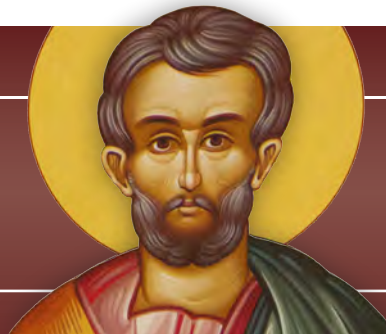




# THE Message



SAINT  
MARK

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

NOVEMBER • 2013



SUNDAY SCHOOL  
MAKING AN IMPRESSION  
ON OUR YOUTH **PAGE 3**



RECAP OF AN EVENTFUL  
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## SAINT MARK CELEBRATES OXI DAY

### GREEK SCHOOL - ANNA KAISER

On Sunday October 27, our Greek School hosted our Annual OXI Day Celebration and brunch. The blue and white décor of tables and Greek Flags were decorating the hall in honor of this great day in Greek history. The filled hall with over 200 people were impressed with our students and their poems as well as a scrumptious brunch. There was not a dry eye in the hall when our little ones said how proud they were to be Greek Orthodox.

It was such a testimony to the importance of our Greek heritage to see how many parishioners came supporting the event, even

those who do not have children enrolled in our program. Our Greek School continues to grow and culture our youth. This success is attributed to the dedication of parents who bring their children every week, and of all our teachers who offer themselves in this effort. It is our duty to pass on to the next generation the torch of Orthodoxy and Hellenic culture, so that it may continue to shine and illumine the world.

Our appreciation once again goes out to all who made this a fantastic memorable day possible. We thank the chefs, servers, teachers, parents, grandparents, godparents, relatives and friends who participated in the celebration, and of course our Saint Mark children ZHTO TO 1940 !!!!



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  
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### Church Maintenance:

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**Philoptochos:** Pam Parent

**Choir:** Sophia Christakis

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

### Ushers:

Tom Hantzarides & Tim Sharp

**Acolytes:** Brian Giusti & Tom Bean

**Church School:** Helen Lang

**Youth Choir:** Virginia Barnes

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

**GOYA:** Mike Gonedes

**Super Seniors:** Athena Sperantas

### 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

# PARISH NEWS

## Parish Assembly For 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

A Parish Assembly meeting will take place in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, December 8, 2103 immediately following the Divine Liturgy. This Assembly is for you, our fellow parishioners, to learn and hear about the status of Saint Mark. We welcome and need you to attend.

### PROPOSED AGENDA

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Opening Prayer                        | 7. Nominations for 2014-15 Parish Council |
| 2. Election of Chairman of Assembly      | 8. Election of Auditors                   |
| 3. Approval of Parish Assembly Minutes   | 9. Election Committee                     |
| 4. Pastor's Report                       | 10. Old Business                          |
| 5. Parish Council President's Report     | 11. New Business                          |
| 6. Presentation of 2014 Financial Budget | 12. Closing Prayer/Adjournment            |

Rev. Fr. Mark A. Leondis

Presiding Priest

Mr. John Koutsoupis

Parish Council President



## BILL MARIANES

### IGNITING THE FLAME OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP:

November so far has seen the beginning of our Stewardship campaign for the 2014 calendar year. We began in a big way by hosting renowned stewardship expert Bill Marianes during the first weekend of the month. On Saturday our community leaders joined with ministry heads from other Orthodox churches in the district in participating in an all-day stewardship seminar on Saturday November 2, immediately following Divine Liturgy in honor of Saint Raphael of Brooklyn.

Bill Marianes captivated the participants with his lively story telling and larger-than-life personality. Theatrics aside, Bill's message was as pure to the Christian faith as any ever offered inside the church. He constantly reminded the audience saying "I didn't come here to make you feel good, but I came here to tell you the truth!" With those words of caution, Bill presented an abundance of factual evidence showing that Church giving is (and has been for quite some time) in decline, and that it is up to us to change our complacency into a spirit of giving.

