



Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

July 2018



LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday

9:00am Divine Liturgy
10:00 am Memorial Service
6pm Vespers

Sunday

8:30am Matins
9:30am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday

6:00pm Paraklesis

Friday

6:00pm Akathist

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

Feast days

July 2nd

St. John Maximovitch

July 11th

St. Paisios The Athonite

July 20th

St. Elijah

July 25th

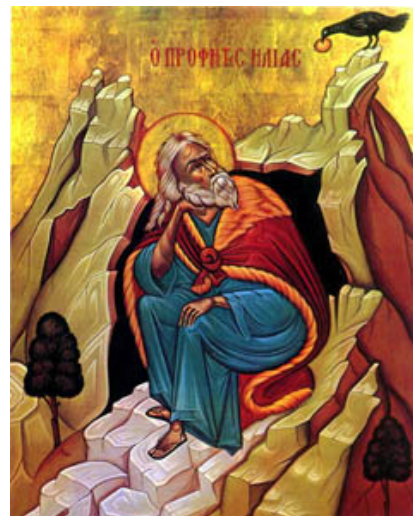
**Dormition of St. Anna, mother of
the Theotokos**

July 27th

St. Panteleimon

The Glorious Prophet Elias

Elias of great fame was from Thisbe or Thesbe, a town of Galaad (Gilead), beyond the Jordan. He was of priestly lineage, a man of a solitary and ascetical character, clothed in a mantle of sheep skin, and girded about his loins with a leathern belt. His name is interpreted as "Yah is my God." His zeal for the glory of God was compared to fire, and his speech for teaching and rebuke was likened unto a burning lamp. From this too he received the name Zealot. Therefore, set aflame with such zeal, he sternly reproved the impiety and lawlessness of Ahab and his wife Jezebel. He shut up heaven by means of prayer, and it did not rain for three years and six months. Ravens brought him food for his need when, at God's command, he was hiding by the torrent of Horrath. He multiplied the little flour and oil of the poor widow of Sarephtha of Sidon, who had given him hospitality in her home, and when her son died, he raised him up. He brought down fire from Heaven upon Mount Carmel, and it burned up the sacrifice offered to God before all the people of Israel, that they might know the truth. At the torrent of Kisson, he slew 450 false prophets and priests who worshipped idols and led the people astray. He received food wondrously at the hand of an Angel, and being strengthened by this food he walked for forty days and forty nights. He beheld God on Mount Horeb, as far as this is possible for human nature. He foretold the destruction of the house of Ahab, and the death of his son Ohozias; and as for the two captains of fifty that were sent by the king, he burned them for their punishment, bringing fire down from Heaven. He divided the flow of the Jordan, and he and his disciple Elisseus passed through as it were on dry land; and finally, while speaking with him, Elias was suddenly snatched away by a fiery chariot in the year 895 B.C., and he ascended as though into heaven, whither God most certainly translated him alive, as He did Enoch (Gen. 5:24; IV Kings 2: 11). But from thence also, after seven years, by means of an epistle he reproached Joram, the son of Josaphat, as it is written: "And there came a message in writing to him from Elias the Prophet, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the way," and so forth (II Chron. 21:12). According to the opinion of the majority of the interpreters, this came to pass either through his disciple Elisseus, or through another Prophet when Elias appeared to them, even as he appeared on Mount Tabor to the disciples of Christ



Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church
16 Romanian Avenue, Southbridge Massachusetts 01550

Telephone: (508) 765-5276

Website: www.StmichaelOrthodox.com

Email: stmichaelromanianorthodox@gmail.com

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

Parish News & Events

**ST. MICHAEL'S
94TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL**

16 Romanian Ave. Southbridge, Ma 01550

**SUNDAY JULY 29th
12 PM - 6 PM**

Ethnic Food,
Drinks, Desserts
Music, Danceing
Kids MoonWalk
LOTS OF FUN!!!!

508-756-5276 www.stmichaelorthodox.org Find us on Facebook

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

**July 7th – Sophia
Penna**

Please Pray for:

Alexandra Malisory
Peter & Laureen Smith
Vasilios Nahn

**Volunteers
to Bake for
Festival!!**

Pitas-any kind

Pastry

Baclava

Cake

Etc.

