

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

November 2020



LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday

10:00am Divine Liturgy
11:00am Memorial Service
5:00pm Vespers

Sunday

9:00am Matins
10:00am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday

6:00pm Paraklesis

Feast days

Nov. 1st - Sts. Cosmas and
Damian

Nov. 8th - Synaxis of the Holy
Archangels

Nov. 9th - St. Nectarios

Nov. 11th - St. Minas the Great
Martyr

Nov. 13th - St. John Chrysostom
and his mother Antuza

Nov. 14th - Apostle Philip and St.
Gregory Palamas

Nov. 15th – Nativity Fast begins;
St. Paisios of Neamt

Nov. 16th - Evangelist Matthew

Nov. 21st - Entrance of the
Mother of God into the Temple

Nov. 25th - St. Catherine the
Great Martyr

Nov. 30th - Apostle Andrew, the
protector of Romania, St.
Andrew Shaguna, the
metropolitan of Transylvania,
and St. Sebastian of San
Francisco and Jackson

Synaxis of the Holy Archangels

All the Angels, according to the Apostle Paul, are ministering spirits, - sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation - (Heb. 1:14). God set them as overseers of every nation and people, and guides to that which is profitable (Deut. 32:8); and while one Angel is appointed to oversee each nation as a whole, one is also appointed to protect each Christian individually. He commands them to guard them that hope on Him, that nothing should harm them, neither should any evil draw nigh to their dwelling (Ps. 90:10-12). In the Heavens, they always behold the face of God, sending up to Him the thrice-holy hymn and interceding with Him in our behalf, seeing they rejoice over one sinner that repents (Esaias 6:2-3; Matt. 18:10; Luke 15:7). In a word, they have served God in so many ways for our benefit, that the pages of Holy Scripture are filled with the histories thereof. It is for these reasons that the Orthodox Church, wisely honoring these divine ministers, our protectors and guardians, celebrates today the present Synaxis that is, our coming together in assembly for their common feast to chant their praises, especially for the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, who are mentioned in the Scriptures by name. The name Michael means "Who is like God?" and Gabriel means "God is mighty." The number of Angels is not defined in the divine Scriptures, where Daniel says that thousands of thousands ministered before Him, and ten thousands of ten thousands attended upon Him - (Dan. 7:10). But all of them are divided into nine orders which are called Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim, Dominions, Powers, Authorities, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels.



Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church
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2020 Parish Council

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

2020 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

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

November 9th – Sam Yanka
November 10th – Tom Dowling and Michael Boilard
November 11th – Max Yanka
November 12th – Brett Thomo
November 22nd – Peter Boilard
November 24th – Gregory Downie

Happy Thanksgiving to All

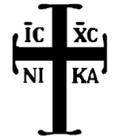
Glory to God for All Things!

Jesus Christ, my Lord and God, I give thanks for your loving kindness and all the blessings You have richly bestowed upon me. I fall down in worship and adoration before You, the King of Glory. I praise You, I glorify You, I bless You and I give thanks to You for Your great goodness and tender mercy. To You I come, my sweet Lord and loving Master. Shine in my heart the light of Your grace. Enlighten my mind, that I may walk uprightly all my life by keeping Your commandments. Glorified and exalted is Your holy name, now and forever. Amen.



Please Pray for:

Bill & Laureen Smith
Mary Grabosky
Henrietta Panu
Jennifer Silva
Alexander



Happy Name Day

Nov. 8th - Archangel Michael - Michael Boilard, Michael Pitsillides
Nov. 14th - St. Gregory Palamas - Gregory Downie
Nov. 16th - Evangelist Matthew - Matthew Dowling
Nov. 25th - St. Catherine the Great Martyr - Katie Mironidis
Nov. 30th - St. Apostle Andrew, St. Andrew Shaguna - Andrew Tanacea, Andrew Silva

Bible Study on the Book of Revelation

Thursdays at 7pm in the chapel or on Zoom. Please contact Fr. John for the link.

