



Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

April 2023



Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday, April 9

9:00 am – Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

7:00 pm - Bridegroom Matins

Great and Holy Monday, April 10:

1:00 pm - Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

6:00 pm - Bridegroom Matins

Great and Holy Tuesday, April 11:

1:00 pm - Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

6:00 pm - Bridegroom Matins

Great and Holy Wednesday, April

12: 1:00 pm - Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

6:00 pm - Holy Unction

8:00 pm - Bridegroom Matins

Great and Holy Thursday, April 13:

10:00 am - Divine Vesperal Liturgy

6:00 pm - Holy Passion Gospel Matins

Great and Holy Friday, April 14:

3:00 pm - Great Vespers

6:00 pm - Lamentations Service

Great and Holy Saturday, April 15:

9:00 am - Vesperal Liturgy 11:00 pm -

Paschal Vigil and Resurrection Service

12:00 am - Paschal Divine Liturgy

Paschal Sunday, April 16:

11:00 am - Agape Vespers

Bright Monday & Bright Tuesday, April 17-18

8:00 am - Matins

9:00 am – Divine Liturgy

Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Mary Magdalene, and the other women who were present at the burial of our Savior on Friday evening, returned from Golgotha to the city and prepared fragrant spices and myrrh, so that they might anoint the body of Jesus. The Sunday that followed, almost thirty-six hours after the death of the Life-giving Redeemer, they came to the sepulcher with the spices to anoint His body. While they were considering the difficulty of rolling away the stone from the door of the sepulcher, there was a fearful earthquake; an Angel, whose countenance shone like lightning and whose garment was white as snow, rolled away the stone and sat upon it. The guards that were there became as dead from fear and took to flight. The women, however, went into the sepulcher, but did not find the Lord's body. Instead, they saw two other Angels in the form of youths clothed in white, who told them that the Savior was risen, and they sent forth the women, who ran to proclaim to the disciples these gladsome tidings. Then Peter and John arrived, having learned from Mary Magdalene what had come to pass, and when they entered the tomb, they found only the winding sheets. Therefore, they returned again to the city with joy, as heralds now of the supernatural Resurrection of Christ, Who in truth was seen alive by the disciples on this day on five occasions. Our Lord, then, was crucified, died, and was buried on Friday, before the setting of the sun, which was the first of His "three days" in the grave; observing the mystical Sabbath, that "seventh day" in which it is said that the Lord "rested from all His works" (Gen. 2:2-3), He passed all of Saturday in the grave; and He arose "while it was yet dark, very early in the morning" on Sunday, the third day, which, according to the Hebrew reckoning, began after sunset on Saturday. The feast itself is called Pascha, which is derived from the Hebrew word which means "Passover"; because Christ, Who suffered and arose, has made us to pass over from the curse of Adam and slavery to the devil and death unto our primal freedom and blessedness.



Christ is Risen!

Hristos a Inviat!

Christos Anesti!

Hristos Voskrese!

Krishti Unjall!

Cristo a Resucitado!

Al Maseek Qam!

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2023 Parish Council Officers

President: Luke Yanka
Vice President: Spiro Thomo
Secretary: Debby Thomo
Treasury: Paul Yanka

2023 Ladies Society Officers

President: Genevieve Boilard
Vice President: Katie Mironidis
Secretary: Debbie Thomo
Treasurer: Mary Andreea

Clergy

Fr. John Downie fr.john_downie71@yahoo.com

Parish News & Events

Happy Birthday!! God Grant You Many More Years!!

April 15th – Anna Tanca

April 17th – Niki Goulas

April 18th – Sophia Pitsillides

April 19th – Jen Zoe Goulas

April 26th – Andrew Silva

April 28th – Julian Economou

April 30th – Christina Kelly

Happy Name Day

April 1st – Mary Grabosky (St. Mary of Egypt)

April 23rd – St. Thomas – Tom Andreea, Tom Dowling, Thomas Burren

April 23rd – George Rapsomanikis, George Siotis, George Goulas, Georgia Kritikos

Confession

Examination of conscience, and going to confession is part of preparation for Holy Communion. It is good for us to confess at least once before a major feast day, such as Pascha.

Fr. John will be available for Confession by appointment.

Please Pray

for:

Sandra
Georgia
Henrietta
Theodor



Pascha Pot Luck

After Lord's Resurrection services we will be having a pot luck to feast together. Everyone is welcome.



Pizza Bible Study – April 25th, 2023-7:00pm

Bible Study for **Young Adults, Orthodox and Non Orthodox** at the new renovated **Central Pizza & Pub**, 55 Central Street, Southbridge, MA.