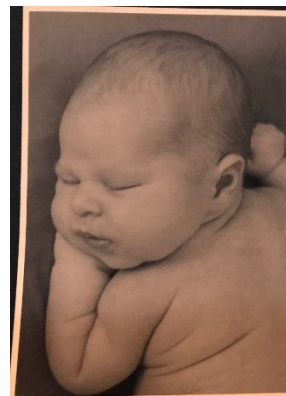
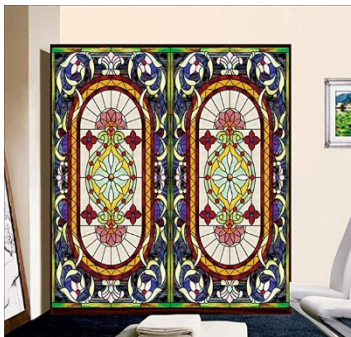
**Let's support our local
churches by attending
their festival!!**

~St. George Greek Church,
Southbridge – July 8th

~St. John the Baptist
Romanian Orthodox
Church, Woonsocket RI –
July 21st 4pm-11pm
July 22nd 12:30-7:00pm

Parish Project Corner

We need sponsor for big windows film (like stickers) to cover the stain on the big windows in the church. Please keep only the big image with the film from the left side and cut the rest. 32.99USD/piece and we would like to order 6 for now and maybe more till our Church feast day (November 8).



JOIN US AS WE
celebrate the
Baptism
OF

Theodore Kenneth Yanka

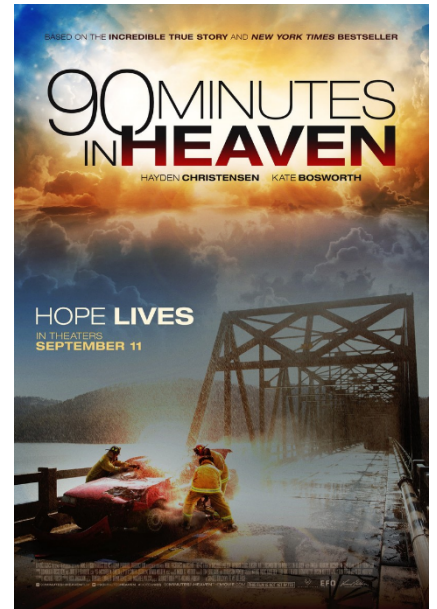
Saturday July 21st | 11:00 a.m.
St. Michael's Orthodox Church

Reception to follow at parish hall
16 Romanian Ave, Southbridge, MA
r.s.v.p. to Kim 978-500-1960

~ Movie & Book Corner ~

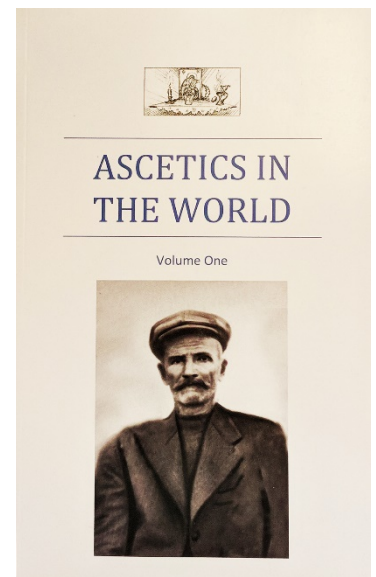
Movie: 90 Minutes in Heaven (2015)

Don Piper died Jan. 18, 1989, when a semi-tractor truck crushed his car. Declared dead by the first rescue workers to arrive on the scene, Don's body lay under a tarp for the next 90 minutes. Don's soul, meanwhile, was experiencing love, joy and life like he'd never known before. Don was in Heaven. When another pastor's prayers helped bring Don back to life, he became a living miracle! Yet this is one miracle Don wished never happened. Heaven's bliss was replaced by excruciating pain and emotional turmoil. With the support and prayers of his beloved Eva, their three kids and friends near and far, Don clings to his faith in God and fights to regain a semblance of his previous life. The Piper family's incredible true story of perseverance and overcoming the challenges of life-and death-will bring hope and encouragement to all who see it.



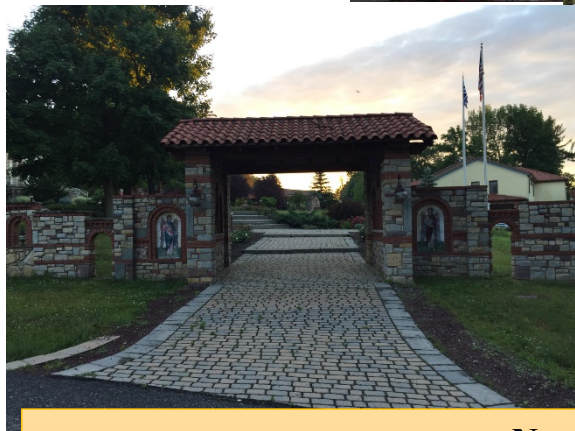
Book: Ascetics in The World – Volume 1 **Translated by Fr. Nicholas Palis**

This inspiring collection from St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite Publication Society features the lives of 45 holy individuals – married and unmarried, lay and clergy. “In this collection are presented biographies of people who lived in various parts of Greece and other countries, and at various times in the Turkish Occupation down to today. They were of different ages, races, and states (clergymen or laypeople, family men or lay monastics). They each had their character and their personal struggle, but they also had some common characteristics between them: strong faith and great love for Christ (from the Prologue).”



