

# Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts  
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

May 2019



## LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

### **Saturday**

9:00am Divine Liturgy  
10:00am Memorial Service  
5:00pm Vespers

### **Sunday**

9:00am Matins  
10:00am Divine Liturgy

### **Wednesday**

6:00pm Paraklesis

### **Friday**

5:30pm Akathist

**Look at calendar at end for  
full schedule of services for  
this month**

## Feast days

**May 3<sup>rd</sup>** – Theotokos of the Life-Giving Spring

**May 5<sup>th</sup>** – St. Thomas & St. Ephraim of Nea Makri

**May 8<sup>th</sup>** – St. John the Theologian

**May 10<sup>th</sup>** – Apostle Simon the Zealot

**May 11<sup>th</sup>** – Sts. Cyril & Methodius

**May 21<sup>st</sup>** – Sts. Constantine and Helen

**May 22<sup>nd</sup>** – Mid-Pentecost

**May 25<sup>th</sup>** – Third Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist

## **Feast of Mid-Pentecost**

The fifty days following Pascha until the Feast of Pentecost are known as the period of the Pentecostarion in the Orthodox Church. At the mid-point between these great feasts of Pascha and Pentecost, on the twenty-fifth day which is always a Wednesday, is one of the most beloved feasts for the most devout Orthodox Christians known quit simply as Mid-Pentecost. Mid-Pentecost is to the Pentecostarion what the Third Sunday of Great Lent which honors the Holy Cross is to the period of Great Lent. It is a day which helps us focus on the central theme of the entire period. Whereas the mid-point of Great Lent reminds us to bear up the Cross of Christ bravely so that we may daily die with Christ in order to experience the Resurrection of our Lord, so also the mid-point of the Pentecostarion enlightens us regarding the theme of the fifty days following Pascha - which is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit poured out as a gift upon all the faithful who partake of the living water which is Christ Himself.

On the Wednesday of Mid-Pentecost, we commemorate the words of our Lord Jesus Christ concerning the provenance of His teaching and His Divine origin, whereby He proved that He was the Messiah, and the Mediator and Reconciler of us and the eternal Father.

The Feast of Mid-Pentecost is celebrated for an entire week until the following Wednesday, making it an eight day feast. During this entire time the hymns of Mid-Pentecost are joined with that of Pascha. Because of the theme of water, traditionally the Church celebrates the Lesser Blessing of the Waters on this day, preferably with a procession with the Holy Cross to a water spring.

Since the hymns of the Church invoke and praise our Lord as the Wisdom of God spoken of in the Book of Proverbs, it is traditional that all churches named after Holy Wisdom or Hagia Sophia celebrate their feast on this day.



**Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church**  
16 Romanian Avenue, Southbridge Massachusetts 01550  
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Facebook: St. Michael Orthodox Christian Church

### 2018 Parish Council

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

### 2018 Ladies Society Committee

President: Alexandra Nasto  
Vice President: Louise Boilard  
Secretary: Debbie Thomo  
Treasurer: Mary Andreea

### Clergy

Fr. John Downie [fr.john\\_downie71@yahoo.com](mailto:fr.john_downie71@yahoo.com)

## Parish News & Events

### Happy Birthday!!

**God Grant You Many More Years!!**

May 12<sup>th</sup> – Yannis Mironidis

May 15<sup>th</sup> – Paul Yanka

April 17<sup>th</sup> – Kim Yanka & Alexis Collazo

May 25<sup>th</sup> – Dimitri Mironidis

May 28<sup>th</sup> – Antonia Pitsillides

### Happy Name Day

May 5<sup>th</sup> – St. Thomas – Tom Dowling, Tom Andrea, & Tom Burren

May 8<sup>th</sup> – St. John the Theologian – Fr. John, Yannis Mironidis, John DeAngeli, Yannis Penna

May 16<sup>th</sup> – St. Theodore the Sanctified – Theodora, Theodore Yanka

May 21<sup>st</sup> – Sts. Constantine and Helen – Charles Panu, Constantine Penn, Eleni Fatsi

May 22<sup>nd</sup> – Mid-Pentecost/Holy Wisdom/Hagia Sophia – Sophia Pitsillides

### Coffee Hour Volunteers Needed

We need more volunteers for each Sunday. If you volunteer, you can dedicate the coffee hour to the memory of a loved one. Any help would be greatly appreciated!