RSVP to Fr. John's email fr.john_downie71@yahoo.com or cell phone: 774 230 2542 by April 21st.

Spring Calendar Raffle

First Fundraising Event of 2023
Contact Sandra Nasto or Mary Dowling for the forms. 1 calendar - \$10
3 for \$25

President's Corner

Dear Parishoners,

As we enter the most important time in our calendar, I'd like to start by saying we are praying for you all to have a blessed Pascha. Enjoy the time with family and friends, and we look forward to seeing you at the Holy Week services. This was always my grandfather's favorite time of the year when I was a kid, and I cherish so many memories from Easter week. Something you may not know about me, but for a short period when I was a kid, I was the church's cantor and spent multiple Holy Week's behind the chanting stand! It truly is a labor of love and thank you to everyone for your donations, prayers, and work during Holy Week (especially our faithful Cantors Loukas and Maria along with our choir, the altar boys, and especially Father John and Preoteasa Camelia).

Here are a few quick updates:


- The renovation work has been completed in Father John's office along with their apartment. They are satisfied with everything, and we look forward to continued improvements over time.
- May 1st, we have a fundraiser coming up at the Publick House; it's a turkey dinner with 2 seatings and tickets are \$15 apiece. Please see Spiro Thomo or Sandra Nasto for tickets.
- Our Young Adult's Retreat is fast approaching on May 26-27. Father Josiah Trenham, who is the most well-known Orthodox Priest in America is our guest speaker. Registration is open now for both the Young Adults Retreat and a special speaking event with Father Josiah. Please visit our church Facebook page for more

information on how to register as well as information on the schedule and guest speaker. Presbyteria Camelia is planning these two wonderful events and we hope to see a great attendance.

Thank you all so much and may God bless you all! We look forward to seeing you in church.

---Luke Yanka/Parish Council President

508-958-4144/lsyanka@yahoo.com



**HOLY ARCHANGEL MICHAEL'S ROMANIAN
ORTHODOX CHURCH PRESENTS**

CHURCH FUNDRAISER

at the Publick House Historic Inn - Sturbridge, MA

MAY 1, 2023 | 4:30PM AND 6:30PM (DINNER SEATINGS)

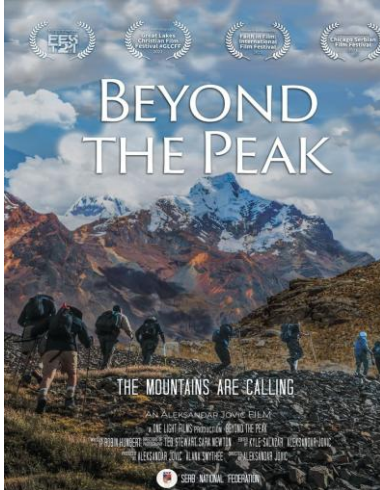
PUBLICK HOUSE HISTORIC INN
277 MAIN ST, STURBRIDGE, MA 01566

MEAL WILL BE A TURKEY DINNER BUFFET
TICKETS ARE **\$15 PER PERSON**

FOR TICKET INQUIRIES, PLEASE CALL
SANDRA NASTO | 508-347-3225
SPIRO THOMO | 774-200-8043

Movie & Book Corner

Movie: Beyond the peak (documentary)



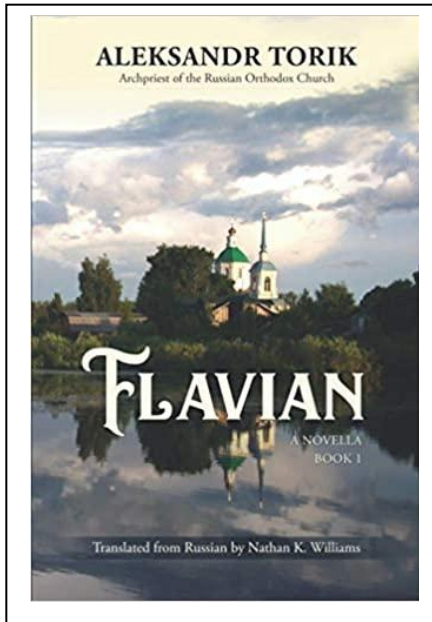
Directed By: Aleksandar Jovic

Produced By: Aleksandar Jovic and Alana Smythee

Beyond the Peak is a mountain climbing documentary that follows David, a man on a mission to climb a mountain in memory of his recently deceased brother - realizing soon thereafter that this would only be the first step of a more profound journey of transformation, acceptance, and revelation for a group of men from St. Nicholas Orthodox church in Indianapolis.