Parish Life

- ~Nick & Fr. John Fixing the baranga roof
- ~Recent trip to Holy Protection Monastery in Pennsylvania
- ~Maria Graduation from High School



Next Agia Skepi Trip July 15th -18th

Contact Fr. John or Preoteasa Camelia if you are interested in coming. We will need to make reservations at the monastery.

A Chance to venerate about 50 Holy relics ~ St. Basil the Great, St. Andrew the Apostle, St. Philip the Apostle, St. Luke Apostle, St. Haralamobose, St. Nectarios, St. Paraskeiv, St. John Maximovitch, St. Luke of Crimea, St. Simeon, etc.

Presidents Corner

07/01/2019

As we enter the summer months it's a great time to reflect on the year we have had; 2018 is half way done and we have had an exciting year! For my first column I want to take the opportunity to thank several people. First and foremost I want to thank Spiro Thomo, our parish council president for more than 2 decades. His commitment and leadership have brought our parish through even the toughest of times. He has certainly created some big shoes to fill and we thank him again for all he does for our parish. Secondly, I want to thank Father John, Preoteasa Camelia and their family. Without them Saint Michael's may not have continued and we are so appreciative of their commitment and for becoming a part of our family. They have taken ownership of the responsibility they have been given and we can never repay for them for that, God has truly blessed us with them being here! Lastly, I want to thank our parish council and all our members and parishioners who have kept, and continue to keep, this church going through all times, both good and bad.

As time goes on, I look forward to sharing in this column the vision of our church and happenings in our community. We have our two biggest fundraisers coming, with both the Festival and Golf Tournament on the horizon, so there will be much to discuss and celebrate. With that being said we must always remember to keep ourselves grounded. I was once told nothing is ever as good as it seems and nothing is ever as bad as it seems. We must continue to remember to keep our trust and faith in God and He will provide. All I ask as Parish council president is for us to work together as a family. If there is anything you feel that can be done differently or better please don't hesitate to come to me, but I also ask of you to not burden each other with complaining and small talk. Together we can take this church to great heights in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I will leave you in this first column with a quote that has impacted me:

"If you are constantly angry and complaining, it is indicative of a proud soul. Humble yourself, reproach yourself, and the Lord is powerful to give you comfort and a helping hand."

~ St. Anatoly of Optina

God bless you and have a wonderful month of July! We look forward to you joining us on July 29th at our festival!

—**Luke Yanka, Parish Council President**

Council Meeting Highlights ~ July 1st

- Financial report looks healthy for first time all year and we appreciate all the donations and continue to look forward to more donations
- Festival and golf tournament are going to be very successful events for the church we are looking for sponsors and participants for both
- July 22nd the Dowling's will be hosting a Sunday school pool party at their house from 12pm-4pm after coffee hour, all our welcome from the parish
- We are looking for volunteers to help out with the festival
- Thank you to Jose for providing the materials for the new roof on the Baranga

Saint Paisios

There are few saints that we can call 'modern' but Saint Paisios (1924-1994) is one of them. While living a very holy life and undertaking the struggle which characterize holy monks, he was also a 'man in the world' who was a carpenter and later a radio operator in WWII before going to Mt. Athos at the age of twenty six. His teachings were well documented and published by a variety of sources and most often address 'practical' subjects that men, women and children face in everyday secular life.

Saint Paisios has no need of any praise or introduction from us. With his imitation of Christ's love, he satisfied both God and other people and this is why he's widely praised in the Church of God.

He had the rare gift of being able to bring solace to people of all works of life, irrespective of their level of education or their spiritual state. I remember the case of a psychiatrist/psychoanalyst who came to visit out monastery after an encounter with the Elder. Not only had he found peace, but he also told me that what the Elder had said to him was the last word in modern psychiatry. It's well known that the Elder didn't read books, other than the Gospels and Abba Isaak the Syrian.

