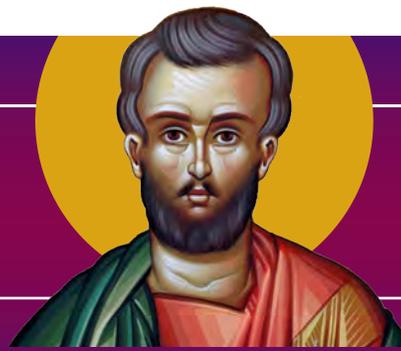




THE Message



SAINT MARK

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LENT • 2014

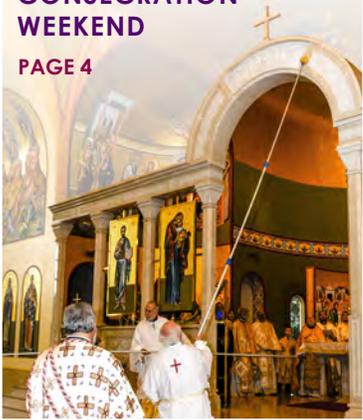


THANKS TO ALL WHO MADE OUR CONSECRATION POSSIBLE!



AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE CONSECRATION WEEKEND

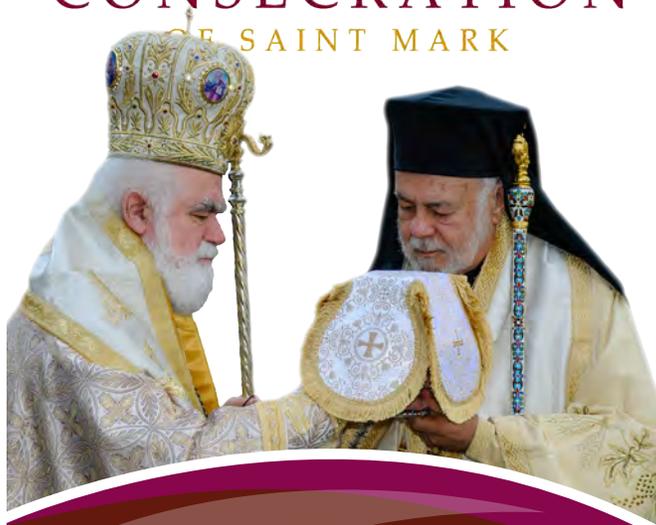
PAGE 4



A LOOK BACK AT THE 2014 BOCA RATON GREEK FESTIVAL PAGE 8



THE CONSECRATION OF SAINT MARK



FEBRUARY 20-22, 2014

Last month brought the community of Saint Mark its long-awaited Consecration. A dream that began as a small mission parish in 1981 was realized at last when His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta consecrated the sanctuary. Metropolitan Alexios was assisted by His Grace Bishop Dimitri of Xanthos who, fittingly, also celebrated the Church's ground breaking in 1996.

The weekend started with a Thursday night memorial service, remembering those in the community who have fallen asleep. The next night the two hierarchs arrived with the relics of Saints Panteleimon, Kyrikos, and the Martyrs of Daou Pentelis to be sealed in the Holy Altar Table. Finally, the Sanctuary was consecrated on Saturday, February 22 forever dedicating it as Christian House of God.



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

2100 NW 51st Street
Boca Raton, FL 33431

Clergy:

Rev. Fr. Mark Leondis,
Rev. Fr. Alexander Leondis,
Rev. Fr. Steven Klund,
Rev. Dn. John Christakis, MD

Office Staff:

Dawn Riger, Parish Administrator
Patti Ali, Bookkeeper

Church Maintenance:

Yosban Pazbalino & Tim Caldwell

Office Volunteers:

Pat Anthony, Niki Core, Joann Haros,
Petitsa Macaulay, Marlene Buettner,
Pres. Mary Leondis, Debbie Fread,
Kay Poly, Alexandra Van Horn

Parish Council: John Koutsoupis

Philoptochos: Pam Parent

Choir: Sophia Christakis

Chanters: Ramona Bean,
George Demopoulos, Art Poly

Ushers:

Tim Sharp & Girard Mitchell

Acolytes: Brian Giusti

Church School: Helen Lang

Youth Choir: Virginia Barnes

JOY: Angela & Girard Mitchell,
and Jim & Claudia Dovas

GOYA: Mike Gonedes

Super Seniors: Athena Sperantsas

Syrtaki:

Mark Christakis & Jenny Saiger

Greek School: Anna Kaiser

Bookstore: Yvette Koutsoupis,
Barbara Tasiounes, Stella Pores

Welcome: Elaine Zographus

Readers: Vivian Jenetopoulos

Photography: Constantine Mukasa
& Irina Giakouminakis

The Message: Fr. Steven Klund



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΑΤΛΑΝΤΑΣ

February 24, 2014

Rev. Fr. Mark Leondis

Rev. Fr. Stamatios Klund

Mr. John Koutsoupis, Parish Council President & esteemed Parish Council members

And the Faithful of St. Mark Greek Orthodox Church, Boca Raton, FL

Dearly beloved,

*"Lord, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your Glory dwells."
(Psalm 26:8)*

I greet you with joy in the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as we look forward to the beginning of our Lenten journey to Great and Holy Pascha.

Truly it was a blessing and an honor for me to celebrate yet another milestone in your beautiful parish life with you. After months of dreaming and planning, we gathered for the Consecration of your beautiful Sanctuary. The sacred service of the Consecration of an Orthodox Church is not merely a beautiful rite or a symbolic act, but rather it is a living testimony to the work of salvation by God the Father, through the Son in the Holy Spirit, and the Incarnation and Pentecost in the life of your parish community.

I also wanted to express my heartfelt gratitude for your gracious hospitality and warm welcome. Though it is always my pleasure and privilege to see you again, I was particularly happy to lead such a joyful celebration and to pray with you for the future of your wonderful community. We can never forget the wonderful Consecration Service, with the participation of priests from the neighboring communities, and all the memories of that blessed day.

Words can hardly express my appreciation for the warm philoxenia that you offered to my humble self and to all our friends and brothers and sisters in Christ, and for all your hard work and dedication in organizing this magnificent celebration. I believe that we truly experienced a blessing as we came together in prayer, worship and fellowship, and I pray that the joy of this wonderful day will continue to inspire and uplift you for years to come.

In closing, I wanted to let you know how pleased and proud I am of Father Mark and Father Stamatios, the President and Parish Council members, the Philoptochos, the Consecration Committee and all the Faithful of your parish community. May Almighty God continue to guide and enlighten you for many more years of faithful service and witness to the Glory of His Holy Name. With prayers for a blessed Great Lent, I remain

Paternally yours with love in Christ

+ALEXIOS

Metropolitan of Atlanta

PASTORAL MESSAGE
Rev. Fr. Mark Leondis



My Dear Faithful,

So here we are in the midst of Great Lent. It is like no other period of the year . . . it is a journey, a God-filled experience, a 40-day period given to us by our Church, to come closer to our Lord. We flee from the busy, hectic and chaotic world we live in and “enter the desert.”

Each year, the Orthodox Church gives us a special 40-day period to prepare us for the Resurrection of our Lord, Pascha (Easter). This period is called Holy and Great Lent and begins forty days before Holy Week. The Church asks us to pay extra special attention to our lives during this period, so we can become closer to our Lord.

The number “40” is a powerful symbol in scripture: Noah built his ark when it rained for 40 days and 40 nights (Genesis 6–9); Moses spent 40 days and 40 nights on the Mountain (Mount Sinai) when receiving the “law from God” (the 10 Commandments – Exodus 24:18); Jesus spent 40 days and 40 nights fasting in the wilderness being tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1-11).

During the forty-day period, the Church asks us to enhance our spiritual lives by fasting, praying and giving alms of mercy. Whatever level you choose is up to you . . . but do something different.