Parents' Nights

Fridays at 6:30pm in the parish house.

Babysitting will be provided.

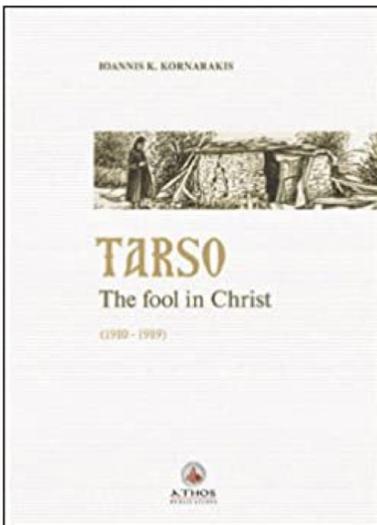
~ Video & Book Corner ~



Video: St. Porphyrios as I Experienced Him

Sermon by Metropolitan Neophytos of Morphou, at Holy Hermitage of the Transfiguration of the Savior in Milesi, Attica - June 7th, 2018

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhl6A1vf2HQ>



Book: Tarso, The Fool in Christ

Everybody thought she was a sick and mad woman and not only that! Her words were never in vain. Yet, her speech needed interpretation. You would ask her one thing and she would answer another - making you think that her answer was irrelevant. However, this was the real answer to what she was asked and also to what she perceived from the past, the present and even future...

Comments on the Pandemic

Elder Ephraim of Vatopaidi, Mount Athos

Many ask us what are the causes of the COVID-19 pandemic: whether it is a natural phenomenon, or whether state-level actors have generated this epidemic.

We need to understand that this way of thinking is distorted. Let's not blame others.

We must first of all think that the perfect God has allowed this to happen to us. Nothing is accidental.

So the cause is us, our sins. Since it is a general pain, it is obvious that sin is a general one - and this is indifference to the spiritual, indifference to God.

Thus, we deserve the distance from services and Holy Communion due to the general indifference of either those who know nothing or those who know but do not cry and pray for their condition and society in general. Yes. We must weep and pray earnestly, waiting patiently and hopefully for the solution. That's how problems are solved!

The causes of the pandemic are spiritual. We, however, have completely changed the system of values: we pass sin as virtue and virtue as sin. This is the worst of all and, in fact, the main cause of trouble. If sin had been accepted as sin, then people would have repented and turned away from it - and God would have waited for our return.

But now that sin passes as a virtue, mankind is steadfastly heading for self-

destruction, and so the spiritual law is bound to intervene.

Of all the sins that pass as virtue, which is the sin - or the category of sins - which are the causes of the pandemic?

It is obvious that since this temptation comes into our bodies, the sins that are the causes of the pandemic are the bodily sins that we see today as a virtue. We are sexually obsessed, we accept any sexual distortion and we no longer know how to satisfy these cravings. Because of this, God separates us from each other, because by remaining together we destroy ourselves.

Let's not look for the causes of the pandemic outside of us, even if it is possible that different more or less

malicious players may have brought or are contributing to this pandemic. However, accusing a state, or an organization capable of doing such things, will only arouse hatred, which will not solve the situation but, rather, will increase the enmity between us.

Conclusion

Once again: the solution is repentance, weeping, fasting and intense prayer with patience and hope. Things are simple, but we do not want to apply them because of the overthrow of the value system, self-love and indifference.

These are the causes of the pandemic.



Without This Suffering I Am Nothing
Fr. George Calciu
From Familia Ortodoxă

My life here in Romania has been full of events, some better and some worse. I do not accuse anyone, I blame absolutely nobody because all of these things were sent by God to benefit my soul. Somebody once asked me if my sufferings in prison helped me in any way. I answered, "It is not that they helped me in some way, but I am the product of these sufferings." If I do something, if I am something, if somebody sees anything in me, know that it is due to suffering. Without this suffering I am nothing! It is possible that of all the difficult questions for the human person, suffering is the most inexplicable. Why is suffering necessary? I lived an experience of suffering which enriched my soul, and I believe that suffering is necessary for me. But it is very difficult to accept this thing.