Won Best Diaspora Documentary @ The Chicago Serbian Film Festival (2021); Won Best Cinematography @ The Great Lakes Christian Film Festival (2021); Nominated for Best Documentary @ The Faith in Film International Film Festival; Official Selection @ The Belgrade International Film Festival (2021)

Book: *Flavian* by Fr. Aleksandr Torik



After an accidental meeting with a former college mate who became a monk with the name of Flavian, the life of an ordinary modern man and successful business manager Alexei took an unexpected turn. He found himself on a new untrodden path full of mysteries and amazing discoveries. Out of the mundane routine of a modern everyday life, he stepped into the fascinating spiritual world where the soul of every human being finds the true meaning of life and Love. "Flavian" is the first novel written by Archpriest Fr. Alexander Torik. The book is based on real life stories from Fr. Alexander's vast experience as an Orthodox priest over the past 30 years. Published for the first time in 2005, the book gained great popularity in Russia, was republished many times by several publishing houses and translated into several foreign languages.

Summary of the Women Retreat *How to prepare properly to receive our Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Communion* with quest speaker Mother Gabriela, Holy Dormition Monastery, MI, March 10th-11th, 2023 – by Presbytera Camelia Downie

Having as a starting point the fact that in each family the mother is the one in charge with "religious education department" we decided to organize our first Women retreat during Holy Lent, March 10th -11th, 2023. Our guest speaker was Mother Gabriela Ursache from Holy Dormition Monastery, MI who talked about "*How we properly prepare to receive our Lord Jesus Christ in Holy Communion.*"

This event was opened with Vespers and an informal talk about monastic life and personality of Fr. Roman Braga, and mother Alexandra, former princess Ileana of Romania, Friday evening. A dinner was served in the Hall of the parish as well.

Saturday, March 11th, the full retreat took place. The day was open with the participation in the Divine Liturgy (67 ladies).

Mother Gabriela conquered the heart of the audience primarily through simplicity, humility and grace of the presentation, but equally through the depth of the theological approach.

To our satisfaction, the participants were very pleased with the way we organized the event, but our greatest joy was to see their eagerness for God's word and for the teaching of the church. Many of the ladies for the first time came in contact with all the prayers of the preparation before the Holy Communion

and they were surprised to find out "that the preparation for the Holy Eucharist begins with participation in Vespers, Matins and then it is crowned by the participation in the Divine Liturgy and Holy Communion", as it was explained by mother abbess. "Arrival at the beginning of the Holy Liturgy is vital for preparation for Holy Communion, because I can't run to the Holy Chalice immediately after I arrived in the church with my absent and scattered mind," added our speaker. In order to cheer the atmosphere Mother Gabriela added a joke, a real story that happened in a Romanian Christian family who used to come to Fr. Roman Braga: "the woman was trying to wake her husband up saying: honey please get up because the Liturgy starts at 10 and we must be there at 11".



Our speaker explained that the Holy Fathers have settled different liturgical periods for our spiritual benefit. So Lent is a great opportunity to reflect and answer two essential questions: *What do I do here on earth?* and *Where will I go?* It is also a period in which it is good to prioritize, to simplify our life and focus on what is essential: the salvation of our soul.

She also added that it is very important what kind of spirit I bring with me into the church, to the liturgy. Do I come like *the prodigal son*, do I come boldly, and do I come with the desire to be united with Christ, to be with Him? Or do I come out of habit, on the run, without any previous preparation?

The Holy Liturgy is the Kingdom of God on earth. The Divine Liturgy begins with *Blessed it is the Kingdom of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*. And In order to enter into the Kingdom we need to be ready, to act, to lay the foundation for our spiritual growth. How we do this? Through a serious preparation before coming to the Divine Liturgy, through a humble and contrite heart, by reconciliation with everyone, and by forgiveness. These are fundamentals ingredients of the proper preparation, followed by practicing and acquiring virtues. In order to become an expert in any field we must practice a lot, every single day. In the same way we must practice prayer, fasting, confession, charity, humility, and forgiveness. When we strive to acquire virtues God sees our endeavor and sends us grace, and with the help of His grace those virtues become natural in us, they become our second nature, our natural way of living, of being .