**Please contact Deb Thomo to sign up.**

## SPRING CHICKEN BBQ

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2019  
5P.M. - 7P.M.

ROMANIAN HALL  
Southbridge, Mass.

\$10.00 Donation

### Morris Street Yard Sale

Saturday, June 22, 9am

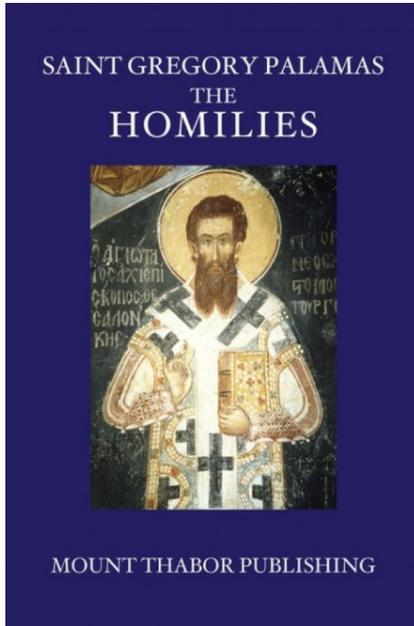
Please see Sandra Nasto.



### Please Pray for:

Preoteasa Camelia  
Laureen Smith  
Carol Porra  
Mary Grabosky  
Muka (a friend of Vasilios)  
Penelope and George Chicoloff (reposed)  
George Vasel (reposed)

## ~ Book Corner ~

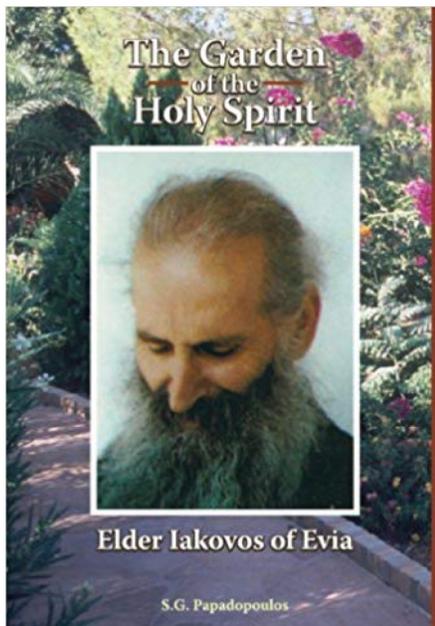


### ***St. Gregory Palamas: The Homilies***

Saint Gregory Palamas (c. 1296 - 1359) represents Orthodox Theology at its most sublime. Patristic Theology in the fourteenth century, of which Saint Gregory is indubitably the greatest exponent, touched the very boundaries of theological expression. Saint Gregory's homilies are among the finest in Patristic literature. In his treatment of the manifold themes contained therein, he is remarkably consistent in maintaining a balance between originality of thought and strict adherence to the tradition of his predecessors. His genius resides in the ease with which he demonstrates, as only a master of the spiritual life can, the refreshingly practical significance of the doctrines of the Church for the Life in Christ.

This is the first edition of all sixty-three extant sermons by St. Gregory to appear in English translation.

“The sermons of Saint Gregory Palamas...form the most complete introduction not only to his theology, but to the theology of all the great Fathers of the Church.” Archimandrite Zacharias, Patriarchal and Stavropegic Monastery of St. John the Baptist, Essex, England.



### ***The Garden of the Holy Spirit: Elder Iakovos of Evia***

Elder Iakovos belongs to a special group of contemporary charismatic Elders (Paisios and Porphyrios, Fr. Dimitri Gagastathis and others) who were responsible for a resurgence of faith among those who knew them personally. In the conscience of the people, these Elders are living proof that the Orthodox Church is alive and continues to produce Saints.

The author of this book, Professor Stylianos Papadopoulos, was blessed to be among those who knew Elder Iakovos. In reading these vivid, lively stories we are moved deeply to glorify God Who in this age of falsehood and agnosticism raised such holy figures among us.

Presented in a revised translation, the life of Blessed Elder Iakovos is offered in a new edition by Orthodox Witness to English speaking readers. From this text, we trust that all will draw strength and courage in their spiritual journey.