If it was to bring solace to a soul, he would spare neither time nor effort. There was once I was curious to know how he was able to cure a young man with severe psychological problems. Out of respect, I didn't ask him. Years later he satisfied my curiosity as follows: "When people have a problem you have to listen carefully, for as long as they're talking and not give any sign that you're tired, because then you'll lose everything. Well, I listened to that young man one day for nine hours, without moving. That's when my insides were damaged." It wasn't the only time that the sacrificial love of Father Paisios worked a miracle.

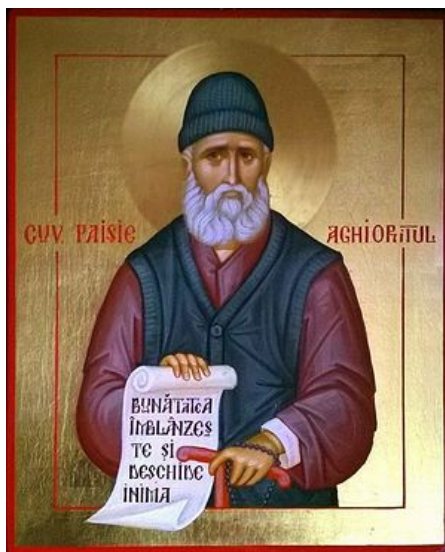
On another occasion, when I asked him about a difficult problem I'd encountered in

confession, as a spiritual father, he told me: "Listen, father, when you become a spiritual father, you have to be prepared to go down into hell for those you confess. Otherwise, don't bother. But what I have to say is that, if you go to hell, you'll make it paradise, because you'll have love." Amazing advice, that only a God-bearing person would be able to give.

It's well known that, in the last thirty years, Our Most Holy Lady has ensured an influx of new monks to the Holy Mountain. Saint

Paisios was one of those elders who helped many young men to take the decision to become monks. He even helped many young monks to take root on the Holy Mountain and to bear fruit. We felt him to be at our side in our struggle to take pastoral care of our young monks, a coach for many who were fighting the devil, the passions, the world.

Saint Paisios the Athonite teaches spiritual dignity and generous pride



The Elder often advised us to have spiritual dignity and generous pride. These were the virtues that distinguished him, too, as everybody knew who met him. I once went to visit him in his old kelli of the Precious Cross and after our chat I said goodbye to him, but he accompanied me for quite a way. As soon as I told him not to tire himself out and to go back to his kelli, he said goodbye and went back. If I hadn't said anything he'd have gone with me as far as our representative's house in Karyes.

I should also say that he rarely showed his gift of foresight and never to show off, but only for the benefit of souls. Once a young monk visited him. The young man was having bad thoughts about his abbot, who refused to have a short jacket made for him. Before the monk said a word, the Elder said to him: "What are these thoughts you're having about your abbot not giving you a jacket?"

He used to comfort young monks when they were troubled by some weakness they had, such as jealousy, which he called faults of immaturity. Naturally, he told them to grow up and get over them.

Saint Paisios was also outstanding as regards the highest of all the virtues—discrimination. He was able to help every soul to discover its true inclination and the direction given it by God, so that it could find its own tranquillity.

His love embraced the whole world. He helped so many people, particularly the young, to live a Christian life in the outside world and in a family.

When you talked to the Elder you felt you were in the arms of God.

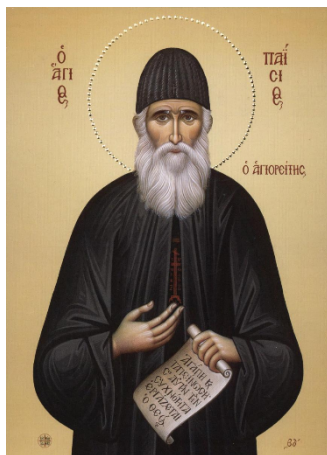
It ought also to be stressed that Saint Paisios was very sensitive to dogmatic issues. He once wrote to me that "Dogmas don't enter the European Union."

His holy life was corroborated by his holy death. He accepted his painful illness as a gift from God and rejoiced at the thought that Christians living in the outside world, and who were suffering from the same illness, would find comfort in the fact that monks were also susceptible to it.

He had overcome any love of self. He wasn't concerned about his own illness, but when he was on his bed of pain he continued to think about his fellow-sufferers. Even in the last days of his life he was interested in people's problems. A God-fearing couple came to see him only a few days before he passed away. They had unmarried daughters and he told them: "I'm giving you a direct order to make sure that your daughters are properly set up." Through his prayers, his command and desire came to pass.

