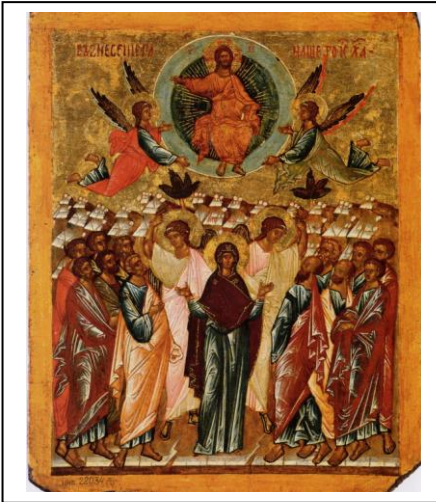




# Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts  
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

May 2023



## LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

### **Saturday**

9:00am Divine Liturgy  
5:00pm Vespers

### **Sunday**

9:00am Matins  
10:00am Divine Liturgy

### **Wednesday**

6:00pm Paraklesis

For the full Calendar check the last page

## **The Ascension of Our Lord**

“I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God, and Your God”  
(John 20:17).

In the Ascension resides the meaning and the fullness of Christ's Resurrection.

The Lord did not rise in order to return again to the fleshly order of life, so as to live again and commune with the disciples and the multitudes by means of preaching and miracles. Now he does not even stay with them, but only “appears” to them during the forty days, from time to time, and always in a miraculous and mysterious manner. “He was not always with them now, as He was before the Resurrection,” comments Saint John Chrysostom. “He came and again disappeared, thus leading them on to higher conceptions. He no longer permitted them to continue in their former relationship toward Him, but took effectual measures to secure these two objects: That the fact of His Resurrection should be believed, and that He Himself should be ever after apprehended to be greater than man.” There was something new and unusual in His person (cf. John 21:1-14). As Saint John Chrysostom says, “It was not an open presence, but a certain testimony of the fact that He was present.” That is why the disciples were confused and frightened. Christ arose not in the same way as those who were restored to life before Him. Theirs was a resurrection for a time, and they returned to life in the same body, which was subject to death and corruption—returned to the previous mode of life.

But Christ arose forever, unto eternity. He arose in a body of glory, immortal and incorruptible. He arose, never to die, for “He clothed the mortal in the splendor of incorruption.” It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (I Cor. 15:42-44).

***Christ Ascended! Indeed  
Ascended!  
Hristos S-a Inaltat!  
Adevarat S-a Inaltat!***

Continuation pag 4

**Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church**  
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Facebook: St. Michael Orthodox Christian Church

### 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](mailto:fr.john_downie71@yahoo.com)

## Parish News & Events

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

May 1<sup>st</sup> – John Mitaras  
May 12<sup>th</sup> – Yannis Mironidis  
May 15<sup>th</sup> – Paul Yanka  
May 17<sup>th</sup> – Kim Yanka  
May 22<sup>nd</sup> – Anna Alexander  
May 25<sup>th</sup> – Dimitri Mironidis  
May 28<sup>th</sup> – Antonia Pitsillides

### Bible Study – May 4<sup>th</sup> - 7:00pm

Bible Study on zoom for the Archdiocese - St. John Gospel Chapter 12



### Happy Name Day

**May 8<sup>th</sup> – St. John the Theologian** – Fr. John, Yannis Mironidis, Yannis Charissopoulos, John DeAngelis,

**May 16<sup>th</sup> – St. Theodore the Sanctified** – Theodora Felicia Railean, Theodora Rania Salhani, Theodore Yanka, Theodore Rapsomanikis

**May 18<sup>th</sup> – Mid-Pentecost** – Sophia Pitsillides

**May 21<sup>st</sup> – Sts. Constantine and Helen** – Charles (Constantine) Panu



### Please Pray

for:

Sandra  
Georgia  
Henrietta  
Theodor



### **Volunteers wanted for Young Adults Retreat**

We need volunteers for different activities before and during the Young Adults Retreat and Speaker Event.