Other teachings of Mother Gabriela:

- The Divine Liturgy is cooperation between God and man. Everything we have is from God and we bring back to God and He gives it back to us in the Holy Communion
- Fr. Roman Braga said, people are looking for the miracles but the Holy Liturgy is the greatest miracle that ever happened, this is why you should not stay home on Sunday, because nothing is more important, more great than the Divine Liturgy.
- What we bring in the church on Sunday at the liturgy may affect

other people around me, my community. If I am totally unprepared, disturbed I can cause distraction, dissipation into other people around me, instead of bringing peace and active participation.

- We are a community and in communion with one another. We are never alone, we are members of the same church, we are following the same rules, the same discipline because we belong to each other. It is not my life, my way. We are one.
- We have to come to the Liturgy with the hunger for God, with the hunger for spiritual growth, for the Holy

Communion. This is why we fast before Holy Communion. If I do not have this hunger for God this is a clear sign of spiritual sickness, and I need to go to "the doctor" to see what is wrong with me and why? In this way

- It is very dangerous to approach the Holy Chalice with indifference, unprepared, because this will lead me to the spiritual death.

- We approach Him with fear, with faith, and love. Fear of not disappointing God's love for us
- We should come to the church in our best clothes, with our best behavior; we should pay more attention to the great Divine Banquet. When we are invited to a formal dinner we are careful about the dress code, how we behave, etc.
- We are praying for a peaceful day during the Liturgy because peace

with one another means we are at peace with God.

- God is not living where there is division, war. There is no peace in the world because our leaders are not at peace with God.
- Our goal should be to become sinless, not perfect. We will be perfect in the Kingdom. We have to strive to sin no more and if I fall again God gave us a wonderful remedy, a healing tool, the second baptism that is the Holy Confession. The Holy Confession is not an obligation or an option, it is a necessary gift that God is giving to us through the priest for our spiritual healing.
- Being tempted is not the same as living in sin. Being tempted to sleep more, to eat more, to lose our temper is human but not the same like living in sin.
- The biggest danger for the soul is when sin becomes a way of living, when we do not ask for forgiveness, we do not care, when we love to be as we are without any desire for a change.
- The most important condition for God to receive our gift and for us to receive the Holy Communion is to be at peace with one another. If you hurt your brother in word and deed leave your gift and go and reconcile with him and after that come back to the church and receive the Holy Communion.
- If we love God we want to be always with Him, to be in prayer, to be



aware of His presence, and this is the preparation for eternal life. If you think that the services are too long than think about eternity. Would you like to be there or not? Or will you cut your connection with God through the sinful life? In this way we will be cut from the presence of God, that is hell.

- God gave us all the tools for our salvation. The most important is confession, and it needs to be made regularly, and every time when you have something on your conscience, on your heart.
- Asking advice from my Spiritual Father or from a more spiritual person than me is an act of humility, I recognize that I do not know everything. I submit myself to my spiritual father.

- The life in our family and in our community should be a continuation of the Holy Liturgy. The life of the Christians should be from

Sunday to Sunday, the Liturgy after the Liturgy because the liturgy is the work of the people.

- In the church, like in any other domain, we have rules. I'm not doing my own things because this is pride, this is selfishness. We are following the discipline of fasting, prayers, of giving alms. We are sustaining each other. It is not legalistic rules. Each of us is doing his part and we are making the whole together. We complete each other. I fast together with other members of the church. One less, another one more. Each according to his strength.

- The discipline of prayer rule – it is important to have some moments of prayer and nothing else to do.
- The discipline of alms giving – to share what God gives us with the church and people in need.
- Personal spiritual discipline is very important as an act of preparation for the Holy Communion. Reading the prayers before the Holy Communion – the Canon plus the 12 prayers, it is a very important prayer discipline. It is ideal as a part of the Communion prayers to be done Saturday evening and the rest Sunday morning. If we are too busy or it is too hard to pray for 30 minutes we can divide these prayers every day during the week and in this way I am preparing to receive Christ in the Holy Communion.
- It is good for the mothers to make part of the prayers for Eucharist together with the children, on Saturday evening
- Another good practice is to listen carefully to the prayers after Communion if they are read in the church, or to read them with your family in the car on the way home.

The presentation was followed by a Q & A session in which the ladies could address questions related not only to the topic of the conference, but the day to day problems.

After lunch, the event continued with a workshop where people were divided in working groups. Each group got some prayers before the Holy Communion from those 12 prayers of Communion, and the Canon of Communion. The task of each group was to analyze the prayers,

understand them, and then made short presentations about their work in front of everyone.



Although it was a full day, the joy of being together and listening to the words full of grace prevailed fatigue. The written feedbacks at the end of the retreat encouraged us to continue to organize such events in the future.

For those who would like to listen to the full conference you can find the registration on our website under Resources and under Women Retreat.