When I was in prison, we were asking each other, all of us brothers, "Why suffering? Why us? Out of all the millions of Romanians, why were we chosen to suffer? Where is the sense in it all?" And God did not reveal any of His intentions to us. We cried out to Him every day to decrease our sufferings, but it seemed that He loaded us with more instead. Ever since I was released from prison I have carried with me this sign of pain which seems to have marked my entire life. After my second imprisonment I left for the West, I traveled throughout all the countries of Europe, and I went to America to speak about what happened in Romania. My intention was this: I cannot

keep silent for as long as there exists in Romania suffering, injustice, communism, and the destruction of churches and of the human personality. During my pilgrimage I arrived at a Catholic monastery and slept in the monastery library. There I found, among so many books, a small booklet containing Christian maxims. I opened it by chance to a page where I saw words of Paul Claudel, a famous French writer. He

"Then I understood exactly the deep meaning of this suffering: God is present in us!"

said this: "God did not come into the world to eradicate suffering; He did not come even to

explain it. God came into the world to fill human suffering with His presence." Did you hear that? To fill human suffering with His presence! Then I understood that during the moments in which we were crying, or when we were revolting, or when we were shouting, "Lord, what are You doing with us?!", He was in us more than in all the others, even with all of our sins and weaknesses. He filled our suffering with His presence. Then I understood exactly the deep meaning of this suffering: God is present in us!

"Thus God Dwells in Us"

Your relationship with God – if you feel that God has answered you – is a special bond which cannot be explained. However I would try to define faith, prayer, and the mercy of God, I would only be using words of human reasoning which have nothing to do with God Who is above all reasoning. God is outside of

the world – He is only found in love. I cannot explain all of these things to you because they cannot be explained. They form part of a mystical relationship of man with God, which someone may feel or may not feel, may practice or may not practice. There is no middle way.

It is not possible to speak today with God, tomorrow to curse Him, the next day to praise Him, and so on. You need to have a direct line in your relationship with God: a line of faith, of your nothingness before God, and of understanding that you are nothing before God because of your sinfulness, not because God did not create you pure. God created you pure, but you have defiled yourself with sins, you have wallowed in all sorts of filth, and you have damaged your heart, soul, and mind. Your mind works against the good, your heart has grown cold towards God, and it no longer loves anyone – you are hardened. All of these things change your relationship with God; they wear it out and break it.

We need to repair this bond through love, striving, and prayer. Let us have love for God and for our neighbor because it is not possible for someone to say that he loves God, Whom he has not seen, and not to love his neighbor whom he has seen (cf. 1 John 4:20). It is impossible to love God and not our neighbor. Our relationship with God has one end in our heart and one end in His hand. Through this relationship of faith, love, and good works, we enter into the will of God, and God abides in us. It is, as I have said, difficult to explain. Only those of us who have faith, who have striven on the road



of life at least to do good little-by-little and to strengthen ourselves in faith, have established this relationship. But I do not say that it is permanent. We may break it with our sins, but there still exists a spiritual channel through which we can speak with God.

I remember when I was little: there were eleven of us children and times were difficult. My mother would pray to God just as I am speaking with you. She would complain that one of the children became sick, the cow did not produce any milk or it did not have babies, the chicken did not lay eggs . . . She would tell everything to God as if she was in a direct relationship with Him. And know that God answered her. Mama knew that God is with us, and she spoke to Him as we speak

to each other, as friends. You tell your pain to your brother or friend, even to the finest detail. God knows about it, but we are still obligated to tell it to Him and to give Him praise. I want you to understand that it is possible to have a familiar relationship with God, as between son and father or as between friends, more or less. This type of relationship is what God requests of us. In silence, in simplicity, and in humility we can establish this relationship with God, so that we will have somewhere to go when we are in trouble and when nobody receives us. When everybody abandons us, when our life seems to be lost, yet still God opens His arms and receives us. This is an extraordinary mystery.