Please contact Katie Mironidis or Presbytera Camelia

### Spring Calendar Raffle

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

## *The Prayer Diary of Geronta Ephrem of Arizona* March 24, 1980 Holy Pascha

“I want and love to help you pray. I want you to become men of prayer. I do not have the gift of prayer, although I know a man of prayer. It is this paternal desire of mine that made me write something for you these days that God has sent me a small gift of prayer—it is, of course, the fruit of Elder Joseph, who is up in heaven, and with his boldness he sends down his blessings to us. I wrote this diary so that we, too, may learn how to pray and see the fruit of prayer and thus acquire the appetite, the desire, the spiritual yearning, the longing to be united with God. We need to come to know through spiritual experience how this union occurs and what fruit the soul tastes from this union of man’s finite nous with the infinite Nous—God.”



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“Today is the Resurrection of Christ. “Come receive light from the unwaning Light....” O unwaning, unsetting, unending light, supremely radiant and extremely white, how You magnetize my nous, my soul, my heart! I long for You unwaningly, with endless love and eros. When shall I be counted worthy by the gift of mercy of my most holy God and Father to enjoy You eternally, eternally! My unworthiness worries

the saved—rather, I deserve to go to hell and be punished forever. The Resurrection, the eternal Pascha, attracts me tremendously. The state of things above draws me. I long and yearn to be up in heaven, up in security. But when will this happen? O Pascha with the angels, with the saints, with everyone dressed in white, how much you all please and attract me! You chant new and ineffable songs to God with tremendous peace and inexpressible tranquility. O Pascha with no end or change of its indescribable joy and celebration! My Father and my God, protect me from every evil so that I, too, the monstrosity, may be counted worthy one day of being in this Pascha that 110 Fire from the Holy Mountain human words cannot describe or express.

“Likewise, do thou exult and be glad, O my Lady Theotokos, in the arising of Him Whom thou didst bear.”<sup>54</sup> In the loveliness of the divine beauty of your Son and God, remember even me, the filthy one, so that I may be together with you in the eternal Pascha! “It is the day of Resurrection; let us be radiant, O ye peoples; Pascha, the Lord’s Pascha.”<sup>55</sup> I bid You farewell, my Pascha, until next year. “

## **The Ascension of our Lord**

### **By Fr. George Florovsky – continuation pag 1**

This mysterious transformation of human bodies, of which Saint Paul was speaking in the case of our Lord, had been accomplished in three days. Christ's work on earth was accomplished. He had suffered, was dead and buried, and now rose to a higher mode of existence. By His Resurrection He abolished and destroyed death, abolished the law of corruption, "and raised with Himself the whole race of Adam." Christ has risen, and now "no dead are left in the grave" (cf. The Easter Sermon of Saint John Chrysostom). And now He ascends to the Father, yet He does not "go away," but abides with the faithful for ever (cf. The Kontakion of Ascension). God's power, in the phrase of Saint John Chrysostom, "manifests itself not only in the Resurrection, but in something much stronger." For "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19).

And with Christ, man's nature ascends also.

"We who seemed unworthy of the earth, are now raised to heaven," says Saint John Chrysostom. "We who were unworthy of earthly dominion have been raised to the Kingdom on high, have ascended higher than heaven, have come to occupy the King's throne, and the same nature from which the angels guarded Paradise, stopped not until it ascended to the throne of the

Lord." By His Ascension the Lord not only opened to man the entrance to heaven, not only appeared before the face of God on our behalf and for our sake, but likewise "transferred man" to the high places. "He honored them He loved by putting them close to the Father." God quickened and raised us together with Christ, as Saint Paul says, "and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephes. 2:6). Heaven received the inhabitants of the earth. "The First fruits of them that slept" sits now on high, and in Him all creation is summed up and bound together. "The earth rejoices in mystery, and the heavens are filled with joy."

"The terrible ascent..." Terror-stricken and trembling stand the angelic hosts, contemplating the Ascension of Christ. And trembling they ask each other, "What is this vision? One who is man in appearance ascends in His body higher than the heavens, as God."

Thus the Office for the Feast of the Ascension depicts the mystery in a poetical language. As on the day of Christ's Nativity the earth was astonished on beholding God in the flesh, so now the Heavens do tremble and cry out. "The Lord of Hosts, Who reigns over all, Who is Himself the head of all, Who is preeminent in all things, Who has reinstated creation in its former order—He is the King of Glory." And the heavenly doors

are opened: “Open, Oh heavenly gates, and receive God in the flesh.” It is an open allusion to Psalms 24:7-10, now prophetically interpreted. “Lift up your heads, Oh ye gates, and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty....” Saint Chrysostom says, “Now the angels have received that for which they have long waited, the archangels see that for which they have long thirsted. They have seen our nature shining on the King’s throne, glistening with glory and eternal beauty.... Therefore they descend in order to see the unusual and marvelous vision: Man appearing in heaven.”