The time is now . . . today . . . to begin your Lenten Journey. Make this year’s 40-day journey something different, something unique. Make these next 40 days something special and I guarantee you will experience the resurrection of our Lord in a new and exciting way.

Enter the desert.

+Fr. Mark Leondis

Fr. Mark Leondis

GREAT LENT 2014
The Journey to Pascha

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.

The other lenten ministries that we are offering are:

Mondays

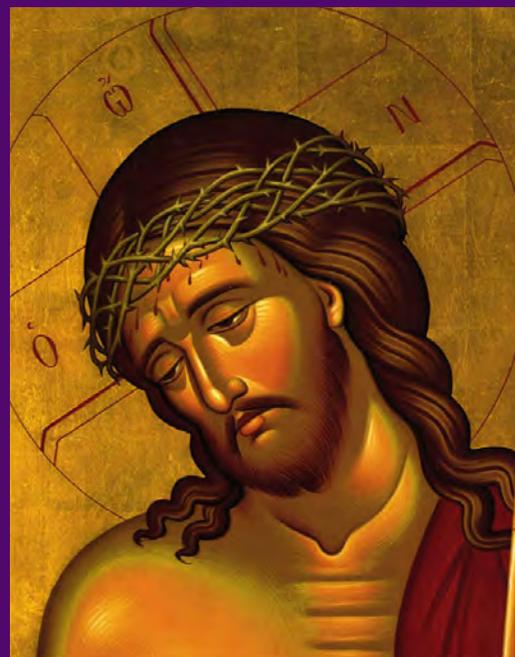
- 9-10 am - *Compline*
- 10-11 am - *Synaxis: A Group Discussion on Prayer*

Wednesdays

- 6:30 pm - *Pre-Sanctified Liturgy*
- 7:30 pm - *Faith Forum Lectures*

Fridays

- 6:30 pm - *Akathist to the Theotokos*
- 7:30 pm - *Community Lenten Dinner*





CONSECRATION WEEKEND

THE SACRAMENTAL EXPERIENCE

Pat Sourlis

As we reflect on the Saint Mark Consecration, moments from the weekend come racing to my mind like scenes from a play. I recall the myriad of meetings, the late work nights, the army of dedicated volunteers, and the years spent in anticipation for this occasion. If I can compare all of this considerable effort to the “rehearsals” that precede a theatrical production, then allow me to share with you my joy in finally witnessing the Consecration take center-stage on “opening night” last month. It was the joy of being presented, as a community, to our Lord!

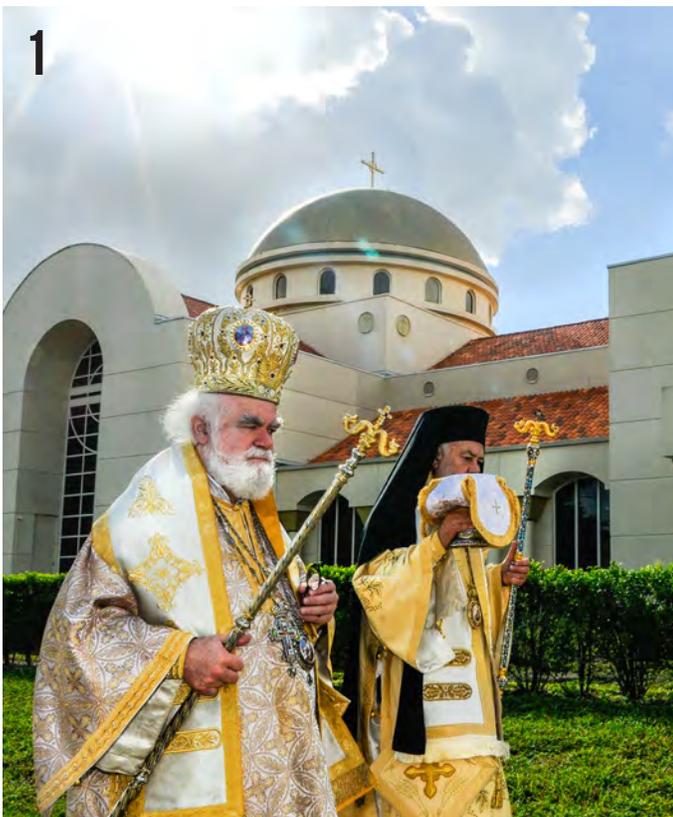
The weekend began on Thursday evening with a Gold Leaf Memorial Service. As the sun set over Saint Mark, a brilliant light rose in the Church. The flames of over 400 votive candles danced on the solea, calling to remembrance all of our loved ones gone before us, and the sacrifices they made for us. On that emotional night, one could feel the Heavens opening to receive our prayers. May their Memories be Eternal.