We pray that our Good Lord may plant seeds that may bloom to hundredfold of fruits in our minds and hearts with the help of what Mother Gabriela taught us. We wish you all to enjoy the light of the Holy Resurrection together with your loved ones!



The Sacrament of the Holy Unction - explanation

The meaning and purpose

“Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.” (James 5:14–15)

The first Scriptural reading for the service of **Holy Unction** shows that this **Sacrament has a twofold purpose: bodily healing and the forgiveness of sins**. The two are joined, for man is a unity of body and soul. There can be no sharp distinction between bodily and spiritual sicknesses. Of course, the Church does not believe that this anointing is automatically followed by recovery of health, for God’s will – and not man’s – prevails in all instances. Sometimes, the sick person is healed and recovers after receiving the Sacrament; but in other cases, he does not recover physically. Nonetheless, the Sacrament gives him the spiritual strength to prepare for death and life in the Kingdom to come.

The first portion of the service features a canon in which we sing to God, beseeching Him for his healing and protection, and for our remission of sins. Later, we sing troparions to saints including James, Demetrios and Nicholas, who are famed for healing with the power of God.

At the end, the priests hold the open Gospel Book over the heads of those receiving Holy Unction, during which the senior priest reads the Absolution Prayer: “I lay not my sinful hand upon the heads of those who approach thee in sins, and entreat of thee, through us, remission of their sins, but thy strong and mighty hand which is in this Holy Gospel which I hold upon the heads of these thy servants.” This commemorates the ancient practice of laying-on of hands for healing.

Where is the service of the Holy Unction held?

In the church or in the home of the sick person for whom Holy Unction is made.

Who can perform the service of Holy Unction?

The Sacrament is formally performed by seven priests, reflecting an ancient practice of performing the service over the course of seven days, each day having its own prayers. However, it is now performed oftentimes by just one priest in one service that includes seven epistle readings, seven gospel readings and seven prayers over the oil for our repentance and anointing. We hear these in the second half of the service.

When can Holy Unction be made? Is for the healthy people too?

This sacrament is offered on Holy Wednesday night, in the remembrance of the Anointing of the Savior with myrrh by the sinful woman (Luke 7, 37-38), but it can be offered year-round (especially on fasting days). The Holy Unction is not only for those on their deathbed, but for anyone who is sick or even over the physically healthy. **Holy Unction does not replace the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) and, like Holy Communion, it can only be offered to Orthodox Christians**. The patient for whom Holy Unction is performed must first go to confession, in order to fully benefit, body and soul, by this wonderful mystery.

What do we need to know about the oil from Holy Unction?

Being blessed by priests with the call of God, this oil is sanctified and filled with the divine gift of the Holy Spirit, like the water of Baptism. He has the power to sanctify the soul and heal the body, drive away diseases, heal wounds, cleanse the taint of sin and share God's mercy and grace.

That is why **the oil left over from Holy Unction must be kept with honor in a chosen place**. It can only be used for pure and pious purposes. It is customary to make a pastry from the flour and oil from Holy Unction, which is given to the sick person to eat. The oil can be put in the candle, either at home or at the church.

The Russian churches have different rules regarding the Holy unction oil - unlike holy oil from in front of an icon or at a shrine, laypersons cannot take Holy Unction to their homes.

The Great Thursday, Friday and Saturday services - explanation

HOLY AND GREAT THURSDAY

On this day the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great is celebrated together with Vespers.

The readings and hymns of Matins dwell on Judas' betrayal, on 'the dark night' which settled in his soul. We pray that we may keep ourselves from greed and deceit, and be made pure by partaking of the holy Mysteries of Christ's Body and Blood. The *Troparion* after the 'Alleluia' at Matins speaks of this:

The whole narration of our Lord's Passion is given at the Matins of Holy and Great Thursday. **It is commonly called 'the Service of the Twelve Gospels.'** A tall Crucifix usually stands in the middle of the church with many candles lighted round it. After the Six Psalms and the Great Litany, the choir chants, 'Alleluia' and the Troparion of Holy and Great Thursday. The priest and deacon come out of the sanctuary carrying the Book of Gospels. It is placed on a podium and the priest begins the reading. The whole story of the Passion is read from the four evangelists and is divided into twelve parts. It begins with the 'Gospel of the Testament' and the prayer at the Mystical Supper, in Saint John's Gospel, and continues through the four Gospels to the burial of Christ by Joseph of Arimathea. After each reading the choir chants, 'Glory to Thy forbearance, O Lord, glory to Thee.' Between the readings special antiphons and hymns are chanted. They speak of Judas' betrayal; of the cruelty of the Jews; of our Saviour's infinite patience and meekness; of the awe of all creation when the Lord of all was nailed to the Cross between two thieves. All recount the Passion and foretell the glory of the Resurrection.