The Ascension is the token of Pentecost, the sign of its coming, “The Lord has ascended to heaven and will send the Comforter to the world”. Because the Holy Spirit was not yet in the world, until Jesus was glorified. And the Lord Himself told the disciples, “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you” (John 16:7). The gifts of the Spirit are “gifts of reconciliation,” a seal of an accomplished salvation and of the ultimate reunion of the world with God. And this was accomplished only in the Ascension. “And one saw miracles follow miracles,” says Saint John Chrysostom, “ten days prior to this our nature ascended to the King’s throne, while today the Holy Ghost has descended on to our nature.” The joy of the Ascension lies in the promise of the Spirit. “Thou didst give joy to Thy disciples by a

promise of the Holy Spirit.” The victory of Christ is wrought in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

.. The revelation of the Holy Trinity was completed. Now the Spirit Comforter is poured forth on all flesh. “Hence comes foreknowledge of the future, understanding of mysteries, apprehension of what is hidden, distribution of good gifts, the heavenly citizenship, a place in the chorus of angels, joy without end, abiding in God, the being made like to God, and, highest of all, the being made God!” (Saint Basil, On the Holy Spirit, IX). Beginning with the Apostles, and through communion with them—by an unbroken succession—Grace is spread to all believers. Through renewal and glorification in the Ascended Christ, man’s nature became receptive of the spirit. ... All this is done through the Church, which is “the Body of Christ;” that is, His “fullness” (Ephesians 1:23). “The Church is the fulfillment of Christ,” continues Bishop Theophanes, “perhaps in the same way as the tree is the fulfillment of the seed. That which is contained in the seed in a contracted form receives its development in the tree.”

The very existence of the Church is the fruit of the Ascension. It is in the Church that man’s nature is truly ascended to the Divine heights. “And gave Him to be Head over all things” (Ephesians 1:22). Saint John Chrysostom comments: “Amazing! Look again, whither He has raised the Church. As

though He were lifting it up by some engine, He has raised it up to a vast height, and set it on yonder throne; for where the Head is, there is the body also. There is no interval of separation between the Head and the body; for were there a separation, then would the one no longer be a body, nor would the other any longer be a Head.” The whole race of men is to follow Christ, even in His ultimate exaltation, “to follow in His train.” Within the Church, through an acquisition of the Spirit in the fellowship of Sacraments, the Ascension continues still, and will continue until the measure is full. “Only then shall the Head be filled up, when the body is rendered perfect, when we are knit together and united,” concludes Saint John Chrysostom.

The Ascension is a sign and token of the Second Coming. “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

The mystery of God’s Providence will be accomplished in the Return of the Risen Lord. In the fulfillment of time, Christ’s kingly power will be revealed and spread over the whole of faithful mankind. Christ bequeaths the Kingdom to the whole of the faithful.

Source: Saint Vladimir’s Seminary Quarterly, Vol. 2 # 3, 1954.

## Word of reflection

To offend God and to stray from the straight path of His commandments is not unusual; all human nature easily slips and quite often falls into sin. However, to remain in evil is a grievous mistake, and we must be very careful, for woe unto us if we are found unrepentant at the time of our departure.

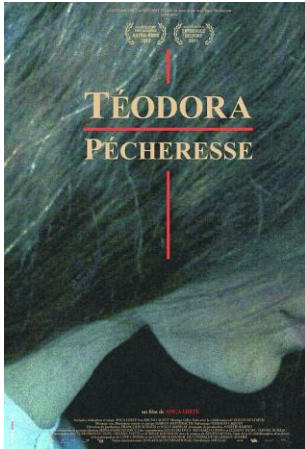
Among many of the methods which the devil uses to deceive those who correctly practice Orthodox Christianity, particularly youth, is to present another trap, by which he has been able to deceive many young men and completely lead them to perdition.