May your memory be eternal, venerable Elder. We're grateful for everything you've given us, for

your consolation, and for your teaching, both through what you've told us and through the way you lived. Pray that we may follow your footsteps as you did those of Christ our Saviour.



"Ask for repentance in your prayer and nothing else, neither for divine lights, nor miracles, nor prophecies, nor spiritual gifts—nothing but repentance. Repentance will bring you humility, humility will bring you the Grace of God, and God will have in His Grace everything you need for your salvation, or anything you might need to help another soul"

- St Paisios of Mount Athos

throughthegraceofgod.wordpress.com

All Night Vigil Service for St. Paisios the Athonite

*Join us for Vespers, Lítia,
Matins including Psaltírea
(Psalms) reading, Divine
Liturgy.*

*10pm July 11th – 1:30am July
12th.*

Words and wisdom from St. Paisios

Q.: I've noticed, Elder, that sometimes babies smile at the time of Divine Liturgy.

A.: They don't do that only at the Divine Liturgy. Babies are in constant contact with God, because they've got nothing to worry about. What did Christ say about little children? 'Their angels in heaven continually gaze upon the face of my Father who is in heaven'. They're in touch with God and with their guardian angel, who's with them all the time. They smile in their sleep sometimes, and at other times cry, because they see all sorts of things. Sometimes they see their guardian angels and play with them- the angels stroke them, tease them, shake their fists and they laugh. On other occasions they see some kind of temptation and cry.

Q.: Why does temptation come to babies?

A.: It helps them to feel the need to seek their mothers. If there wasn't this fear, they wouldn't need to seek the comfort of being cuddled by their mothers. God allows everything so that it'll turn out well.

Q.: Do they remember what they see as babies when they grow up?

A.: No, they forget. If a little child remembered the number of times it had seen its guardian angel, it might fall into pride. That's why, when it grows up, it forgets. God's wise in His doings.

Q.: Do they see these things after baptism?

A.: Of course after baptism.

Q.: Elder, is it all right for an unbaptized child to reverence relics?

A.: Why not? And they can be blessed with the holy relics. I saw a child today, it was like a little angel. I asked, 'Where are your wings?' It didn't know what to say! At my hermitage, when spring comes and the trees are in blossom, I put sweets on the holm-oaks next to the gate in the fence and I tell the little boys who come: 'Go on, boys, cut the sweets from the bushes, because if it rains they'll melt and spoil'. A few of the more intelligent ones know that I've put them there and laugh. Others really believe that they've grown there and some others have to think about it. Little children need a bit of sunshine.

Q.: Did you put lots of sweets, Elder?

A.: Well, of course. What could I do? I don't give good sweets to grown-ups; I just give them Turkish

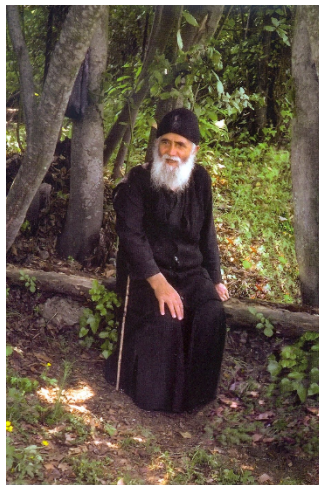
delight. When people bring me nice sweets, I keep them for the kids at the School [the Athoniada]. 'See, last night I planted sweets and chocolates and today they've come up! See that? The weather was good, the soil was well-turned because you'd dug it over well and they came up just like that. See what a flower garden I'll make for you. We'll never need to buy sweets and chocolates for kids. Why shouldn't we have our own produce?' (Elder Paisios had planted sweets and chocolates in the freshly dug earth and put lilac blossoms on top to make it seem that they were flowering).

Q.: Elder, some pilgrims saw the chocolates you planted in the garden because the paper stood out against the soil. They didn't know what to make of it. 'Some kid must have put them there', they said.

A.: Why didn't you tell them that a big kid put them there?

Q.: Elder, why does God give people a guardian angel, when He can protect us Himself?

A.: That's God looking after us especially carefully. The guardian angel is God's providence. And we're indebted to Him for that. The angels particularly protect little children. And you wouldn't believe how! There were two children once, playing in the street. One of them aimed at the other to hit him on the head with a stone. The other one didn't notice. At the last moment, apparently, his angel drew his



attention to something else, he leapt up and got out of the way. And then there was this mother who went out into the fields with her baby. She breast-fed it, put it down in its cradle and went off to work. After a bit, she went to check and what did she see? The child was holding a snake and looking at it! When she'd suckled the child, some of the milk had stayed on its lips, the snake had gone to lick it off and the baby had grabbed hold of it. God looks after children.

