulation process.

If the flow of blood from your heart stops, your body can't receive the nourishment it requires. If you can't ask for forgiveness, your heart will not be able to give forgiveness. We can only receive forgiveness if we give it. We have to always remember that God has forgiven us 10,000 times more than we are asked to forgive others, and do our best to be as forgiving as He is!



ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN MONTH SERMONETTE

by Mai Makhlouf

Do you ever feel as if you are alone and not even God hears your prayers? In the same way that Jesus had to carry his own cross – suffering is a part of every life and is unfortunately unavoidable, both for sinners and saints. While no one enjoys it, in the Orthodox Church, suffering can be a tool for our redemption and salvation. And when we go through these difficult times, we can truly find God.

In John 16:33, Jesus tells us "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." 2020 (and 2021 so far) could be called the year of tribulation. COVID 19 took a terrible toll on all of us, creating anxiety and stress, physical illness, isolation and loneliness, even death. No one has been spared as the world deals with this global pandemic, yet few speak of how our faith can help us get through this.

Today's Gospel reading is a good example of that. "And they came, bringing to Jesus a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above Him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Jesus could have simply said to the paralytic "Rise, take up your pallet and walk" but doesn't. He was very deliberate in his response, first forgiving the sins of the paralytic. In providing this order for us, it is clear what is the priority for Christ; by forgiving his sins, the paralytic moves closer to God and is ultimately healed.

This is one of my favorite passages that we hear during Great Lent. How faithful is the paralytic, who is only looking to get closer to Jesus. He isn't bitter or lamenting his disability. How resourceful and supportive are his

friends, removing part of the roof to help him get to Jesus. This passage serves as an example of how we as Orthodox should be preparing for Easter. We must come to Christ in faith and let Him heal us of our spiritual sins. Nothing should deter us from getting to Christ, who alone can heal us. And most importantly, we must help each other come to Christ.

Suffering, disease and death are not punishments from God. I know that it feels like it is, but it isn't. During these times when you are feeling most alone and not sure how you are going to be able to survive, remember that Christ is with you. We must continue to remember Christ and how He suffered for us during our challenges and difficult times - it is only through Christ that we are made whole.

The pain and suffering we experience are unique to each of us and so are the many lessons they teach us. The cross that you bear will strengthen your character, sharpen your faith, and remind us of our priorities. God allows us the experience of suffering in the hope that we will be like the paralytic, ever striving to move closer to God, knowing that only through God can you be healed.

As we go through our different stages of life, let us not be discouraged when the trials, temptations and tribulations come. They will come, they will leave and they will return. It is during these times it is important to keep connected to church, connected to each other, and connected to your faith through prayer, fasting and the sacraments. Remember that God loves us and that He is with us always. It is with patience and thanksgiving and trusting in His love that we can endure all things and become more faithful Orthodox Christians. "O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love and mercy endures forever (Ps. 136:1)".

SPRING AHEAD IN FAITH

by Deacon Nicholas Mahshie

This season is a time of warming weather and nature coming back to life. As flowers bloom and animals are born, we are reminded of the innocence and beauty that exists in this world and that there is new life all around us. It's truly beautiful to watch winter melt into spring. I go outside and feel the sun bring new warmth. It's familiar but new all at once. As Christians, we are given new life and new mercies every morning. Spring provides a wonderful reminder to us that we should be living a full life and leaving the old dead parts of life behind. There is always hope during the coldest, darkest winters of life. The hope that spring will come and new life will come forth!

Sometimes in order to come into a new season and spring forward in faith, we have to let go of the old season. One of the many lessons life teaches us is to let go. We can't hang on to past hurts, past struggles, and past relationships. And, sometimes this means we have to give ourselves time to grieve in order to move forward. We may have to let ourselves feel the loss, be sad for a little while, and talk to someone who cares. After we've grieved, we can pick ourselves up and start looking ahead once again.

As spring starts to surface and the trees begin to bloom, we can see God's reminder to align our

hearts to the new thing He's doing for us. Let us go to prayer, and fasting, and repentance as we embrace all the "new" He has in store for us. Jesus' death paid the penalty for your past sin as well as all the sin you'll commit today and in the future. He's that powerful! And that same power is now in you. When you were baptized, you receive the Holy Spirit. He is our guide and gives us the ability to overcome sin. You may not feel instantly stripped of all of your imperfections and insecurities. Part of learning to follow Jesus step by step is learning to hear from Jesus and do what He says.

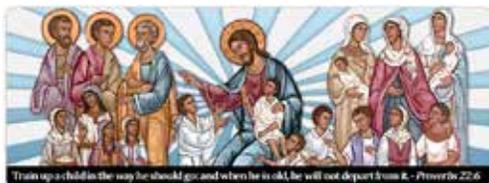
As we follow Jesus, our actions and desires begin to change. Instead of wanting the things our old selves would want and doing the things our old selves would do, we find ourselves wanting what Jesus wants and doing what Jesus would do.