This I say to you: try to pray! Try to speak with God unceasingly!

On the Plague (Part 5) St. Cyprian of Carthage

We ought to remember that we should do not our own will, but God's, in accordance with what our Lord has bidden us daily to pray. How preposterous and absurd it is, that while we ask that the will of God should be done, yet when God calls and summons us from this world, we should not at once obey the command of His will! We struggle and resist, and after the manner of froward servants we are dragged to the presence of the Lord with sadness and grief, departing hence under the bondage of necessity, not with the obedience of free will; and we wish to be honoured with heavenly rewards by Him to whom we come unwillingly. Why, then, do we pray and ask that the kingdom of heaven may come, if the captivity of earth delights us? Why with frequently repeated prayers do we entreat and beg that the day of His kingdom may hasten, if our greater desires and stronger wishes are to obey the devil here, rather than to reign with Christ?

Besides, that the indications of the divine providence may be more evidently manifest, proving that the Lord, prescient of the future, takes counsel for the true salvation of His people, when one of our colleagues and fellow priests, wearied out with infirmity, and anxious about the present approach of death, prayed for a respite to himself; there stood by him as he prayed, and when he was now at the point of death, a youth, venerable in honour and majesty, lofty in stature and shining in aspect, and on whom, as he

stood by him, the human glance could scarcely look with fleshly eyes, except that he who was about to depart from the world could already behold such a one. And he, not without a certain indignation of mind and voice, rebuked him, and said, You fear to suffer, you do not wish to depart; what shall I do to you? It was the word of one rebuking and warning, one who, when men are anxious about persecution, and indifferent concerning

“That in the meantime we die, we are passing over to immortality by death; nor can eternal life follow, unless it should befall us to depart from this life. That is not an ending, but a transit...”

their summons, consents not to their present desire, but consults for the future. Our dying brother and colleague heard

what he was to say to others. For he who heard when he was dying, heard for the very purpose that he might tell it; he heard not for himself, but for us. For what could he, who was already on the eve of departure, learn for himself? Yea, doubtless, he learned it for us who remain, in order that, when we find the priest who sought for delay rebuked, we might acknowledge what is beneficial for all.

To myself also, the very least and last, how often has it been revealed, how frequently and manifestly has it been commanded by the condescension of God, that I should diligently bear witness and publicly declare that our brethren who are freed from this world by the Lord's summons are not to be lamented, since we know that they are not lost, but sent before; that, departing from us, they precede us as travellers, as navigators are accustomed to do; that they should be

desired, but not bewailed; that the black garments should not be taken upon us here, when they have already taken upon them white raiment there; that occasion should not be given to the Gentiles for them deservedly and rightly to reprehend us, that we mourn for those, who, we say, are alive with God, as if they were extinct and lost; and that we do not approve wills the testimony of the heart and breast the faith which we express with speech and word. We are prevaricators of our hope and faith: what we say appears to be simulated, feigned, counterfeit. There is no advantage in setting forth virtue by our words, and destroying the truth by our deeds.

Finally, the Apostle Paul reproaches, and rebukes, and blames any who are in sorrow at the departure of their friends. "I would not," says he, have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which are asleep in Jesus Will God bring with Him. He says that those have sorrow in the departure of their friends who have no hope. But we who live in hope, and believe in God, and trust that Christ suffered for us and rose again, abiding in Christ, and through Him and in Him rising again, why either are we ourselves unwilling to depart hence from this life, or do we bewail and grieve for our friends when they depart as if they were lost, when Christ Himself, our Lord and God, encourages us and says, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes in me, though he die, yet shall live; and



whosoever lives and believes in me shall not die eternally? ” John 11:25 If we believe in Christ, let us have faith in His words and promises; and since we shall not die eternally, let us come with a glad security unto Christ, with whom we are both to conquer and to reign forever.