Q.: Elder, in that case, why do so many children suffer from illnesses?

A.: God knows what's best for each of us and provides as necessary. He doesn't give people anything that's not going to benefit them. He sees that it's better for us to have some sort of defect, a disability instead of protecting us from them.

St John Maximovitch, Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco - sermon

“Stand fast on spiritual watch, because you don’t know when the Lord will call you to Himself. In your earthly life be ready at any moment to give Him an account. Beware that the enemy does not catch you in his nets, that he not deceive you causing you to fall into temptation. Daily examine your conscience; try the purity of your thoughts, your intentions.

There was a king who had a wicked son. Having no hope that he would change for the better, the father condemned the son to death. He gave him a month to prepare. The month went by, and the father summoned the son. To his surprise he saw that the young man was noticeably changed: his face was thin and drawn, and his whole body looked as if it had suffered.

“How is it that such a transformation has come over you, my son?” the father asked. “My father and my lord,” replied the son, “how could I not change when each passing day brought me closer to death?” “Good, my son,” remarked the king. “Since you have evidently come to your senses, I shall pardon you. However, you must maintain this vigilant disposition of soul for the rest of your life.”

“Father,” replied the son, “that’s impossible. How can I withstand the countless seductions and temptations?” Then the king ordered that a vessel be brought, full of oil, and he told his son:

“Take this vessel and carry it along all the streets of the city. Following you will be two soldiers with sharp swords. If you spill so

much as a single drop they will cut off your head.” The son obeyed. With light, careful steps, he walked along all the streets, the soldiers accompanying him, and he did not spill a drop. When he returned to the castle, the father asked, “My son, what did you see as you were walking through the city?” “I saw nothing.” “What do you mean, ‘nothing’?” said the king. “Today is a holiday; you must have seen the booths with all kinds of trinkets, many carriages, people animals...”

“I didn’t notice any of that,” said the son. “All my attention was focused on the oil in the vessel. I was afraid to spill a drop and thereby lose my life.”



“Quite right, my son,” said the king. “Keep this lesson in mind for the rest of your life. Be as vigilant over your soul as you were today over the oil in the vessel. Turn your thoughts away from what will soon pass away, and keep them focused on what is eternal. You will be followed not by armed soldiers but by death to which we are brought closer by every day. Be very careful to guard your soul from all ruinous temptations.”

The son obeyed his father, and lived happily. Watch, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. (I Cor. 16:13).

The Apostle gives Christians this important counsel to bring their attention to the danger of this world, to summon them to frequent examination of their hearts, because without this one can easily bring to ruin the purity and ardor of one’s faith and unnoticeably cross over to the side of evil and faithlessness.

Just as a basic concern is to be careful of anything that might be harmful to our physical health, so our spiritual concern should watch out for anything that might harm our spiritual

life and the work of faith and salvation. Therefore, carefully and attentively assess your inner impulses: are they from God or from the spirit of evil? Beware of temptations from this world and from worldly people; beware of hidden inner temptations which come from the spirit of indifference and carelessness in prayer, from the waning of Christian love.

If we turn our attention to our mind, we notice a torrent of successive thoughts and ideas. This torrent is uninterrupted; it is racing everywhere and at all times: at home, in church, at work, when we read, when we converse. It is usually called thinking, writes Bishop Theophan the Recluse, but in fact it is a disturbance of the mind, a scattering, a lack of concentration and attention. The same happens with the heart. Have you ever observed the life of the heart? Try it even for a short time and see what you find.

Something unpleasant happens, and you get irritated; some misfortune occurs, and you pity yourself; you see someone whom you dislike, and animosity wells up within you; you meet one of your equals who has now outdistanced you on the social scale, and you begin to envy him; you think of your talents and capabilities, and you begin to grow proud... All this is rottenness: vainglory, carnal desire, gluttony, laziness, malice—one on top of the other, they destroy the heart.

And all of this can pass through the heart in a matter of minutes. For this reason one ascetic, who was extremely attentive to himself, was quite right in saying that “Man’s heart is filled with poisonous serpents. Only the hearts of saints are free from these serpents, the passions.”

But such freedom is attained only through a long and difficult process of self-knowledge, working on oneself and being vigilant towards one’s inner life, i.e., the soul.