The following evening His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta, accompanied by His Grace Bishop Demitrios of Xanthos arrived bearing the relics of Saints Panteleimon, Kyrikos, and the Holy Martyrs of Daou Pentelis. These martyrs were from many centuries before and thousands of miles away, but now they have finally arrived to their final resting place here at Saint Mark. From this time forth,

every service held in our beloved sanctuary will be celebrated on the graves of these martyrs.

Finally, Saturday, February 22 brought with it the long-awaited Consecration. The service began in grand fashion with the entire congregation making three processions around the outside of the Church. In a weekend full of memories, perhaps the most vivid was the sight and sound of the metropolitan striking the front doors with his staff proclaiming: “Lift up the gates, O you rulers, and be lifted up, you everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall enter.”

The two hierarchs, leading the faithful back into the Church, returned the Holy Relics to the sanctuary to be sealed inside the Altar. The bishops placed them, along with the names offered at the memorial service on Thursday evening, in a specially created vault in the Altar Table. Then, the vault was sealed with an ancient mastic/wax mixture used during the time of Christ. Next, the clergy fell to their hands and knees to anoint and wash the newly-sealed Altar. Once dried, the bishops exited the Altar to anoint all of the iconography in the Nave of the Church. The Consecration was then completed by the faithful themselves, who one by one, reverently came forward and helped transfer the Holy Oil used in the Consecration into a pair of vigil lamps. The flames from these lamps will always burn on the Holy Altar, and just like the Church of Saint Mark, they will provide a light for all generations to come.





1 The Heirarchs processing the Holy Relics outside.

2/3 The weekend began with the candle-lit Gold Leaf Memorial Service.

4 The next night during the vespers service the Holy Relics arrive to Saint Mark.



5 After vespers on Friday night, Metropolitan Alexios bestows Fr. Mark with the rank of "Protopresbyter"...

6 ... Likewise, His Eminence then tonsures five young acolytes as "Readers."



7 Saturday morning, Tony Nicolaides is at work mixing the "mastic" that will be used to seal the Altar.

8-10 The Consecration begins with the faithful outside the Church until...



11 ...His Eminence, assisted by John Douglas, triumphantly reopens the doors for the first time as a consecrated temple!

12 Once back inside, His Eminence seals the Holy Relics in the Altar...



13 ...And then after anointing the Table with chrysm, he and the clergy wash it...

14 ...Then dry it with the "Antiminsia" and re-cover it with the liturgical items.



15 After the Altar is finished, the heirarchs anoint the icons in the Church.

16/17 A team of dedicated women take the "Savana" worn by the bishops and divide them into small cases to be given to the faithful.

18 After the Consecration parishioners help fill the candelaria with the Holy Oil used to anoint the Church.



CONSECRATION WEEKEND



A WEEKEND TO CHERISH

Pat Sourlis

This past year provided many opportunities for our community to come together and work for the Glory of God. In 2013, we were called as one body to pitch in to help fill our Church with mosaics and marble fixtures from Italy. The year also saw the completion of our iconography campaign and the acquisition of all new liturgical appointments. It was a time for a band of volunteers to patiently design and sew altar cloths and acolyte vestments. 2103 was the time to look at each other as brothers and sisters in Christ and fondly do our part in this historical occasion.