# Parish Life

## Holy Week and Pascha



## President's Corner

President's Corner Report  
05/01/2019

Christ Is Risen! Indeed He Has Risen!

What an incredible Holy Week we experienced at the end of April! The Passion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is something that none of us can afford to take for granted and His resurrection is something that we should be celebrate in how we live our lives. I want to thank everyone involved in making this Holy Week special, starting with Father John & Camelia, our amazing Cantors and Readers, our altar boys, our members who cooked, cleaned and helped decorate, along with everyone who donated and attended services. There were over 17 services this week and it was an incredible journey for everyone in our Orthodox community! Thank you!

Doxastikon of the Praises (Plagal of the First Tone)

“It is the day of Resurrection; let us be radiant for the festival, and let us embrace one another. Let us say, O brethren, even to those that hate us: Let us forgive all things on the Resurrection; and thus let us cry: Christ is risen from the dead, by death He has trampled down death, and on those in the tombs He has bestowed life.”

## **The Panagia, the Life-Giving Spring**

**From *Ekklesiastiki Paremvasi*. Translated by John Sanidopoulos.**

The feast of the Life-Giving Spring that we celebrate on the Friday of Renewal Week is a feast of our Panagia (Theotokos/Mother of God). The following is written in the Synaxarion of the day: "On the Friday of Renewal Week we celebrate the dedication of the church of our Most Holy Lady and Mother of God of the Life-Bearing Spring; we even remember the supernatural miracles that took place in this church of the Mother of God."

The Panagia is called Life-Giving Spring, since she gave birth to Life, who is Christ. The epithet "Life-Giving Spring" was first given to the Panagia by Joseph the Hymnographer in the ninth century, in a composition of a hymn to the Panagia.

The feast, as mentioned above, refers to the dedication of the Sacred Church of the Panagia, known as the "Life-Giving Spring in Baloukli", outside the walls of Constantinople, where there was a spring of holy water that did and does many miracles.

The Sacred Church of the Life-Giving Spring in the City was first built by Emperor Leo the Thracian, who was virtuous and forgiving, even before he became emperor and was a simple soldier, when he met a blind man outside the Golden Gate of Constantinople. The blind man asked for water to drink, and Leo looked for the source of the spring of water in the area, which was overgrown with trees, and he was unable to find it. He became very sad that he was unable to find water for the blind man. He then heard a voice say to him: "King Leo (he was called a king even though he was just a soldier, which became verified), come deeper into the woods, and after receiving in your hands this turbid water, quench the thirst of the blind man and wash his eyes, and then you will know who I am who dwells in this place." Leo immediately did what the voice ordered him to do and the blind man received his sight. The voice was that of the Panagia.

Leo, when he became emperor, out of gratitude and honor built on the site of that holy water the sacred church in honor of the Panagia, the Life-Giving Spring. When over a period of time this sacred church collapsed, other emperors - Justinian and Basil the Macedonian - took it upon themselves to have a new church built, even more grand than the previous.

Another tradition says that the first church was built by Justinian, after seeing in a vision while he was hunting there a small church and a Priest in front of a spring, saying to him that it is a spring of wonders. There he built a monastery with the materials left over from Hagia Sophia.

This church in the Queen City collapsed in the fifteenth century. According to reports from 1547 the church no longer existed. Only the holy water was there. In 1833 Patriarch Constantios I, with permission from the Sultan, rebuilt the church over the ruins of the old one. Thus on February 2nd in 1835, Patriarch Constantios with twelve other Hierarchs dedicated the new Church of the Life-Giving Spring in Baloukli. Baloukli means "the place of the fish", since the Spring contains fish.

In this church many miracles took place, even to noble families of the empire, a typical example being the release from sterility of Empress Zoe, who after the miracle from the Life-Giving Spring gave birth to Constantine Porphyrogenitos, who became emperor in Byzantium. In this church also were healed the emperors Justinian, Leo the Wise, Romanos Lekapenos, Andronikos III, Patriarch Stephen of Constantinople, Patriarch John of Jerusalem, many empresses and many senior officials of the empire, as well as clergy and monks, and many ordinary Christians. In the fourteenth century Nikephoros Kallistos wrote about the holy water of the Spring, and compiled a list of 63 miracles.