Be careful. Watch out for your soul! Turn your

thoughts away from what will soon pass away and turn them towards what is eternal. Here you will find the happiness that your soul seeks, that your heart thirsts for.”

St. John Maximovitch was a great lover of children and especially orphans. He was responsible for rescuing many unwanted and abandoned children while he was in Shanghai, China, developing a large orphanage in the process. There was, for example, a boy named Paul who had witnessed his father and mother being killed and chopped into pieces by the Communists right in front of his eyes. Because of the trauma the boy had become mute and could not even pronounce his own name. He was like a trapped animal, afraid of everyone, and trusted only his fists and spitting. He was brought into the orphanage at a time when it was packed and had no place for him. Due to the fact that Paul was so frightened, the ladies there thought that he was abnormal and refused to accept him lest he scare the other children. When Archbishop John found out about him, he insisted on immediately dropping everything and going to meet the boy personally. They did not even know that he was a Russian boy and spoke Russian, for he only mumbled and hissed like a caged animal. When Archbishop John arrived, he sat down before the boy, who was still trembling, and said to him the following: “I know that you have lost your father, but now you have found another one – me,” and he hugged him. This was said with such power that the boy burst out in tears and his speech returned to him.



The Martyrdom of Saint Helen, the virgin martyr

From the city of Sinopi

Her martyric struggle happened in the 18th century

The virgin martyr of Christ Saint Helen was the daughter of the pious family Bekiari and she lived in the eighteenth century in the oldest city of Pontos, beautiful Sinopi. Her parents raised her with the admonitions and teachings of the Lord. They planted in her heart the seed of love for the Lord Jesus Christ. Her uncle played a very important role in her upbringing. He was the brother of her father. He taught in the catacomb Church of Sinopi.

Helen was a ravishing beauty. Her virginity showed forth with a special grace on her face. It was a reflection of the Holy Spirit. She was known for her obedience to her parents and for the warm love that her soul had for the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, our Savior. She was fifteen years old when on a particular day her mother sent her to buy some yarn for her needlepoint at the store owned by Mr. Kriona. On the road that led to the store was the home of Oukouzoglou Pasha, the Turkish administrator of Sinopi. He saw Helen from the window of his house as she passed by. The beauty of Helen attracted the attention of his damned soul and he desired to despoil her.

The Pasha ordered that she be brought to him. When he learned who she was, he immediately tried two or three times to rape her. But there was an invisible power that surrounded her! There was an invisible wall that protected the girl. It was the wall of prayer. Helen, during the course of that whole horrible incident, kept praying within herself, repeatedly reciting six psalms. In spite of this the evil one did not give up in his attempt to rape her. He ordered the soldiers to keep Helen under house arrest. He had hoped that a little later he would be able to succeed in his evil desire.

During the course of her house arrest she was able, with the help of God, to avoid the detection of the soldiers guarding her and she slipped away. She returned to her parents who had been very worried about her and she revealed to them all that had happened to her. In a short time, the Pasha realized that she had escaped from his house and he was beside himself. He was threatening everyone and everything. He invited the elders of Sinopi and requested that Helen be brought to him. If this demand of his was not fulfilled he would order the total annihilation of the Greek population of the city.



The Elders came together in the Greek School of Sinopi. They invited the father of Helen and they requested that he surrender his daughter to the Pasha in order to avoid the greater catastrophe. The father of the girl was overwhelmed with remorse. But finally he gave in to the request. It was similar to what the Patriarch Abraham did in sacrificing his son. He accepted to sacrifice his daughter in order to avoid the slaughter of the people. He went home and prepared his daughter as best he could. Overwhelmed with fatherly grief, he took her to the Pasha. She was not offered up to him to satisfy his banal desires but as a sweet-smelling

offering to the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

The abominable Oukouzoglou Pasha received the beautiful Helen with unbridled joy hoping that he would finally be able to satisfy his lewd desires. Straightway he tried repeatedly to rape her but again the same phenomenon happened, an impenetrable wall surrounded the girl and hindered the Pasha from touching her. There was an invisible power that kept him away. While all this was going on, the holy girl was praying with great fervor. She was reciting the Six Psalms which she knew by heart. She had learned them from her uncle.

The Pasha on the following day tried again to fulfill his lewd desires but again he was met by that strange phenomenon. He became extremely agitated and angry. He ordered that the girl be locked away in the fearful damp jails of Sinopi.