Matins ends shortly after the twelfth Gospel.

HOLY AND GREAT FRIDAY

Great Friday is the most solemn day of Holy Week. In awe and trembling, we stand before the Cross on which our Saviour died and we see the image of Him dead, lying in our midst, on the Epitaphios (the Winding Sheet).

During the Service of Matins, which by anticipation is chanted on Thursday evening, we will hear some of the most awe-inspiring hymns of the ecclesiastical year. The following is but a one example:

Today there is hung upon the Tree, He that suspended the earth upon the waters. A crown of thorns is placed upon Him Who is the King of the Angels. With false purple is He wrapped about, He that wrappeth the Heavens with clouds. Buffetings did He receive, Who freed Adam in the Jordan. With nails was He affixed, He that is the Bridegroom of the Church. With a lance was He pierced, He that is the Son of the Virgin. We venerate Thy Passion, O Christ. Show also unto us Thy glorious Resurrection.

The solemn Vespers of Great Friday is celebrated in the afternoon at the time of our Lord Jesus' death. Again all the readings remind us of the suffering Christ and His glory. After the entrance, lessons are read in which the Prophet Isaih speaks of 'the Lamb led to the slaughter,' and an Epistle of Saint Paul on the power and wisdom of the Cross; again a Gospel is read describing our Lord's trial before Pilate, His Crucifixion and burial.

Holy and Great Saturday is a reverent vigil at the tomb of the Son of God, slain for our sins. By anticipation, the Saturday Matins is held on Friday evening.

After the Six Psalms and the Great Litany, the Royal Doors are opened clergy come out with candles and censer. The choir sings ‘The Lord is God and hath appeared unto us,’ and then the appointed *troparia*.

In the meantime, the priest and deacon cense the Shroud, then stand in front of it. The priest and the choir then chant the ‘**Lamentations**’. It is like a long poem depicting the Angels in Heaven and all creatures on earth overwhelmed by the death of their Creator, and their gratitude at being freed from death’s power by Christ.

After the Lamentations, the Resurrection hymns are sung. Then, following the customary litanies, the choir chants the canon, where the note of joy and triumph is heard more and more clearly. At the end of the Great Doxology of Matins, the priest raises the Shroud, which is then taken by four pall-bearers, the deacon walks in front, the people follow, all carrying candles, accompanied by the choir chanting, ‘Holy God, Holy and Strong, Holy and Immortal, have mercy on us.’ This represents the burial of Christ. Then, the *prokeimenon* is chanted, and the glorious prophecy of Ezekiel is read about the dry bones of Israel, out of which arose ‘an exceeding great host’ quickened to life by the breath of God. Then follows Saint Paul’s Epistle about Christ our Passover, and the Gospel about the sealing of Jesus’ tomb. Matins then ends as usual.

HOLY GREAT SATURDAY MORNING

The Liturgy of Holy and Great Saturday is that of Saint Basil the Great, it is also known as the First Resurrection because it is the time when the Holy Light is coming in the church of Jerusalem. It begins with Vespers. Then the Old Testament readings are recited. They tell of the most striking events and prophecies of the salvation of

mankind by the death of the Son of God. The account of creation in Genesis is the first reading. The sixth reading is the story of Israel’s crossing of the Red Sea and Moses’ song of victory – over Pharaoh, with its refrain: ‘For gloriously is He glorified’. The last reading is about the Three Children in the fiery furnace of Babylon, and their song of praise with its repeated refrain: ‘O praise ye the Lord and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.’ In the ancient church the catechumens were baptized during the time of these readings. The Epistle which follows speaks of how, through the death of Christ, we too shall rise to a new life. After the Epistle, the choir chants, like a call to the sleeping Christ: ‘Arise, O Lord, Judge the earth, for Thou shalt have an inheritance among all the nations... The deacon carries out the Book of the Gospels, and reads the first message of the resurrection from Saint Matthew. Because the Vespers portion of the service belongs to the next day (Pascha) the burial hymns of Saturday are mingled with those of the resurrection, so that this service is already full of the coming Paschal joy.