The evil one first presents this trap under a guise which appears to be good and sympathetic, making it appear as an enticement to youth, and urging them to freedom, laughter, joking and gesticulations, outspokenness, and finally to the use and misuse of alcohol, all of which do not appear disastrous to the world, but which are characterized as a means of “freedom”, by use of political and clever auspices. Thus, getting used to bad habits youth become filled with passions and are then mocked by demons and men alike. The trap is covered with a heavy shadow and with abstract justifications, making it appear that all these are very small sins and after the passing of this age all of these will be averted; and after all, these are things only hermits and monastics in the mountains should avoid.

If only they could fathom what great slipping away is brought about by these claims, they would want to depart from these pretexts and applicable excuses as from a deadly snake. It is the aim of the baiting Satan to first instill in a youth all these small sins, and thus paralyze his senses, inciting him to joking, indecent pictures, facetiousness and drunkenness, which gives birth to all the passions.

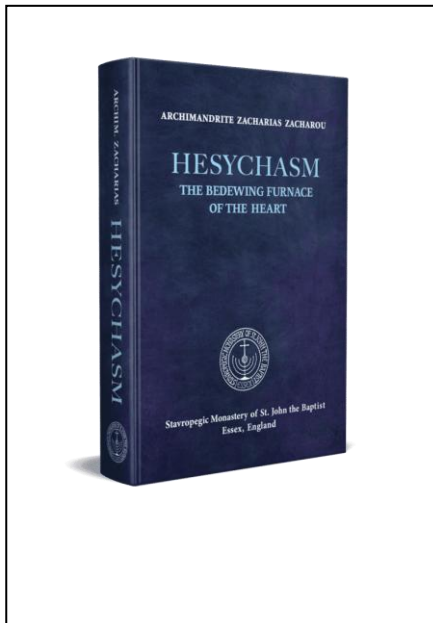
The main reason and beginning of passions were a result of carelessness and indifference to the above causes. Just as the carnal passions come from negligence in small things, the same from the negligence in the spiritual things, from childish foolishness a person comes to the level of unrepentance and despair.

## Movie & Book Corner



### Movie: *Theodora the Sinner* - Documentary

Christian Orthodox nuns in a Romanian monastery call each other "little mother". They have given up the earthly life and all the traps that come with it, to be wedded to the Eternal Being. "God my sovereign, it is You I seek each and every morning. I hunger for You, and my body and soul tremble for You..." This is a film about the most beautiful among the „little mothers” and her betrothal to God.



### Book: *Hesychasm – The bedewing furnace of the heart* by Archim. Zacharias Zacharou

The work of holy stillness is dynamic and so enthralling that when the mind is enthroned in the heart, it is captivated and longs for nothing to tear it away. It descends into the deep recesses of the heart and rises to the infinite heights of the divine Will. Purified in its furnace, the mind becomes fit for the contemplation of the judgments of God. Like the apostles after Pentecost, man now lives as if he were ‘full of sweet new wine’, given over to the sober drunkenness of divine love.

*From Parish life – Pictures Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Holy Pascha 2023*





## *The aroma of reverence*

### *St. Paisios*

From "Elder Paisios of Mount Athos," by Hieromonk Isaac.

Once, a reclusive ascetic who had heard a lot about Elder Paisios came to visit him. They talked for a while, and he ascertained that Elder Paisios was an exceptionally reverent man. Indeed, the elder had a rare reverence, which he had learned from his parents, and mainly his mother.

While at the monastery, he benefited from many of the fathers, and especially from a particular hieromonk. He would say, "We can't reach the reverence he had—impossible. He would celebrate liturgy every day, and he struggled greatly. Once, for half a year, he ate nothing but half of a small *prosphoron* and a few tomatoes dried in the sun." When this reverent priest would serve out in the chapels, like other priests of the monastery, he preferred to have as a chanter the young Father Averkios (as the elder was then called).

The elder had an innate reverence. He placed such emphasis on it that he once said that "reverence is the greatest virtue, because it attracts the Grace of God." To the elder, reverence was the fear of God and spiritual sensitivity. Reverent people behave carefully and modestly, because they intensely feel the presence of God.

The elder wanted reverence to be unaffected and internal. He turned away from mere external forms. .. The elder's conduct was reverent, but with a freedom that was alien to dry forms. If he didn't feel something, he wouldn't do it. He distinguished reverence from piety—a word he even avoided saying. He would say that reverence is like incense, while piety is just perfume.