His message was also one of hope, quoting the scriptures saying that when done properly, stewardship is not an obligation but a joyful expression of our faith! Saint Mark would like to thank all of our "cheerful givers" and encourage everyone to contribute what talents, time, or treasure that they can offer towards the service of our Lord here in Boca Raton. Call or stop by the office to find out how you can help.

# SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN YOUTH'S LIVES

Our Church School Ministry has enjoyed a busy two months of classroom instruction each Sunday, which began with the Blessing of the classrooms, teachers, and students, on September 15.

## 2013-2014 SAINT MARK TEACHING STAFF

- **Helen Lang:** Director & **Joanne Chapman:** Assistant Director
- **Virginia Barnes:** K-5th Grade Music Teacher & Pageant Director
- **Angela Mitchell, Rick & Erin Kontos:** Pre-K 4
- **Dawn Riger & Irina Giakoumounakis:** Kindergarten
- **Sophia Valladares:** 1st Grade
- **Joanne Lindholm & Patricia Danias:** 2nd Grade
- **Maria Matthews & Sallie Bothers:** 3rd Grade
- **Katherine Skoundridakis & Lisa Stabile:** 4th Grade
- **Tom Copulos:** 5th Grade
- **George Douglas:** 6th Grade
- **Stephanie Christakis:** 7th & 8th Grade
- **John Cucuras:** High School

Our returning, dedicated teachers welcome Mr. Rick Kontos, and Mrs. Sophia Valladares into the classroom this year.

We have been blessed with Father Steven's teaching in the High School, and 7th/8th Grade classes, as a guest lecturer. Our text book based curriculum is supplemented with the lessons based on the Gospel reading for each Sunday.

The Church School Ministry welcomes anyone interested in assisting our program; please speak with your child's teacher or the director Helen Lang for volunteer opportunities! A specific need of the Church School Ministry, is a 'roaming photographer' to assist with classroom pictures throughout the school year.

Religious education is by far one of the most critical ministries in our parish and is a tradition that dates back thousands of years before the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is our duty, as it has been over the course of history to educate our youth in the significance our spiritual inheritance as Orthodox Christians. Without the dedicated service of our volunteer faculty, this ministry would not be possible. Make sure to thank all of the Sunday Church School staff listed above when you see them for their work in helping illumine the spiritual eyes of our children.



## STEWARDSHIP

*Penelope Douglas Moloney*

*Greetings fellow-Stewards!*

Remember to fill out your pledge cards for 2014 and bring them to the Church on Sunday, or to the office during the week.

We were so overjoyed to have Metropolis Stewardship expert Bill Marianes last month. His "Igniting the Flame" presentation was inspiring and we were so pleased to see the number of committed community leaders who attended. What a way to get ready for a new year of giving and Christian service!

Saint Mark is excited to announce that we will soon introduce a new electronic contribution program on our website. Soon parishioners will be able to easily set up recurring Stewardship contributions and make one-time contributions for various ministries. Please note that you will still need to fill out a Stewardship card each and every year.

We encourage you to arrange a schedule of recurring contributions that will provide much needed consistency for Saint Mark's Stewardship Program. If you are currently contributing on a weekly or monthly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 or 12 checks per year. Even when circumstances prevent you from attending services, Saint Mark will continue to receive your Stewardship on an uninterrupted basis.

This new system will provide a convenient and consistent way to meet your Stewardship commitment. For more information about this new opportunity, please contact the Church Office at: 561.994.4822.



**75%** of the Saint Mark budget comes from Stewardship. Without you filling out your stewardship pledge card 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 2014 Stewardship Pledge Card — please, do so today (they are located in the pews). "God loves a cheerful giver."

- (2 Corinthians 9:7)

# SAINT MARK

## OCTOBER MINISTRIES



### GOYA - ANNA SAIGER & ANNA GONEDES

October was a great month for our GOYA! We started things off with a morning basketball pickup game with the GOYANs from Saint Demetrios in Ft. Lauderdale. It was such a treat to get to hang out with many of the same kids that we met a couple weeks before at the District "Survivor" Retreat in Miami. The games were competitive, but at the end of the day, we were all just happy to play on the same court together. It was a great way to connect with our brothers and sisters in Christ and we look forward to doing it again soon!

