

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

March 2021



LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday

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

Sunday

9:00am Matins
10:00am Divine Liturgy
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
2:30pm Presanctified Liturgy
Wednesday, Friday
6:00pm Presanctified Liturgy

FEAST DAYS

March 6th – Saturday of the Souls
March 7th – Judgement Sunday
March 9th – 40 Martyrs of Sebaste
March 14th – Expulsion of Adam from Paradise
March 15th – Clean Monday; Lent Begins
March 20th – St. Theodore the Tyro
March 21st – Sunday of Orthodoxy
March 25th – Annunciation of the Theotokos
March 26th – Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel
March 28th – Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas

Annunciation of the Theotokos

Six months after John the Forerunner's conception, the Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth, a town of Galilee, unto Mary the Virgin, who had come forth from the Temple a mature maiden (see Nov. 21). According to the tradition handed down by the Fathers, she had been betrothed to Joseph four months. On coming to Joseph's house, the Archangel declared: "Rejoice, thou Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." After some consideration, and turmoil of soul, and fear because of this greeting, the Virgin, when she had finally obtained full assurance concerning God's unsearchable condescension and the ineffable dispensation that was to take place through her, and believing that all things are possible to the Most High, answered in humility: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And at this, the Holy Spirit came upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadowed her all-blameless womb, and the Son and Word of God, Who existed before the ages, was conceived past speech and understanding, and became flesh in her immaculate body (Luke 1:26-38).

Bearing in her womb the Uncontainable One, the blessed Virgin went with haste from Nazareth to the hill country of Judea, where Zacharias had his dwelling; for she desired to find Elizabeth her kinswoman and rejoice together with her, because, as she had learned from the Archangel, Elizabeth had conceived in her old age. Furthermore, she wished to tell her of the great things that the Mighty One had been well-pleased to bring to pass in her, and she greeted Elizabeth and drew nigh to her. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, she felt her six-month-old babe, Saint John the Baptist, prophesied of the dawning of the spiritual Sun. Immediately, the aged Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and recognized her as the Mother of her Lord, and with a great voice blessed her and the Fruit that she held within herself. The Virgin also, moved by a supernatural rejoicing in the spirit, glorified her God and Savior, saying: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," and the rest, as the divine Luke hath recorded (1:39-55).

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church
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2021 Parish Council

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

2021 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

Volunteers for Cleaning the Church

We need volunteers to help clean the church each week after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday. Please see the sign-up sheet in the hall. Please try to sign up at least once every one or two months.

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

March 8th – Destiny Collazo
March 10th – Preoteasa Camelia and Susan Brogan
March 13th – Tom Andrea, Debbie Yanka, and Theodore Rapsomanikis
March 14th – Nick Thomo
March 17th – Ruth Yanka
March 31st – Paul Goulas

Happy Name Day

March 12th – St. Symeon the New Theologian – Symeon Downie

March 20th – St. Theodore the Tyro – Theodore Yanka, Theodore Rapsomanikis



Stewardship Forms

Stewardship forms have been sent out in the mail. Please fill them out and return them to the church in the mail or in the tray on a Sunday.



Please Pray for:

Johanna
Paul

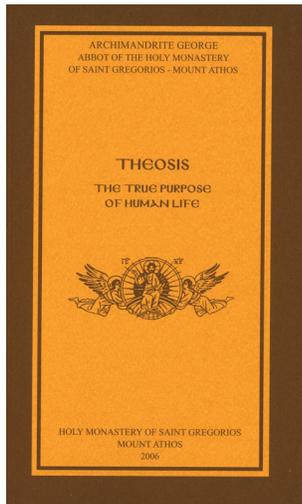


School Snack Drive

Please bring **individually-wrapped** snacks for our local schools.



~ Book Corner ~

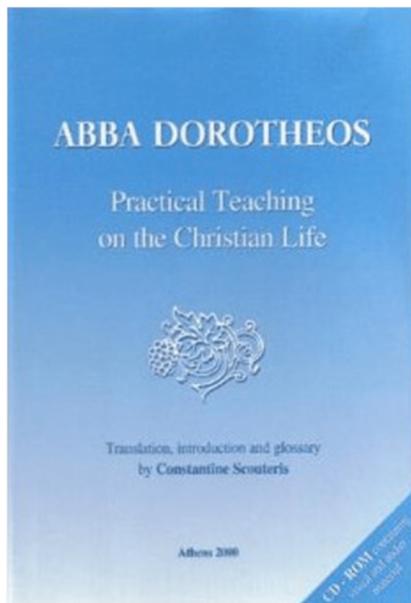


Book: *Theosis: The True Purpose of Human Life*

The beauty of this book is its simplicity. In clear and simple terms it states the original purpose of the Christian life—namely Theosis.