The elder's reverence encompassed not only small and seemingly unimportant matters, but also spiritual and essential issues. "If

someone neglects the little things," he taught, "the danger is that he'll start neglecting greater, holier things. And then, without realizing it, rationalizing it all to himself—'This is nothing, that doesn't matter'—he can end up, God forbid, totally neglecting the things of God and becoming irreverent, arrogant, and atheistic."

His reverence could be seen in the way he prayed, venerated icons, received *antidoron* and holy water, partook of Holy Communion, held icons during processions, chanted, and arranged and beautified the small chapel of his hermitage. He paid attention to details, but in a way that wasn't ritualistic or fastidiously formal. This was his own attitude toward God, which wasn't laid out in advance by any *typikon* of the Church: it was his personal disposition. He felt that his whole hermitage, not just his chapel, was sacred space. He arranged his cell, the corner where he prayed, just like a little church. There was an *iconostasis* with many icons and a lamp that burned continuously, and he would cense and light many candles there. He had constructed his bed so that it was like a coffin, and he would say, "This is the altar of my cell." Icons and holy books never touched his bed, with the exception of an icon at its head.

The icon was rather tattered and faded, and a brother once asked him why it was in this condition. The elder tried to hide the truth, but the monk finally realized that it was like that because of his many kisses and tears..

He also treated the other areas of his hermitage with reverence—the workshop where he made the little icons, the guest-house where souls were reborn by God's Grace, the balcony, and even the yard. He thought that it was irreverent to have a toilet

inside the hermitage. It was partly for ascetic reasons that he kept it at such a distance, but mostly it was out of reverence.

Once, when he was away from the hermitage of the Holy Cross, the fathers of the monastery (out of love, so he wouldn't be uncomfortable) made him a small outhouse, outside but sharing a wall with the hermitage. The elder never used it. At *Panagouda*, the Athonite location of his hermitage, when his health had deteriorated toward the end of his life and he needed to go out frequently at night—in cold, rain, and snow—his spiritual children began to insist on building him an outhouse just clear of the balcony to make things easier for him. He refused. "That's where the Panaghia appeared," he said. "How can I go to the toilet there?"

The elder's life was fragrant with deep and unaffected reverence, just as the angels in Heaven worship God day and night "with great reverence." This was clear to see from his relationship with God and from the expressions on his face when coming into contact with sacred things. He reacted to sacred objects as though they were alive.

Once, when Elder Paisios was visiting the hermitage of another monk, his hernia was bothering him. The elder of the hermitage begged him to lie down and rest a little, but Elder Paisios declined. He was only able to lie on his left side, and, if he had done that there, the bottom of his feet would have been pointing at some icons, which he thought of as irreverent.

Before entering the holy altar, he would make a prostration to the floor, remove his monastic cap, and kiss the cross on the altar-curtain; and then he would enter by the side door. During the Communion hymn at liturgy, if he intended to commune, he

would make full prostrations. For a time, he had it as a rule to eat nothing for thirty-three hours before communing.

Because of his great reverence for the mystery of the priesthood, the elder never assented to ordination, even though, as he once said, "It's been revealed to me three different times that I could become a priest."

Plainly, the elder saw reverence as a fundamental virtue for every Christian—although, rigorous as his criteria were, he considered it something rare. To the elder, reverence was greater than most of the other virtues. He often used it as a criterion. If a reverent person wrote or said or did something for which he was criticized, the elder, even before forming a clear opinion on the issue itself, would go out of his way to propose mitigating circumstances. He would say, "He's a reverent man—I don't believe he'd do something like that." The elder believed that this quality preserved a person from making errors, from deceptions and from falling—perhaps in the sense of the verse declaring that the Lord *will carefully guard the way of those who reverence Him*. (Prov 2:8).

The elder considered reverence to be extremely important in all of a Christian's life and struggles, and especially those of a monk. A person's reverence, he believed, acts as a steady factor in his life, affecting everything and raising his spiritual level.

When a new monk asked the elder what it was that he should pay the most attention to, the elder replied, "Reverence and attention to yourself."

A Russian bishop, presented with many candidates for the priesthood, once asked the elder whom he should ordain. "Those who

are reverent and pure," the elder answered—he did not say educated or energetic men, or candidates with good voices.