Next we all took a trip after Church on Sunday, October 13 with a really fun afternoon of *Paintball* (pictured above). It got pretty intense running through the field with paintballs flying around in every direction. While it was a lot of fun, it made us all very thankful that we are blessed to live in a part of the world where we don't have to worry about warfare and violence in our day-to-day lives.

Which brings us to this past weekend. About 24 of our Goyan's went to Orlando to volunteer at Give Kids The World. GKTW is a facility that brings terminally ill children from all over the world to Orlando for a week of happiness. The group met at Church early Saturday morning and drove up together to spend the day at Blizzard Beach water park. Even though the weather was a little cool we all enjoyed it so much. After a quick shower

it was off for a nice dinner together and then back to the hotel for late night liturgy with Fr. Mark. He spoke to us about the importance off "doing for others" and how the next day we

would have an amazing chance for this. Then we were off to sleep after a long day!!

Sunday morning it was an early start so we could get to "Give Kids The World" village and volunteer. Our job was to serve the children and their families breakfast and bring up their spirits any way we could! In total, we served over 360 people! We had the opportunity to meet some wonderful families which was very touching for all of us. It was a very amazing experience for all of us GOYAN's and hopefully made all of us realize how blessed we all are. Personally this trip was one of the most rewarding ones I have been on as a Goyan, and think everyone else would agree. We did our best to represent Saint Mark and hope that our efforts will somehow comfort (even if just a little) these beautiful children and their families. I know all the Goyan's who experienced this trip are already looking forward to another opportunity like this again.

Anyone that was not able to make the trip will hopefully be able to join us the next time to feel the joy this brought to all of us!!

Lastly, we are looking forward to hosting the second District GOYA Retreat of the year. It is called the "Burning Bush" retreat where we will dive a little deeper into the Advent season leading up to Christmas by playing games and having discussions centered around the Virgin Mary, and the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is going to be an AMAZING time and if you want more information call the Church office at 561.994.4822.



## CHRISTMAS PAGEANT - VIRGINIA BARNES

This year's community Christmas Pageant "Heralds for Christ" will be on **Saturday, December 14th**. The program will begin promptly at 5pm, and will be followed by the Saint Mark Community Christmas Party at 6pm.

The Christmas Pageant has truly grown into a community event, representing many ministries of Saint Mark. For me, it is a great joy to get to know my Saint Mark family through this rewarding endeavor.

Many have already come forward to help. If you are interested in participating, please contact Virginia Barnes.



## OCF COLLEGE MINISTRY - FR. STEVEN KLUND



On Saturday, October 26th the OCF chapter from Florida Atlantic University and the chapter from the University of Miami went on a Kayaking adventure down in Oleta River State Park in Miami, FL. We went to brunch and departed for Miami following the Feast-Day Liturgy at Saint Demetrios. The weather was absolutely perfect and the water was calm and warm. There is nothing quite as peaceful as spending the day enjoying God's natural wonders. The trip was the first ever joint-activity between the two OCF chapters, and hopefully it will be the first of many.

The college fall semester is already half-way over, with many of our OCF students already having taken their course midterms. We are looking forward to a strong finish to our first term together. November



12th at 6:30 our OCF is going to come to Saint Mark for vespers and then stay after to participate in our Bible Study on the Book of Romans. Later in the month, we are tailgating before the FAU vs NMSU football game on Saturday the 23rd, and then on the eve of Thanksgiving (Wed. 11/26) we will be holding our 3rd and final "Orthodoxy on Tap" of the season at the Biergarten at 8:00 pm. Our semester of activities concludes with vespers and our OCF Christmas party and Yankee Swap gift exchange on December 5th, on the eve of the feast of Saint Nicholas.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining our college OCF ministry please contact Fr. Steven Klund at the church office at 561.994.4822 or look us up on Facebook at:

[www.facebook.com/groups/fauocf/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/fauocf/)

## MEN'S CULINARY COOK OFF - PHILOPTOCHOS

On the evening of November 2nd, 2013 our Philoptochos Ladies Society hosted this year's Men's Culinary Event, with all proceeds being used to fund Philoptochos charities. It was a very successful event with dishes served from over 20 competitors, feeding about 150 taste-testing "judges." There was a little bit of everything, from gumbo to pizza to even chocolate octopus!