TEEN SOYO

Father Elias is pleased to announce the appointment of Ramzy and Diala (Habib) Makhlouf as the new Teen SOYO advisors!

Both come to this position with great experience and enthusiasm. We are so grateful to have them!

As more become vaccinated and restrictions begin to loosen, we pray that we will have an active, invigorated Teen SOYO once again!



What's the Buzz? CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

by Lina Abu-Manneh

Sunday School continues to be on Zoom every Sunday at 9 - 9:30 am for the older kids (grades 3 and up), and at 7:00 - 7:30 pm for the younger group (grades K-2). Samantha and I teach the older group, and Milia teaches the younger one.

For both groups, the first 15 minutes are dedicated to a lesson, and other 15 minutes are dedicated to a game.

We talk about various topics including the Bible reading for that Sunday, or we read about the life of a saint, other times we watch a video from the "Be the Bee" series on YouTube, which I encourage you all to check out and play for your kids. It touches on various topics that we can all relate to.

More recently, and in order to get the older kids more engaged, we asked them what they liked to talk about during the Sunday school lesson, as we wanted our lessons to be relatable and useful to them in their day-to-day lives. Their answers included topics like addiction to smoking, alcohol and drugs, bullying, the pandemic and even the stimulus bill!

So we started a series of lessons about addiction, always bringing it back to our faith and what the bible says about issues like these. We're so happy we're discussing such important topics with the kids, I hope that they will remember our chats when they're faced with situations in school or with their friends where they may feel pressured to make a bad decision.

We always end our lesson with a fun game, Bingo, Scattergories, or memory games. The winner is mailed a prize in the mail!

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
Shirley & Edward Sabbagh	25
Andrew & Chrystal Mullen	29

RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE IN A TIME LIKE NO OTHER!



We are experiencing a time like no other. We have been challenged in every aspect of our lives—staying at home, working from home, wearing masks, and helping our children with their schoolwork. Our social life has diminished because we have not been able to visit family and friends. Our spiritual life has shifted largely to "virtual community," away from our beloved parishes.

This virus has had no boundaries. Some 27 million cases have been identified in the United States alone; almost 500,000 lives have been lost, and millions have been hospitalized. COVID has affected everyone in one way or another. And just imagine how it has affected those less fortunate! How can they combat this pandemic, given the lack of resources available?

For the most part everyone has done their best to combat this invisible adversary. Some have been able to respond with courage and resilience, adapting to the "new normal," but others have not been so fortunate, suffering in silence and struggling not to lose hope.

During this pandemic, the Archdiocese, through its Food for Hungry People and Charitable Outreach program, has made every effort to be of assistance by reaching out to those in need in our parishes and in our local communities. For almost five decades we have committed ourselves to helping the hungry, the homeless, the afflicted, and the oppressed. There is no better time than now for us to renew our commitment to extending kindness and compassion to others. We thank you for helping us rise to the challenge in this "time like no other."

May God bless you and your families and keep you healthy and safe.

Robin Lynn Nicholas
Food for Hungry People and Charitable Outreach

"The bread you do not use belongs to the hungry. The garment hanging in your closet that you do not use is the garment of the person who is naked. The shoes you do not wear are the shoes for the person who is barefoot. The money you keep locked away is the money for the poor." - St. Basil the Great

BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS



April

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



Churching of Sam Samir Alamir
and his mother Yara and father
Habib on March 28, 2021.

May

Sami Khoury	1
Sana El-Amir	3
Sam Azar	5
Thomas Eassa	5
Khader Fashho	5
Mayjon Ghrayyeh	5
Elias Abboud	6
Mahfouz Abu-Manneh	6
Roy Nasr	6
Joanne Craig	7
Nada Tadros	9
Violette Humsi	10
Layla Soto	10
Nour Warde	10
Lina Abu-Manneh	13
Nimer Shehadeh	14
Robert Tadros	14
Maria Khalifeh	15
Jabra Tarazi	15
Naya Zawaideh	15
Rana Madden	19
Mary Abdulky	20
Solomon Dayeh	21
Aliah Mahshie	21
Mohammad Tadros	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
Diala Makhlof	5
Salwa Makhlof	5
Georgette Mtanos	5
Tonya Warner	5
Nabil Habayeb	6
Ramzi Khairallah	6
Ramzy Makhlof	6
John Tadros	6
Grace Khairallah	7
Lila Habayeb	8
Cailie Urbas	8
Naya Alamir	11
Anna Jabaji	11
Sophia Makhlof	11
Nicholas Abdo	12
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
Mazen Makhlof	23
Rajeh Makhlof	23
Alexander Eassa Jr.	25
Christopher Mtanos	27
Karen Gabriel	29

THE CORNERSTONE

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