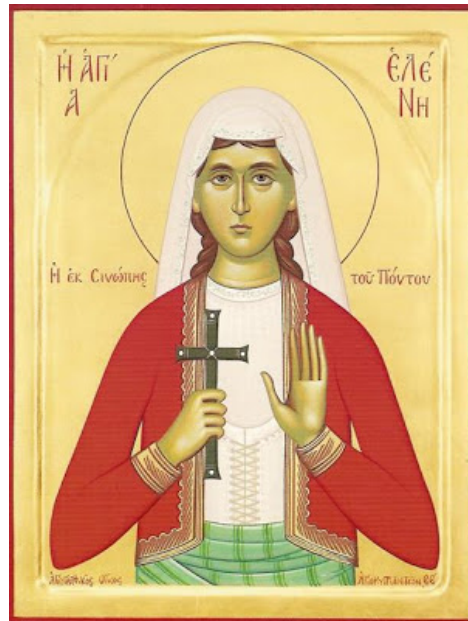
The heart of the evil minded Pasha became even more hardened. His eyes did not see the evident miracle that was happening before him. His unclean soul would not come to its senses but on the contrary he was being overwhelmed by satanic powers. He desired wantonly to stain the holy virgin. The following day he went to the jail determined to succeed at last in satisfying his passion. But once again the invisible wall was there! And again Divine Grace turned him away!

The Pasha was now overwhelmed with rage. He ordered that Helen be tortured and then killed. Helen was tortured and killed by the soldiers. Helen had now become a Holy Relic. She was put in a bag and was thrown into the sea. But instead of sinking to the bottom of the sea, the sack with the martyred body in it floated on the surface of the sea while a heavenly light shown upon it from heaven. The Turks became frightened by this phenomenon and cried out that “the infidel is burning, the infidel is burning” The precious Relic continued to float until it reached the area of the sea known as Gaei, where because of the depth of the sea, the color of the water is black. At this point the bag sank to the bottom of the sea.

After a few days, a Greek ship dropped anchor in the area of Gaei. On the third night, the watch on duty noticed that a bright light was being emitted from the bottom of the sea. The seaman thought that maybe there was a large amount of gold at the bottom of the sea.

The sailor on watch immediately notified the captain of the ship to grapple up what they thought was gold from the bottom of the sea. Finally, instead of gold, they grappled up the bag with the precious Relic of St. Helen, the Virgin-Martyr. In the precious bag that the sailors had recovered was

the head of the Saint which had been severed from the body. At the top of the head was a nail. In addition to this, there was also another hole made by another nail. It became very evident that the evil ones had terribly tortured the Saint. They drove two nails into her head and then they decapitated her. Two of the Turkish divers knew about the martyrdom because they were the ones who threw the Saint into the ocean but they were afraid to talk about it. The captain then transferred the holy Head of St. Helen to the Church of the Holy Mother in Sinopi. Her body was placed upon another boat that was leaving for Russia filled with Greeks.



At the location of the ocean floor where the martyred Helen sank to the bottom of the ocean, a stream of fresh poured forth and this area ever since then has been known as the Blessed Place.

Many miracles have happened through the relic of Helen's head in Sinopi. This is especially true for people who suffer from headaches. They would call the priest, who would also have the Head of the Blessed Helen. He would sing a service of Supplication and he would do a blessing of the water and the pain would disappear.

The president of Sinopi, Chris Kaforopoulos, during the ethnic cleansing in 1924, took with him the Holy Head of St. Helen and placed it in the Church of the Great Martyr Marina in AnoToumba, Thessaloniki. It is enshrined there to this very day. It is very fragrant and performs miracles for the glory of our Lord and God.

July 2018

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church
Southbridge, Massachusetts
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 St. Cosmas & Damian Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am	2 Archbishop of San Francisco St. John Maximovitch	3	4 Paraklesis of Theotokos 6:00pm	5	6 Akathist 6:00pm	7 Divine Liturgy 9:00am Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am Vespers, Litia 6:00pm
8 Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am	9	10	11 Paraklesis of Theotokos 6:00pm	12	13 Akathist 6:00pm	14 Divine Liturgy 9:00am Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am Vespers, Litia 6:00pm
15 Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am	16	17	18 Paraklesis of Theotokos 6:00pm	19	20 St. Elijah *No Service Fr. will be in PA	21 Divine Liturgy 9:00am Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am Vespers, Litia 6:00pm
22 Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am	23	24	25 Paraklesis of Theotokos 6:00pm	26 Vespers, Litia for St. Panteleimon 6:00pm	27 St. Panteleimon the Great Divine Liturgy 9:00am Akathist 6:00pm	28 Divine Liturgy 9:00am Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am Vespers, Litia 6:00pm
29 Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am	30	31				