That in the meantime we die, we are passing over to immortality by death; nor can eternal life follow, unless it should befall us to depart from this life. That is not an ending, but a transit, and, this journey of time being traversed, a passage to eternity. Who would not hasten to better things? Who would not crave to be changed and renewed into the likeness of Christ, and to arrive more quickly to the dignity of heavenly glory, since Paul the

apostle announces and says, "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change the body of our humiliation, and conform it to the body of His glory? ” Philippians 3:21 Christ the Lord also promises that we shall be such, when, that we may be with Him, and that we may live with Him in eternal mansions, and may rejoice in heavenly kingdoms, He prays the Father for us, saying, "Father, I will that they also whom You have given me be with me where I am, and may see the glory which You have given me before the world was made." John 17:24 He who is to attain to the throne of Christ, to the glory of the heavenly kingdoms, ought not to mourn nor lament, but rather, in accordance with the Lord's promise, in accordance with his faith in the truth, to rejoice in this his departure and translation.

Nativity Fast Recipe Bulgur Pilaf

Bulgur Pilaf Ingredients

- 1 cup toasted uncooked bulgur wheat
- 1/2 cup toasted uncooked orzo
- 3 cups water
- 1 cup green peas (if using frozen, thaw first)
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 1/2 cup chopped onion (green onions or scallions also work well)
- 2 tbsp chopped garlic
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1 1/2 tsp fennel seed
- 1 tsp coriander
- 1 tsp salt
- 3/4 tsp fresh ground black pepper
- 6-8 sprigs fresh thyme

Optional

- 1 tbsp lemon zest
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts

Toast orzo and bulgar (separately) over VERY low heat until they begin to just slightly brown. Set aside.

Grind coriander and fennel seeds together in spice grinder or mortar and pestle. Set aside.

Add olive oil to 3 quart saucepan (one with a tight fitting lid) and sauté onions until almost translucent. Add garlic and sauté until tender, careful not to burn!

Add toasted orzo and bulgur and mix well to coat with olive oil. Add carrots, peas and spices. Mix well to combine completely. Add water and sprigs of thyme. Stir gently to combine all ingredients and bring up to a boil. Lower heat to low simmer, cover and cook for 20 minutes.

Without removing lid, take pilaf off of the heat and let sit, covered, for an additional 10 minutes. Then fluff the pilaf with a fork, being sure to remove all thyme stems, and gently stir in lemon zest and fresh mint. Garnish with chopped walnuts.

Enjoy right from the stove or at room temperature. Bulgur pilaf keeps, covered in the fridge, for up to a week.



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sts. Cosmas and Damian Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	2 Election Vigil – Vespers, Litia, Matins, Divine Liturgy 9:00pm	3	4 Paraklesis 6:00pm	5	6	7 Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia – Holy Archangels 5:00pm
8 Synaxis of the Holy Archangels Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am Vespers – St. Nectarios 6:00pm	9 St. Nectarios Divine Liturgy 10:00am	10	11 St. Minas the Great Martyr Divine Liturgy 9:00am Paraklesis 6:00pm	12	13 St. John Chrysostom and his mother Antuza	14 Apostle Philip and St. Gregory Palamas Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers 5:00pm
15 Nativity Fast Begins; St. Paisios of Neamt Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	16	17	18 Paraklesis 6:00pm	19	20 Vespers, Litia, Matins – Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple 6:00pm	21 Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers 5:00pm
22 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	23	24	25 St. Catherine the Great Martyr	26	27	28
29 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am Vespers 6:00pm	30 Apostle Andrew, St. Andrew Shaguna, St. Sebastian Divine Liturgy 10:00am					