In chanting and iconography also, reverence was more important to the elder than technique. He was able to discern its presence in chanting or in an icon, and he would say, "If you pay attention to the meaning of a *troparion*, it'll change you, and you'll be able to chant in a reverent way. If you're reverent, you might make a mistake while you chant, but it'll come out sounding sweet. If you only pay attention to technique— I mean, going note-by-note, without a reverent spirit—then you'll end up like a lay chanter I once heard: he was chanting *Bless the Lord, O my soul* like a blacksmith striking an anvil. I heard it in a car, and it disturbed me—I told the driver to turn off the tape. When someone doesn't chant from the heart, it's like he's running you out of church. A sacred canon says that people who chant with improper voices should be given penances because they drive people away from church."

Concerning iconography, he advised, "You should make an icon with reverence, like we were going to be giving it to Christ Himself. How would we like it if someone gave us a photograph where our face wasn't right? It's not right for our Panaghia not to show her physical beauty. There has never been a woman as beautiful as the Panaghia was in soul and body. How she transformed people's souls with her grace!"

"The Grace of God," observed the elder, "comes to reverent people, and it makes the soul beautiful." But he observed with sadness that contemporary people pay little attention to such things. "If a person's not reverent," he said, "if he scorns Divine things, then Divine Grace abandons him; he's overcome by temptations, and becomes

like the demons. Divine Grace won't come to an irreverent person—it comes to people who honor it."

The elder considered it irreverent to place icons, ecclesiastical books, *antidoron*, and holy objects in general on the seats of church-stalls, and even more so on chairs or beds (except on a pillow). He suggested that people put the little icons that he would hand out in their chest pockets. Once, he related, a pilgrim came holding his head crooked from neck pain. Through Divine enlightenment, the elder realized that the man had suffered this at the hands of demonic powers, because he had put a cross the elder had given him, which contained a piece of the Precious Cross of the Lord, in his back-pocket. The elder forbade anyone who lived carelessly to carry the Precious Cross.

He once told us about someone who had become possessed because he had spit in an unclean place on a day when he had communed. The same had happened to a woman who had thrown holy water onto excrement. Another time, he related, a young man who was engaged to be married visited a conjurer, who told him to urinate on the wedding rings. Upon following the conjurer's instructions, the young man became possessed, because wedding rings are holy. The elder also gave other, similar examples of careless and irreverent people being abandoned by Divine Grace and becoming possessed.

He didn't think it was right to refer to the holy Fathers of the Church simply by their first names; for example, as "Basil" or "Gregory." "We talk about 'Father so-and-so' and use the term 'Father' for monks and clergy," he commented, "and this is how we're going to talk about the holy Fathers?"

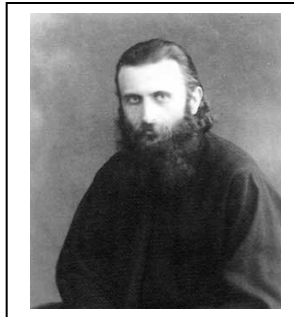
## Fr. Arsenie Boca revelation about Satan's trap to deceive people

Fr. Arsenios was born in 1910 in a small village in Romania by pious Orthodox parents, Joseph and Christina. When his mother was pregnant with little John (his baptismal name) she dreamed repeatedly that either the sun or the moon shone on her stomach. She thus often wondered what kind of a child was that would be born.

Fr. Arsenie joined the brotherhood of the St. Constantine Brincoveanu monastery. He was enlightened by the Grace of the Holy Spirit and acquired the gift of foreseeing the future.

Fr. Arsenie became renowned for his abilities as a confessor and a spiritual guide. When he met a person, one felt that the Saint had the ability to enter and examine the depths of that person's soul. He was able to reveal your thoughts and many past sins or deeds. He would also know a person's name upon meeting them and without any prior knowledge. Once he was ordained and received the blessing to confess, he would frequently reveal the unconfessed sins (forgotten or not) to those who came to him, as well as things that would happen to them in the future.

He was extremely bothered and concerned about the many people he confessed who refused to change their life, selecting to continue satisfying their desires. Fr. Arsenie was fully aware that, in the Day of Judgment, he would be their guarantor for the salvation of their souls. He thus begged and pleaded with God to reveal to him the reason for which people refuse to abandon their sinful ways.