Its author Archimandrite George has been the Abbot of St. Gregorios Monastery since 1974. He is well known throughout the Orthodox world both as a theologian and spiritual father. He has written many books and articles on theology and the spiritual life. His works have been translated into many languages.

The idea of Theosis will be unfamiliar to the Western mind, although it is not a new concept to Christianity. When Christ said, “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,” [1] this is a call to a life of Theosis.



Book: *Practical Teaching on the Christian Life*

The practical teaching of Abba Dorotheos of Gaza, creates a challenge for man in the modern age. Today, we are accustomed to a way of life where our pursuit for opulence renders our world outlook inadequate to comprehend the value and importance of ascecis, of bodily toil and frugality. To a great extent, we have adapted the Gospel to a level which suits our own worldly pursuits. Thus, we tend to reject the words of a holy man such as Abba Dorotheos who had dedicated his life to the teaching of the Gospel, the unconditional love for God, for fellow human beings and for the world.

**The Antichrist: An Orthodox Perspective
from the Church Fathers (Part 8)
Fr. Andrew J. Anderson**

St. Ephraim the Syrian on the Mark of the Beast

St. Ephraim the Syrian (fourth century) in his sermon, “On the coming of the Lord, the end of the world, and the coming of the Antichrist”, wrote this about the mark of the beast:

Beloved, we need a lot of prayer and tears in order that some of us prove strong through the trials; because the beast will work many illusions. He himself is an enemy of God and wants to destroy everyone. The torturer will use such means so that all will have to have the mark of the beast on themselves, in due time, that is at the fulfillment of time,

when the Antichrist comes and deceives all with signs. And only in the case [that they have the mark] will they be able to purchase food and other necessities; and he will set up supervisors to enforce his orders. My brethren, notice the wiliness of the beast which is above all measure, and the contriving of his wickedness—how he will start with the stomach, so that man, when brought to an extreme of food deprivation, will be compelled to accept the mark, or rather the wickedly profane symbol, not just on any part of the body but on the right hand and also on the forehead, so that he will be unable afterwards to make the sign of the cross with the right hand or to sign the holy name of the Lord or the glorious and honorable cross of Christ our Savior on the forehead... Therefore my brethren, a terrible trial is ahead for all the Christ-loving people—that they not fear or fall

“Beloved, we need a lot of prayer and tears in order that some of us prove strong through the trials...”

into negligence until the hour of death during the time when the serpent will be marking [people] with his sign instead of the sign of the cross of the Savior... And if someone will not be marked with the mark of the beast, that person will not be taken captive with his fantastic signs. And likewise the Lord will not abandon such, but will enlighten them...

St. Paisios of Mt. Athos warns Orthodox not to take the 666 Mark

The Christians who reject the “666” mark and refuse to worship the image of the Antichrist will be seen as religious rebels and extremists—unfortunately—

and will be persecuted by the authorities, becoming martyrs for Christ as in the days of the Roman Empire.

However, St. Paisios the Athonite warned that not all Christians will see any danger in taking the devil’s mark. He believed that even some Orthodox Christian priests will be fooled and will not warn their flocks. Instead they will “diaper” their spiritual children with comforting lies, telling them to take the “666” mark and not to worry, saying: “it does not matter, it is nothing.”³³ How sad! These clergy will not be able to discern the “signs of the times,” and will earn for themselves the same rebuke that the Lord Jesus gave to the Pharisees in His day: “You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times” (Matt. 16:3). Yet those Christian non-conformists who do actually refuse the “666” mark will be “hated by all nations”

for Christ's sake, as the Lord Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24:9. Because of the Christian rebellion against the Antichrist's claims, the Antichrist will launch the fiercest persecution of Christians ever seen in history, as the Lord predicted in Matthew 24:21—"Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time." But out of His mercy, for the sake of those faithful followers who are going to be saved, the Lord Jesus promised that "those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:22).