It was the year to prepare our Sanctuary to present to God!

And, in 2014 we did just that. I would like to thank each of you for your part in helping the Consecration Committee succeed in this past year's mission. Thanks to every one of you and your offerings, the Church of Saint Mark is finally a consecrated house of worship in the eyes of the Lord!

The evenings following each service during the consecration weekend brought with them opportunities to once again come together as a community, only these were now chances to celebrate! Fr. Mark often speaks of the idea of coffee hour being a "liturgy after the

Liturgy." Sharing in service is vital for the longevity of the community, however the sharing in the celebrations are what made it all worth the effort. The three receptions that weekend were magnificent, most notably Saturday evening's Grand Banquet. With over 350 dining and dancing together, the banquet was the perfect culmination of the joy that the weekend brought to our community.

I offer my sincere and heartfelt thanks to the entire Saint Mark family who acted as the engine pushing us toward this milestone, and to Fr. Mark for serving as our conductor ensuring that we reached it. It is my prayer that God will continue to provide us reasons to come together in celebration, and that we may continue to grow as one body in Christ.

Good strength to all, and have a very blessed Lent!







.....
GREEK FESTIVAL - PAT ANTHONY

Another great festival put on by the parishioners of Saint Mark! The dedication, energy, and camaraderie this year was incredible. It was such a joy to see all the new volunteers working side by side with the experienced, all with smiling faces.

This year we welcomed back the Aegean Duo to entertain us at the outside Taverna, and they brought along their nephew, Niko Tzetzis (who is also a classmate and a good friend of Fr. Steven) as a new DJ. With constant music and enthusiasm Niko led the Syrtaki to success, as well as provided photography of the weekend and byzantine chanting for church services.

The “Kefi” after hours at the outside Taverna was remarkable. As tired as the workers were, they partied on. Led by the band, who continued playing well until the last guest left the dance floor, the festival continued to thrive even after the vendors and food lines closed up. Among these committed late-night warriors we remember the newly-departed Keith Ely who kept the bar open for business well after most of us were already asleep at home. The memory of his life will always be kept alive in our hearts along with the life of our beloved “Saganaki King” Andreas Tzanakakis (who fell asleep earlier this fall). May their memories be eternal!

In addition to a new DJ, we were also now able to utilize Patch Reef Park for parking, which allowed us to eliminate the expense of a bus or trolley. Bill Cocose and his team of volunteers (including even Father Mark himself) did a superb job with the Golf Carts, welcoming people and bringing them back and forth from the adjacent parking lots. Compliments were all about about the rides back and forth to their vehicles.

Financially, we are almost finished paying bills, and we believe we were as successful as 2013, and we will know more in the next few weeks. The consensus from the post-festival reviews were that our hard working volunteers exhibited a fellowship that made our visitors feel welcome and satisfied.

The Committee would like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt “Thank You” for all those who worked before, during and after the festivities. We appreciate all of our volunteers who helped make this a successful display of hellenic traditions and a witness of our Orthodox faith here in South Florida. We are always looking for ways to improve so if you would like to join the Committee or have suggestions, please speak to one of the Committee Members: John Koutsoupis, Steve Giakouminakis, Mark Rados, Pat Anthony, Debbie Fread or Suzette Johnson.







2014

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REGISTRATION OPENS **APRIL 1**

www.atlmetropolis.org

SAINT MARK WILL BE GOING:

WEEK 1: JUNE 28 - JULY 5

Applications can be found online, or at the Church office (4/1). For any questions about camp talk to Fr. Mark or Fr. Steven.