Fr. Mark's homemade clam chowder brought home the 1st place ribbon, edging out Mike Gonedes' (pizza, 2nd place). Though tying with Elias Alexandrou for 3rd place, Girard Mitchell easily took home the award for best-dressed, decked out in cuff-links and a black bowtie.

Along with Fr. Mark, first-time contestant Fr. Steven Klund completed the clergy sweep of the event taking home the top prize in the dessert competition. Fr. Steven, an admitted rookie in the kitchen surprised the judges (and his Presbyteria!) by combining pumpkin pie and carrot cake into his "Thanksgiving Cupcakes." Though some of the other contestants had objections to his use of Cool Whip as a "secret ingredient," Fr. Steven said that he had a great time and that he is looking forward to returning next year. When asked about the "Cool Whip" controversy, Fr. Steven responded saying "I wouldn't ever dream of cheating the game. That's why I bought fat-free!"



## AN INTERVIEW WITH PHILOPTOCHOS

PAM PARENT - PHILOPTOCHOS PRESIDENT



**FATHER STEVEN (FS):** What is the History of Philoptochos?

**PAM PARENT (PP):** The beginning of the Philoptochos Society can be traced to the late nineteenth century when hundreds of immigrants were arriving daily in the United States from Greece, Asia Minor and Constantinople. Throughout the nation in Orthodox Churches, women's clubs were being formed with the task of welcoming the new émigrés and assisting them in adjusting to their new country.

In 1931, Archbishop Athenagoras realized the urgency of providing adequate philanthropic and relief services to the poor and suffering. An important item on the Archdiocese Fourth General Assembly agenda was to form a national woman's organization merging all the existing chapters, and thus the Philoptochos Society was created.

of the church. Our mission also is to promote the charitable, benevolent, and philanthropic purposes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. We perform all the charitable work of our Society with discretion, courtesy and kindness.

**(FS):** How do you meet your goals?

**(PP):** Through our membership and our wonderful community we are able to achieve our goals. With our appeals, fundraisers, Sunday coffee hour and koliva memorials, we disbursed over thirty thousand dollars last year. We have been able to help members of our church, our local community and metropolis. We also meet our obligations with our National Philoptochos who in turn gave over two million dollars to causes all over the world last year.

**(FS):** What are some of the ways in which

tism Assistance Fund, the Children's Medical Fund, the Cancer Fund, International Orthodox Christian Charities and others.

Nationally we have helped victims of disasters. Most recently we donated over \$2,000.00 to the victims of Hurricane Sandy through the Adopt a Family campaign of our National Philoptochos Society.

Wherever there is a need, Philoptochos will try to lend its support. Recently, we have sent funds and health kits to help families in Greece and Cyprus who are suffering as a result of the economic chaos there.

**(FS):** How does Philoptochos help to promote Orthodoxy?

**(PP):** We promote Orthodoxy by letting God be our leader, and our labor is a labor of love to glorify Him and our Orthodox Church. When you look at the Philoptochos women of Saint Mark you see the Orthodox Church in action. Through their efforts, we are able to provide donations to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, financial support for the Hellenic College/Holy Cross Scholarship fund, Orthodox Campus Ministry, Support a Priest and Orthodox Christian Ministries. We have formed groups that visit the homebound and provide support where we can.

We have also donated two icons for our sanctuary, Saints Cosmas and Damian, and now Saints Martha and Mary. Both of these icons serve as teaching tools, are a focus for prayer, and assist us to glorify God and our church. They are also a gentle reminder to us all of what our purpose is on earth.

**(FS):** What has been your most humbling experience with Philoptochos?

**(PP):** The most heartwarming and humbling experience has been the selfless devotion of the many women of Philoptochos, and the overwhelming generosity of our community. Without the support of the families of Saint Mark, our efforts would not be possible. The same can be said of the women of Philoptochos. They always step up when needed, and never turn away from their responsibilities. When you support Philoptochos, you are supporting the Church.