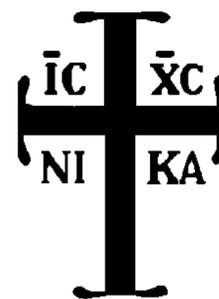
The Great Tribulation—St. Ephraim the Syrian's sermon

St. Ephraim (fourth century) describes those End Days, the Antichrist, and the afflictions to come during the Great Tribulation:

Yet I shall begin my sermon with pain and with sighs shall I speak concerning the end of the present world and of the most shameless and appalling serpent [i.e. Antichrist] who will bring the world into turmoil and will put fear, cowardice and terrible disbelief into the hearts of men. He will work wonders, signs and terrifying spectacles, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect (Mat. 24:24), deluding all by false signs and semblances of miracles wrought by himself. For by permission of the Holy God, he will receive the power to deceive the world, because impiety will have filled the earth and every sort of horror will be committed everywhere. Therefore, the most pure Master will permit, because of the godlessness of the people, that the world should be tempted by the spirit of falsehood, since men desired to separate from God and love the

evil one. Great will be the contest, O brethren, in those times, especially for the faithful, when signs and wonders will be wrought with great authority by the serpent himself; when he will show himself in awful apparitions as being similar to God—he will fly about in the air and all the demons, like angels, will exult before the tormentor. For he will cry aloud with might, transforming his countenance and dismaying all men without measure...

To be continued.



Fasting Recipe Roasted Potatoes

Ingredients

- 2 very large baking potatoes
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tsp salt
- 2 tsp pepper
- 2 tbsp chopped rosemary
- 1 cup broth or water
- 3-4 cloves chopped garlic (2 tbsps)
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice (about 1 lemon)
- 2 tbsp crushed Greek oregano

Peel potato and cut into 6 long wedges, set aside. Whisk chopped rosemary, chopped garlic, salt/pepper, olive oil, lemon juice and water/broth together in medium bowl. Add peeled potato wedges to marinade and coat them completely. Transfer coated potatoes and marinade to roasting pan.

Roast potatoes in 400 degree oven for 50-60 minutes until fork tender and golden brown. Serve warm from the oven and garnish with additional chopped rosemary and crushed Greek oregano and a wedge of lemon.

This recipe gives you approximately 12 good sized potato wedges. If you're serving these as a side to your main meal, the recipe gives you 4 good sized side servings with 3 wedges per person. I usually serve them on a platter as part of a larger table of dishes.



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 + Strict Fast Paraklesis 6:00pm	4	5 + Strict Fast	6 Saturday of the Souls Divine Liturgy 10:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 11:00am) Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
7 Judgement/Meatfare Sunday Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	8 + Fast Day – No meat	9 + Fast Day – No meat Holy 40 Martyrs of Sebaste	10 + Fast Day – No meat Paraklesis 6:00pm	11 + Fast Day – No meat	12 + Fast Day – No meat	13 + Fast Day – No meat Divine Liturgy 10:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 11:00am) Vespers 5:00pm
14 + Fast Day – No meat Expulsion of Adam from Paradise/Cheesefare Sunday Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am Vespers 7:00pm	15 + Strict Fast Clean Monday – Lent Begins Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete 6:00pm	16 + Strict Fast Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete 6:00pm	17 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 6:00pm Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete 8:00pm	18 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 2:30pm Great Canon of St. Andrew of Crete 6:00pm	19 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 6:00pm	20 + Fast Day – Wine and oil allowed St. Theodore the Tyro Divine Liturgy 10:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 11:00am) Vespers 5:00pm
21 + Fast Day – Wine and oil allowed Sunday of Orthodoxy Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	22 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 2:30pm	23 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 2:30pm	24 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 6:00pm	25 + Fast Day – Fish allowed Annunciation of the Theotokos Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	26 + Strict Fast Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel Presanctified Liturgy 6:00pm	27 + Fast Day – Wine and oil allowed Divine Liturgy 10:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 11:00am) Vespers 5:00pm
28 + Fast Day – Wine and oil allowed Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	29 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 2:30pm	30 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 2:30pm	31 + Strict Fast Presanctified Liturgy 6:00pm			