One day, while he was sitting in a chair within his garden staring at the mountain across from him, he observed that a huge dark cloud appeared on the mountaintop. There was great commotion and noise coming from within the cloud. Continuing to attentively stare at it, he suddenly observed that the cloud separated in two and at the very peak of the mountain there was a royal throne surrounded by fire. On the throne was seated the Enemy of mankind, Satan, surrounded by a plethora of demons. Fr. Arsenie was able to clearly follow what was transpiring. He thus hears the Evil One say:

“Which one of you is skillful and clever enough to come up with some kind of a cunning and wicked thought which we will whisper in the minds of people so that we can attract them and draw them to our side? In this way we can establish a kingdom that is greater than God's since there is so little time left...”

A demon then appeared who worshipped his leader all the way to the ground and said:

“Excellent leader of the darkness, I consider it proper to whisper into people's ears that there is no God.”

Satan then said:

“Your wickedness is not the best because we can gain a greater number of souls in a different way. Let somebody else come up with another idea.”

A second one came and said:

“Excellent leader of the darkness, I suggest that we whisper to them that there is a God but there is no such thing as Heaven or Hell and that this life of theirs simply ends at their grave.”

Satan, after extensive contemplation, said:

“This wicked thought is also insufficient and will not enable us to win many souls. People will remember that Christ said, as He ascended into Heaven: ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. [Jn 14:2-3]’ The faith of people into these words is unfortunately strong enough to counteract our plans. People will continue to believe that He will reward all according to their life deeds. Let another one of you suggest something else.”

A third one then came up and after he worshipped his leader all the way to the ground, took the floor and said:

“Most excellent leader of the darkness, I propose that it is much better that we praise people for their faith in God, their belief in the existence of Paradise and Hell, their expectation for the Last Judgment. However and at the same time, let us whisper to them: ‘Do not rush into repentance. Let repentance be your deed during the latter part of your life. Death is still far away. For the time being, enjoy your life, satisfy all of your carnal desires because you have plenty of time left.’ Thus, while we conduct our alluring and magic works, they will grow old without realizing it and reach their life’s end before they can repent. Death will arrive suddenly and will find them unprepared and they will be ours forever.”

Satan then moved his head acknowledging his satisfaction. He grunted and squealed with devilish joy and with hasty anxiety told them all: “Quickly, all of you go and do exactly as your colleague indicated.”

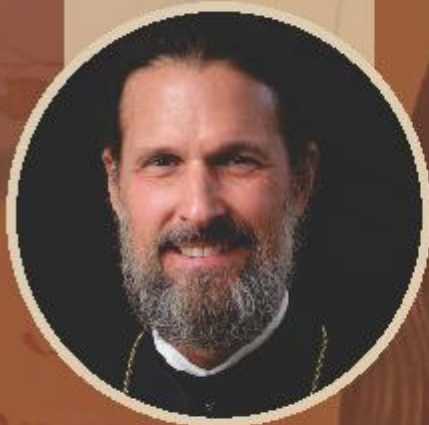
It is for this reason that people fulfill their Christian duties in a lackluster manner. The cunning demons, throughout their life, whisper to them in a tempting way regarding the joys of this world and people obey. They refuse to change their ways and continue to satisfy their desires and sinful nature, ignoring the advice of the Church regarding true repentance, even in their old age...

Fr. Arsenie foretold his end by informing many that he had three more Paschal seasons to celebrate and indeed, he fell asleep in the Lord three years later. He had foreseen the fall of the Communist establishment and the rise of the Romanian people against the atheist regime, and quickly after this prophecy he fell asleep in November 1989 (the Communist regime fell one month later, in December 1989). He has remained in the souls of many of his spiritual children, continuing to guide them from above.

There exists a miraculous event that attracts thousands of Christians to his grave site, at the Prislop women’s monastery. Even though the temperatures there can be extremely low, often reaching 20 degrees Celsius below zero, all of the flowers that have grown on his grave neither wither nor freeze and die by the extreme temperatures but instead remain in full blossom. From winter to summer, Father’s grave remains full with blossomed, multi-colored fragrant flowers (refer to the picture at the start of the article).

HOLY ARCHANGEL MICHAEL'S  
ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH  
PRESENTS

Guest Speaker  
**FR. JOSIAH  
TRENHAM**



*Saint Silovan's*

# YOUNG ADULT RETREAT SPRING EDITION

FAITH | FELLOWSHIP | ACTIVITIES | NATURE | MORE!

May 26  
5pm - 10pm

May 27  
8:30am - 8pm

**\$95**  
\*per person  
*Financial assistance  
is available on request*

Price includes the following: Admission for Friday and Saturday, **4 meals**, **2 conferences** with Fr. Josiah Trenham, workshops, and activities.