The icon of the Panagia of the Life-Giving Spring depicts the Panagia in a fountain from which an abundance of water flows out, carrying in her arms Christ who gives a blessing. Two angels crown her holding a scroll that reads: "Rejoice, thou who art the King's throne! Rejoice, thou who carriest Him Who carriest all!" Around the fountain are depicted the emperor and many sick with various diseases. They receive the holy water sprinkled on them by the healthy. At the corner is depicted someone emblazoned with fish, since as we said Baloukli means "the place of fish".

The reverence and love of the people of Constantinople for the Life-Giving Spring has been transmitted to all Orthodox in many places...supporting the people in their everyday lives and in their faith in God.

## **The Resurrection and the Truly Resurrected People**

### **Fr. Nicholas Patsalos**

The power of the Resurrection as experienced and described by any Father of the Church is found in the forms of Saints of our time who truly lived It secretly. Their living proof proves that they have become "united in death and resurrection" and that the Resurrection is not a past event, but its consequences touch today. They are the long-suffering people who struggle to death with a single concern not to lose communion with Christ, who take part "in the resurrection of the first," with the result that "the second death has no power, but are priests of God and Christ "According to the holy Revelation of John.

The Orthodox church has many such crucified-resurrected figures. The 19th century can boast about the "Russian Shepherd," Sarov's holy Seraphim, who really lived the Resurrection every day. The Resurrectional greeting "Christ is Risen" was a way of life for him. Everyday he confessed that "Christ Risen and Hades was despoiled", using the resurrectional greeting to greet or address anyone. His whole life, resurrected, without fear of death and evil.

On the other hand, equal to Saint Seraphim, according to the elder Sophronius of Essex, the great saint of the 21st century, Porphyrios Kafsokalivitis, is also a highly resurrected personality. Death, for St. Porphyrios, was non-existent, so he boldly said that he felt "eternal." Indeed, every time he would commune of the immaculate mysteries, he would say a troparion of the Canon of the Resurrection while receiving the resurrected, deified body of the Lord.

Therefore, in the faces of the saints, we can distinguish the charismatic context in which the Resurrection is experienced, as opposed to the intense institutional character that Easter recruits from many. Saint Porphyrios, like the other modern saints of our day, teaches us what the Resurrection ultimately is. For them, the theory of our own easy words became an act, and the abolition of death became the experience for them. Saint Porphyrios was joyfully waiting, as

he said, for death as the place and the way of the perfect meeting with Christ. The time dimension is abolished. And there is not in his mind the distinction between it and the other life. Life is one, it simply changes its form and way: "I belong to the Lord either in this life or in the other," as he said.

### **Elder Porphyrios and the Joy of the Resurrection**

The following story was told by the cardiologist of Elder Porphyrios, Dr. George Papazahos, when he visited the Elder in his cell one Bright Tuesday following Pascha.

I went to see him as a doctor. After the cardiological examination and the usual cardiogram, he asked that I not leave.

I sat on the stool near his bed. His face was shining with joy. He asked me:

"Do you know the hymn which says, 'Let us celebrate the death of death...?'"

"Yes Elder, I know it."

"Say it."

I began to say it quickly. "Let us celebrate the death of death, the destruction of hades, the beginning of eternal life. And leaping for joy, we celebrate the Cause, the only blessed and most glorious God of our fathers."

"Did you understand it?"

"Of course I understood." I thought he was asking me about its interpretation.

He made a sudden movement with his hand and told me:

"You understood nothing, George my man! You said it like a hurried chanter. Listen to what fearful things this hymn says: Christ by His Resurrection did not cross us over a lake, over a crack in the earth, over a canal, over a river like the Red Sea. He brought us over an abyss, of which it was impossible for man to cross alone. For centuries we awaited this Pascha, for this passage. Christ brought us from death to life. This is why today we 'celebrate the death of death, the destruction of hades'. Death is lost. Do you understand? Today we celebrate 'the beginning of eternal life', a life near Him."