After the Gospel the Liturgy proceeds as usual. Instead of the Cherubic Hymn, a special Great Entrance Hymn is chanted:

Let all mortal flesh keep silence and stand with fear and trembling, and take no thought for any earthly thing, for the King of kings and Lord of lords cometh to be slain and given as food for the faithful. Before Him go the choirs of the angels with all sovereignty and power: the many-eyed Cherubim and six-winged Seraphim, covering their faces and crying out the hymn: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Translated from Romanian; Synaxarion of the Lenten Triodion and Pentecostarion, pp. 163-166 (Rives Junction, Mi.: HDM Press, 1999).

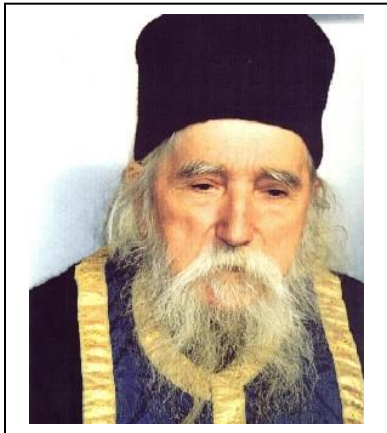
Christ is Risen! By Elder Cleopa of Romania

Today we celebrate the feast of feasts and the holiday of holidays. Today there is spiritual joy throughout the entire Christian world. Today our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ has illumined everything through His Resurrection. Let heaven and earth rejoice together, and the earth be glad, because the light of the Resurrection of the Lord has filled with light heaven, and earth, and hell, and all the ones enslaved in the bonds of death. In the hope of the Resurrection, our Savior brought them into eternal joy when He descended into Hades. Today Jesus Christ, our Life, through His Resurrection established a new foundation of humanity and crowned all the holy miracles He worked while on earth.

Today is the day of the Resurrection of the Lord, the victory of reconciliation, the undermining of war, the crushing of death, and the defeating of the devil. It is meet and right for us today to repeat the words of the prophet Isaiah: *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* (cf. Hosea 13:14, 1 Cor 15:55).

On this day our Master Jesus Christ smashed the gates of brass and the name of death itself; He made it to no longer be called death, but sleep.

Before Christ's coming and before the economy of the Cross, the name of death was frightening. And after Christ our God led Himself as a sacrifice to the Cross for us and resurrected from the dead, He transformed death into sleep, as a lover of men.



Do you see how bright the victory of the Resurrection of Christ is? We have been given countless blessings through the Resurrection of our Lord. The deceit of the devils perished through the Resurrection. Through the Resurrection we counter death. Through the Resurrection we overlook the present life. Through the Resurrection we strive for the heavenly reward. Through the Resurrection, while clothed in our bodies we draw nearer to the bodiless ones if we so desire.

Today the splendid victories took place. Today Christ our God conquered death and He undermined the tyrannical demon, and He offered us the path towards our salvation through His Resurrection. So let us all rejoice and exalt, for our Savior conquered death and hell and worked everything for our salvation.

Listen to what our godly father St. John Chrysostom says: *Let us not be careless and ungrateful towards the blessings that we receive through the Resurrection of our Lord. Neither should we say, "Look, Great Lent is over, now we no longer need to worry about anything." For now more than before, we have to be very careful with our souls so that by strengthening the body we do not render the soul more helpless. That is, by caring for the servant (body), not to become careless towards the master (soul). For our spiritual labor is for the rest of our life. He also says, We are freed from the burden of fasting, but we did not also renounce the fruit of the fast. The efforts of laboring are over, but do not let go of the ambition for doing good deeds. The fasting period is over, but let the*

reverence remain. The bodily fast passed, but not the spiritual, which is better than the other, and the former was done for the latter.

Through spiritual fasting we understand the working of good deeds, that all of us who were baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity and who believe in Christ, Who resurrected from the dead, are all obligated to do. Before all good deeds that help the salvation of our souls the most, Christian love comes first. Without love, without forgiveness, and without almsgiving there is no salvation, there is no Pascha, there is no joy in the soul, and there is no resurrection from the death of our sins, as well as no peace in our hearts.

The day of Resurrection, let us be illumined with the feast, and let us embrace one another. Let us say, brethren, even to those that hate us, let us forgive all things in the Resurrection, and so let us cry, Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.

We should scrutinize all of our thoughts, all of our feelings, and all of our behaviors very well, and then approach the Holy Chalice with a broken and humble heart, with our hearts filled with faith and love for the Cup of Holy Communion, in order to receive Christ our God, Who is always present and ready to come and dwell among us, as it says so clearly in His Holy Gospel: *Whoever eats My Body and drinks My Blood abides in Me and I in him.* (Jn 6:56).