**16 ROMANIAN AVE, SOUTHBRIDGE, MA**

*Limited Space - First Come, First Serve*

*\*Fr. Josiah's talk on FRIDAY is only for young adults (18-35).*

# Schedule

## Young Adult Retreat 2023



## Friday, May 26

- ▶ **5:00 pm - 5:30 pm** Welcome & Registration
- ▶ **5:30 pm - 6:30 pm** Ice breakers (games/exercises)
- ▶ **6:30 pm - 7:30 pm** Dinner
- ▶ **7:30 pm - 8:00 pm** Preparation for Fr.Josiah's talk
- ▶ **8:00 pm - 9:00 pm** The Prayer Rules - Prayer in the Orthodox life (Talk)
- ▶ **9:00 pm - 10:00 pm** Q & A session with a bonfire

\*Fr.Josiah's talk on FRIDAY is only for young adults (18-35).

## Saturday, May 27

- ▶ **8:30 am - 10:00 am** Divine Liturgy with Fr.Josiah
- ▶ **10:00 am - 10:30 am** Breakfast
- ▶ **10:30 am - 10:45 pm** Departing to Conference Center
- ▶ **11:00 pm - 12:00 pm** Reflections on the Conscience (Talk)
- ▶ **12:00 pm - 1:00 pm** Lunch in Conference Center/ Break
- ▶ **1:00 pm - 2:00 pm** Q & A Session
- ▶ **2:00pm - 3:00pm** Returning to the church
- ▶ **3:00pm - 4:00pm** Activities
- ▶ **4:00 pm - 4:30 pm** Prospora workshop
- ▶ **4:30 pm - 5:30 pm** Vespers
- ▶ **5:30 pm - 8:00 pm** Cookout & Traditional Dances

\*Fr.Josiah's talk on SATURDAY is open to everyone (all ages).

Accommodation options are available - Please fill it out on registration form

Holy Archangel Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church presents

# SPEAKER EVENT

with Fr. Josiah Trenham

*"Reflections of the Conscience"*



Guest Speaker  
**FR. JOSIAH  
TRENHAM**

**MAY 27, 2023  
11AM-2PM**

**EVENT DETAILS:**

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

**\$65 per person**

**Southbridge Hotel & Conference Center**

14 Mechanic Street Southbridge, MA 01550



# Schedule

*Speaker Event*



*Saturday, May 27*

- ▶ **10:30 am** Registration & Welcome
- ▶ **11:00 am - 12:00 pm** Reflections on the Conscience (Talk) with Fr. Josiah
- ▶ **12:00 am - 1:00 pm** Lunch
- ▶ **1:00 pm - 2:00 pm** Q&A session with Fr. Josiah

Southbridge Hotel & Conference Center  
14 Mechanic St, Southbridge, MA 01550

# May 2023

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church  
 Southbridge, Massachusetts  
[www.stmichaelorthodox.com](http://www.stmichaelorthodox.com)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 St. Athanasios – Patriarh of Constantinople St. Matrona of Moscow	3 Fish allowed	4 St. Monica  7:00 pm Bible Study - Zoom	5 Fish allowed St. Ephrem the New (Nea Macri)	6 Divine Liturgy 9:00am Vespers 5:00pm
7 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	8 St. John Theologian  Divine Liturgy 8:00am	9 Vespers and Litia – Mid Pentecost 6:00pm	10 Fish allowed Mid Pentecost St. Simon Zilot Divine Liturgy 8:00am	11	12 Fish allowed	13 Divine Liturgy 9:00am Vespers 5:00pm
14 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	15	16	17 Fish allowed St. Nektarios Divine Liturgy 8:00am	18	19 Fish allowed	20 Divine Liturgy 9:00am Vespers Sts. Constantine & Helene Church - Webster
21 Sts. Constantine & Helene  Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	22	23	24 Fish allowed  Vespers & Litia 6:00 pm Matins 7:00 pm	25 Holy Ascension  Divine Liturgy 9:00 am	26 Fish allowed  YAR – Fr. Josiah 5:30 pm – 10:30 pm	27 YAR & Speaker Event – Fr. Josiah  Divine Liturgy 8:30am Vespers 4:30pm
28 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	29	30	31 Fish allowed			