Today the National Philoptochos Society is the largest Christian Women's Philanthropy in the United States.

**(FS):** What does "Philoptochos" mean?

**(PP):** Philoptochos is the combination of two Greek words, Philo which means friend and Ptochos which means poor. The combination of these two words translates to a friend of the poor.

**(FS):** So what's the point of it all?

**(PP):** Philoptochos is fondly known as the "right arm" of the church. Our mission is to aid the poor and to offer assistance to anyone who may need the help

Philoptochos of Saint Mark provides assistance and support?

**(PP):** Locally we provide quiet assistance to our parishioners in need, scholarships to our graduating students, and tuition for children attending Saint Stephen's Camp. We also give a scholarship for a deserving Greek School student, and cooperate with and support the other ministries at Saint Mark. We volunteer at the Caring Kitchen in Delray Beach, preparing and serving meals for the hungry. Last spring we donated two van loads of clothing to the Dress for Success organization.

With the benevolence of our community, we supported such charities as the Au-



# SENIORS OF SAINT MARK

ATHENA SPERANTSAS

On Wednesday, October 23, the Seniors of Saint Mark gathered together for the first time this ecclesiastical year for a luncheon at the Delray Beach Golf Club. The lunch followed the Divine Liturgy for the feastday of Saint James, the Brother of our Lord, and many of our seniors came early for the service and drove to lunch together. Fr. Mark and Fr. Steven were in attendance as well as 40 other members. After lunch Fr. Steven spoke, and though he had come to know most of those in attendance over the past 5 months, he officially introduced himself to the group. He spoke of what it meant to be called a “brother or sister” to the Lord, as well as his calling to the priesthood and a funny story of how he came to be assigned to Saint Mark.

- To participate as a group in social and cultural events including but not limited to theatrical plays, concerts, luncheons, and day trips otherwise not easily enjoyed independently.
- To welcome and include visiting members and seasonal South Florida residents to our group and events.
- To encourage comments and suggestions for future activities.
- To be available for our members as needed for prayer, transportation, assistance, support, and any other personal needs.

## SENIORS OF SAINT MARK - MISSION STATEMENT

The Seniors of Saint Mark is a ministry established in order to serve the elder members of our parish. It is the hope that through the functions of this group, our seniors will be able to gather as a group within our community in order to experience Christian love and fellowship together. Major objectives set before the group include the following:

- To maintain a faithful and liturgically active senior population within the Saint Mark parish.
- To provide regular opportunities for fellowship among our senior population at the parish
- To offer, at modest expense, activities scheduled during daylight hours.
- To encourage newcomers to become active and connected with their peers.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

### Seniors Christmas Luncheon

- December 11th, at 12:30 pm
- Highland Beach Holiday Inn (on A1A)
- \$28 Donations for members
- \$33 Donations for non-members
- For more information please call:  
Elizabeth Zographus (561.495.2812)  
or Olga Malides (561.499.7058)

# WALKING TOWARD CONSECRATION

## Part I

FR. MARK LEONDIS

**O**n February 22, 2014, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America and His Eminence Metropolitan Alexios of Atlanta will perform the Service of Consecration for our Sanctuary. This article and forthcoming articles will explain the service of consecration in order that you might be prepared to more fully experience this moving service.

The word consecrate in Greek is “eykainia” and means to “make new, to renew, to initiate or to dedicate.” Solomon used this term to describe the dedication of the temple. To consecrate means to set apart, to dedicate or sanctify a person or thing for the exclusive service and worship of God.

The Greek word for consecration in the New Testament is “teleio”, and means “to set apart or to dedicate something through a religious rite for sacred use.” The word is interpreted to mean to separate, to clean or to make holy, or as we know it, to perfect. It means dedicating something to God for His use in which He would dwell, in which He would be present. Whatever was dedicated to God belonged to him. It was separated from its former common and mundane use -- and it was made holy.