LENT DISCUSSION SERIES

FAITH FORUM

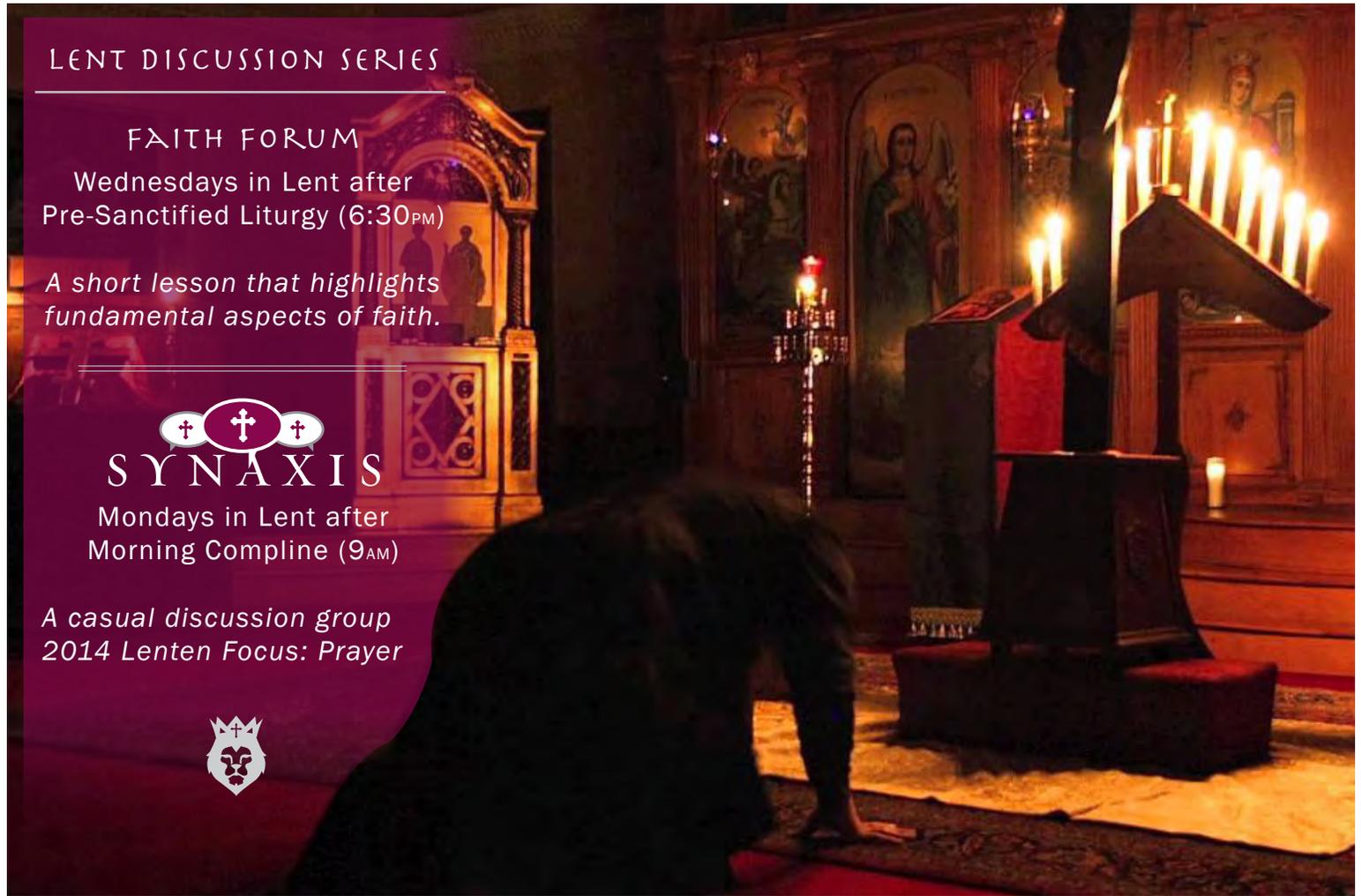
Wednesdays in Lent after
Pre-Sanctified Liturgy (6:30PM)

*A short lesson that highlights
fundamental aspects of faith.*



Mondays in Lent after
Morning Compline (9AM)

*A casual discussion group
2014 Lenten Focus: Prayer*



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.

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

In Memory of: _____ In Honor of: _____

Names as you would like them to appear: _____

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____ Total: _____



SAINT MARK
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
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