Are we determined to do this? It is for our benefit, for the benefit of our earthly and heavenly life. For it is only if we are united with our Lord Jesus Christ that we will be able to understand better and deeper the true meaning of our life on earth. We will surely embark victoriously on the path of the eternal, holy, and heavenly life.

Today is the Passover of our Lord. Today Christ, our Life, conquered death, hell, and the devil. Today the gates of Paradise and of the Kingdom of Heaven have opened to us. Today the angels rejoice together and worship God.

Therefore, let us put away all evil, all sadness, and all sin from our homes and from our hearts, and let us welcome the Resurrected Christ with joy. Let us worship the Cross upon which Christ was crucified. Let us kiss the Tomb from whence our Lord resurrected. Let us follow our Savior with faith and hope, together with the Mother of God, with the Apostles, with all the Saints, with the Holy Fathers, and all our ancestors. Let us spiritually kiss each other, brother and brother; let us reconcile; let us love one another, for today we acquired forgiveness and salvation through the Resurrection. Let no one be sad; let no one lose faith and hope due to the troubles of life, for the Resurrected Christ is with us. We carry Him inside ourselves, and He will always dwell with us, if we remain in His love and if we keep His commandments.

With this life-giving faith that gives us power and victory, let us chant together the Hymn of the Resurrection: ***Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life.***

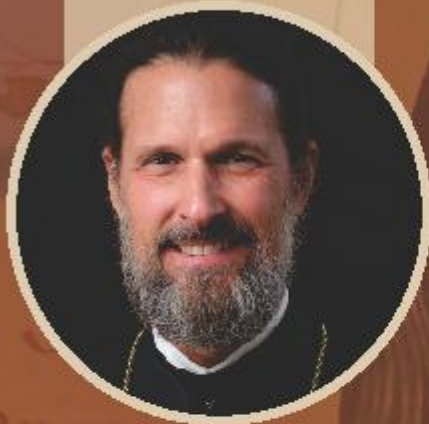
Amen.

Word of God from saints

Before the Incarnation of the Lord, death was frightening even for the saints, who mourned their death as annihilation. But now, since the Lord has risen with the body, death is no longer frightening; all those who believe in Christ treat death as nothing-all and prefer to die than to deny their faith in Him - St. Athanasius the Great

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TRENHAM**



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TRENHAM**

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EVENT DETAILS:

- Admission for Saturday
- Restaurant Lunch
- Conference with Fr. Josiah Trenham
- Q & A Session

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April 2023

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts

www.stmichaelorthodox.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 + Fast Day Divine Liturgy 9:00am Vespers 5:00pm
2 + Fast Day Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am Bridegroom Matins 7:00pm	3 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 10:00am	4 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 12:00pm	5 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 6:00pm	6 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 12:00pm	7 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 10:00am	8 + Fast Day – Wine and oil allowed Saturday of Lazarus Divine Liturgy/9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:15am) Vespers 5:00pm
9 + Fast Day – Wine and oil allowed Palm Sunday Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	10 + Strict Fast Great and Holy Monday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 1:00pm Bridegroom Matins 6:00pm	11 + Strict Fast Great and Holy Tuesday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 1:00pm Bridegroom Matins 6:00pm	12 + Strict Fast Great and Holy Wednesday Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 1:00pm Holy Unction 6:00pm Bridegroom Matins 8:00pm	13 + Strict Fast Great and Holy Thursday Divine Vesperal Liturgy (St. Basil the Great w/ Vespers) 10:00am Holy Passion Gospel Matins 6:00pm	14 + Strict Fast Great and Holy Friday Epiphaphion 12:00 Great Vespers 3:00pm Lamentations Service 6:00pm	15 + Fast Day – Wine and oil allowed Great and Holy Saturday 10:00am Divine Liturgy Resurrection Service 11:00pm Paschal Divine Liturgy 12:00am
16 Great and Holy Pascha Agape Vespers 11:00am	17 Bright Monday Matins 8:00am Divine Liturgy 9:00am	18 Bright Tuesday Matins 8:00am Divine Liturgy 9:00am	19 Bright Wednesday	20 Bright Thursday Vespers, Litia and Matins 6:00pm	21 Bright Friday Life-Giving Fount of the Mother of God Divine Liturgy 10:00am	22 Bright Saturday Vespers 5:00pm
23 First Sunday after Pascha (St. George) Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	24	25 Pizza Bible Study 7:00pm- Central Pizza Southbridge	26	27	28	29 Divine Liturgy 9:00am Vespers 5:00pm
30 Second Sunday after Pascha Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am						