In the New Testament, the title saint “ayios,” is what all Christians were called, because they were considered consecrated persons. To consecrate, therefore, means to set apart a church for the purpose of worship, and the setting apart of Christians for the work of God. The dedication of the Church must also be accompanied by the dedication of ourselves to God, to become his servants, his saints on earth.

As we read in Matthew 18:20, the Church is made up when two or three are gathered together in prayer in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As we dedicate and consecrate ourselves to God, the Holy Spirit too sanctifies each of us. God’s holiness enters us and thus, my brothers and sisters, we find the true essence of consecration. The Holy Spirit is both the seal and the power of consecration. King Solomon said, “Blessed be the Lord; the God of Israel, who with His hands fulfilled what He promised with His mouth to David, my father. As the Lord promised, I have built the house for the name of the Lord, the God of

heart will be there for all time (I Kings 9:3).”

The consecration of a new church building follows the tradition of Solomon in Eastern Orthodoxy. To consecrate a Church means to initiate the edifice into the service of God, to set it apart for exclusive use as a house of worship and a dwelling place of God on earth.

Baptism and Chrismation are the sacraments of initiation into the Church, for they impart the fullness of the Holy Spirit as the promise of new life in Christ. In like manner, a new church building receives new life by its consecration and becomes a house of God. It is filled with the Holy Spirit and dispenses the gifts of the Spirit to the faithful within its walls.

When a Christian accepts the Christian faith, he does so forever. When a church is consecrated, it remains a place of Christian worship forever. The service of consecration is weaved with threads of the Old and New Testaments, the theology of the Church, and with eastern Christendom’s powerful symbolism.

The Archbishop and Metropolitan will offer our new church building to God and with it our efforts, our contributions and our sacrifices.

This moving day will bring to mind Solomon’s prayer to God on the day he dedicated the temple. “Let your eyes be open to the supplication of your people Israel, giving ear to them whenever they call to you. For you did separate them from among all the peoples of the earth to be your heritage (I Kings 8:52-53).”

I pray that together we will hear the Lord tell us as he told Solomon of old: “I have heard your prayer and your supplication, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house, which you have built and put my name there forever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time (I Kings 9:3).”



Israel (I Kings 8:15,20).”

After the temple was completed in Jerusalem, Solomon dedicated it or consecrated it to God, and he prayed saying, “O Lord my God, hear the prayer of your servant this day. May your eyes be open night and day toward this house, the place on which, you said my name shall be there (I Kings 8:23-29).”

After Solomon completed the consecration, the Lord appeared to him and said: “I have heard your prayer and your supplication, which you have made before me. I have consecrated this house, which you have built and put my name there forever; my eyes and my



SAVE THE DATES:

**THURS. 20**

Thursday 2/20/14

Gold Leaf Memorial Service & Reception  
6:00 pm

**FRI. 21**

Friday 2/21/14

Consecration Vespers  
6:00 pm

**SAT. 22**

Saturday 2/22/14

Consecration Liturgy  
9:00 am

# SAINT SPOTLIGHT

## THE GREAT MARTYR SAINT KATHERINE

FR. ALEXANDER LEONDIS

**S**aint Catherine is numbered among the great fourth century martyrs who gave witness and her life rather than deny her Lord, Jesus Christ. She was born of noble parents who governed Alexandria. She was both a princess, a scholar and a student of literature, philosophy and rhetoric.

Although she was raised a pagan, she became an ardent Christian in her teenage years, having received a vision in which the Blessed Ever-Virgin Mary revealed Christ to her. After her vision she said: "His beauty was more radiant than the shining of the sun, His wisdom governed all creation, His riches were spread throughout all the world." Catherine developed an understanding of the Christian truths, which she discussed with the ability of an accomplished theologian.

In the beginning of the fourth century Emperor Maxentius persecuted the Christians mercilessly in order to impose his pagan religion. Young Catherine did not hesitate to stand before him to censure him for his actions against the Church and boldly proclaim Christ as her God and Savior.