He spoke with enthusiasm and conviction. He was moved. He paused for a moment then continued more loudly:

"Now chaos, death, and hades do not exist. Now there is all joy, thanks to the Resurrection of our Christ. Together with Him human nature was resurrected. Now we can be resurrected and live eternally near Him. What happiness is in the Resurrection! 'And leaping for joy, we celebrate the Cause.' Have you ever seen the little goats now in the Spring who jump on the grass? They eat a little from their mother and begin to jump again? This is what it means to leap - to jump. This is how we should also jump for unspeakable joy at the Resurrection of our Lord and our own."

He stopped speaking again. I breathed in a joyous atmosphere. He continued:

"Can I give you some advice? In your every sorrow, in your every failure, concentrate for a moment within yourself and say this hymn slowly-slowly. You will see that the greatest thing in your life - and in the life of the whole world - happened. The Resurrection of Christ, our salvation. And you will realize that everything that is upside down which is occurring will seem to you very small to spoil your mood."

He squeezed my hand saying:

"I pray that you leap for joy, looking at the chaos behind you from which the Risen Christ crossed you over, 'the only blessed of our fathers'. Chant now 'Christ is Risen!'"

My postscript: Truly, He is Risen!

+ George Papazahos, Professor of Cardiology  
Translated by John Sanidopoulos

### From St. Paisios

"It was Spring and Elder Paisios would hear the birds outside chirping.

He asked me, "What are the birds saying now?"

I answered, "How do I know Elder?"

He replied, "Blessed one, they are saying the 'Christ is Risen!'"

- From Archimandrite Arsenios Katerelou

### From Elder Sophrony of Essex

And lo, on Easter Saturday, in 1924 perhaps, the Light visited me after I had taken communion, and I felt it like the touch of Divine Eternity on my spirit. Gentle, full of peace and love, the Light remained with me for three days. It drove away the darkness of non-existence that had engulfed me. **I was resurrected, and in me and with me the whole world was resurrected.** The words of St John Chrysostom at the end of the Easter Liturgy struck me with overwhelming force: 'Christ is risen and there are no dead in the grave'. Tormented hitherto by the spectre of universal death, I now felt that my soul, too, was resurrected and there were no more dead . . . If this is God, then quickly let me abandon everything and seek only union with Him.

The descent of this (Light) to us is nothing other than the revelation of God to man: the revelation of heavenly mysteries. Without this light, the earth would remain without true knowledge of God. Based on my personal experience, I returned to myself to name that Light **the Light of the Resurrection**. With the coming of that Light, the spirit of man comes to the plane where there is no death. The radiance from this Light grants man **the experience of the Resurrection** as a foretaste of the blessedness to come.

- From *We Shall See Him as He Is*, Archimandrite Sophrony



# May 2018

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Southbridge, Massachusetts

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Bright Wednesday	2 Bright Thursday  Vespers & Litia – Bright Friday/Theotokos of the Life-Giving Spring 6:00pm	3 <b>Bright Friday/Theotokos of the Life-Giving Spring</b>  <b>Matins 9:00am</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy 10:00am</b>	4 Bright Saturday  Divine Liturgy 9:00am  Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
5  <b>Thomas Sunday St. Ephraim of Nea Makri</b>  <b>Matins 9:00am</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy 10:00am</b>	6	7	8  St. John the Theologian  Paraklesis 6:00pm	9	10  Apostle Simon the Zealot  Akathist 5:30pm	11  Sts. Cyril & Methodius  Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am)  Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
12  <b>Sunday of the Myrrh- bearing Women</b>  <b>Matins 9:00am</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy 10:00am</b>	13	14	15  Paraklesis 6:00pm	16  St. Theodore the Sanctified	17  Akathist 5:30pm	18  Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am)  Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
19  <b>Sunday of the Paralytic</b>  <b>Matins 9:00am</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy 10:00am</b>	20  Vespers & Litia – Sts. Constantine and Helen 6:00pm	21  <b>Sts. Constantine and Helen</b>  <b>Matins 9:00am</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy 10:00am</b>	22  <b>Mid-Pentecost</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	23	24  Akathist 5:30pm	25  Third Finding of the Head of St. John the Baptist  Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am)  Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
26  <b>Sunday of the Samaritan Woman</b>  <b>Matins 9:00am</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy 10:00am</b>	27	28	29  Paraklesis 6:00pm	30	31  Akathist 5:30pm	