The Emperor was amazed at Catherine's extraordinary beauty and nobility in character. He felt that he could convince her to renounce Christianity. He gathered the most famous pagan philosophers and orators of the Alexandria. Catherine's arguments were so convincing, that many of her former opponents began to accept and confess Christ as their God.

When the prefect saw he was failing to convince her, he threatened to torture her. Catherine remained. He had her flogged, placed on the torturous breaking wheel, which is also known as the "Catherine Wheel" and then placed her in jail. Her words of wisdom had gained such great fame that the prefect's wife and one of his generals, came to the prison to plead with her to renounce her be-

liefs and save her life. Instead of convincing her to renounce Christ, they too accepted and confessed Jesus as their Lord.

All the prefect's attempts failed to change the fervent faith of Catherine. In absolute despair, he issued to behead her. The saint received her sentence with joy, for she knew that there existed no nobler way to die than for the sake of Christ. She thus received the glorious crown of martyrdom at the prime of her youth on November 25.

According to tradition, angels carried her corpse to the monastery of Mount Sinai. and the monastery became a major pilgrimage site for devotees of Catherine and Mount Sinai where Moses received the Ten Commandments. Saint Catherine's Monastery today is a famous repository of early Christian art, architecture and manuscripts that remains open to tourists and visiting scholars.

Her remains are found to this very day at the monastery,

which bears her name. When part of her relic is removed from her reliquary by one of the monks, the entire Church is filled with an otherworldly and ethereal fragrance, which is a sign of sainthood and sanctification.





On Sunday November 10, Saint Mark held a special ceremony following the Divine Liturgy in honor of all veterans, both in our community and throughout the world. It was part of a busy morning since it was also the Daughters of Penelope and the AHEPA Society Sunday. Immediately after the Memorial and Artoclasia services at the conclusion of Liturgy, Command Sgt. Maj. Paul Duros processed up to the solea accompanied by military colorguard bearing the American and Greek national flags.

Once at the podium in front of the congregation, he gave a beautiful history and an emotional testimony on the valor and pride of patriotic service. After publically recognizing all of our veterans, he concluded by explaining the symbolism behind the

"Fallen Soldiers" table setting. This special tribute was on display at the Veteran's Day luncheon held in the church hall. It consisted of a lone plate and table setting for one, with a single rose, a yellow ribbon, a lemon, salt, and an upturned glass on a white table cloth. We then sang together the "Star Spangled Banner" and "God Bless America" and finished by retiring the colors.

Fr. Alexander also gave a brief sermon dedicated to our service men and women, highlighted by an excerpt from the "Song of Roland." Saint Mark would like to thank all of our dedicated men, women and veterans who serve and have served for our country. Our prayers are with you, and may God always protect them and us, His children.

GOD BLESS AMERICA!!!



### THE BABY HOUSE - MARIA MATTHEWS

Saint Mark will once again put up an Angel Tree for the "Baby House," an organization for children afflicted with Cerebral Palsy. The tree will be set up in the hall on Sunday November 17, November 24, and December 1. We ask that you place your wrapped gifts for these precious children by the Angel Tree in the community hall.

The GOYA, Greek School and St. Mark trip to the Baby House will be on Monday December 9, this year. All interested in attending should meet at Saint Mark at 5:45 pm and the bus will leave promptly at 6 pm. This year we will be collecting \$10 per person for the bus.

For more information please contact:

Maria Matthews (954-428-5755) or

the Saint Mark church office (561-994-4822)



*Saint Mark Greek Orthodox Church Presents:*

# MOONLIGHT & Mistletoe

\* BALL AND SILENT AUCTION \*

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2013 | EMBASSY SUITES - BOCA RATON

*Under the Mistletoe:*

6:00 PM COCKTAILS & SILENT AUCTION

*Starry Night:*

7:00 PM DINNER & DANCING TO LIVE MUSIC

*Attire*

ELEGANT PREFERRED

*For Information & Tickets:*

IRENE ALEXANDROU - (561) 994 9615 OR PAT SOURLIS - (561) 483 8517

PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT THE CONSECRATION OF SAINT MARK



TICKETS  
\$60



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