



# Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts  
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

April 2018



## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

### **Sunday April 1:**

9:00 am Matins  
10:00 am Divine Liturgy  
6:00 pm Bridegroom Matins

### **Great and Holy Monday, April 2:**

3:30 pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy  
6:00 pm Bridegroom Matins

### **Great and Holy Tuesday, April 3:**

3:30 pm Pre Sanctified Liturgy  
6:00 pm Bridegroom Matins

### **Great and Holy Wednesday, April 4:**

3:30 pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgy  
6:00 pm Holy Unction  
8:00 pm Bridegroom Matins

### **Great and Holy Thursday, April 5:**

9:00 am Divine Vespereal Liturgy (Liturgy of St. Basil  
the Great united with the Vespers)  
6:00 pm Holy Passion Gospel Matins

### **Great and Holy Friday, April 6:**

12:00 pm Royal Hours  
3:00 pm Great Vespers  
6:00 pm Lamentations Service

### **Great and Holy Saturday, April 7:**

9:00 am Divine Vespereal Liturgy (Liturgy of St. Basil  
the Great united with the Vespers)  
11:00 pm Pascha Vigil and Resurrection Service 12:00  
pm Paschal Divine Liturgy

### **Paschal Sunday, April 8:**

12:00 pm Agape Vespers

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

## **RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

Mary Magdalene, and the other women who were present at the burial of our Savior on Friday evening, returned from Golgotha to the city and prepared fragrant spices and myrrh, so that they might anoint the body of Jesus. The Sunday that followed, almost thirty-six hours since the death of the Life-giving Redeemer, they came to the sepulcher with the spices to anoint His body. While they were considering the difficulty of rolling away the stone from the door of the sepulcher, there was a fearful earthquake; and an Angel, whose countenance shone like lightning and whose garment was white as snow, rolled away the stone and sat upon it. The guards that were there became as dead from fear and took to flight. The women, however, went into the sepulcher, but did not find the Lord's body. Instead, they saw two other Angels in the form of youths clothed in white, who told them that the Savior was risen, and they sent forth the women, who ran to proclaim to the disciples these gladsome tidings. Then Peter and John arrived, having learned from Mary Magdalene what had come to pass, and when they entered the tomb, they found only the winding sheets. Therefore, they returned again to the city with joy, as heralds now of the supernatural Resurrection of Christ, Who in truth was seen alive by the disciples on this day on five occasions.

Our Lord, then, was crucified, died, and was buried on Friday, before the setting of the sun, which was the first of His "three days" in the grave; observing the mystical Sabbath, that "seventh day" in which it is said that the Lord "rested from all His works" (Gen. 2:2-3), He passed all of Saturday in the grave; and He arose "while it was yet dark, very early in the morning" on Sunday, the third day, which, according to the Hebrew reckoning, began after sunset on Saturday.

The feast itself is called Pascha, which is derived from the Hebrew word which means "Passover"; because Christ, Who suffered and arose, has made us to pass over from the curse of Adam and slavery to the devil and death unto our primal freedom and blessedness.



**Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church**  
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**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 Andrea

**Clergy**

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

**Parish News & Events**

**Happy Name Day**

**April 6<sup>th</sup>** - St. Gregory from Sinai - Gregory Downie  
**April 10<sup>th</sup>** - St. Martyr Maxim - Maxim Yanka  
**April 15<sup>th</sup>** - St. Apostle Thomas - Tom Dowling and Thomas Burren  
**April 27<sup>th</sup>** - St. Apostle Simeon- Simeon Downie  
**April 21<sup>st</sup>** - St. Martyr Alexandra - Alexandra Malisory

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

**April 15<sup>th</sup> – Anna Tanka**

**Please Pray for:**

Alexandra Malisory  
Peter & Lauren Smith  
Richard Powers who passed away on March 25<sup>th</sup>. May be his memory eternal!

**CHICKEN BBQ**



**MAY 19TH**

**5-7PM**

**\$10 DONATION**



**Come and Enjoy Some**  
**BBQ, MUSIC & FUN!!!**

**Saturday Night**  
**Midnight**  
**Service After**  
**Pot Luck**

To celebrate the Lord's resurrection after the midnight service we will be having a pot luck to break the fast. Everyone is welcome



*Turkey Dinner Fundraiser!!!!*

**April 9th**

Public House, Sturbridge MA

**Tickets:**

Adults \$14

Children (up to 12) \$5



**Hristos a inviat!**

A d e v a r a t a i n v i a t !



**Christ Has Risen!**

T r u l y H e H a s R i s e n !

## ~ Movie & Book Corner ~

### Movie: Bitter Harvest

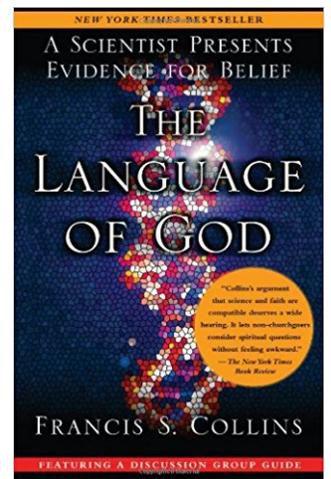
Based on one of the most overlooked tragedies of the 20th Century, BITTER HARVEST is a powerful story of love, honor, rebellion and survival as seen through the eyes of two young lovers caught in the ravages of Joseph Stalin's genocidal policies against Ukraine in the 1930s. As Stalin advances the ambitions of the burgeoning Soviet Union, a young artist named Yuri (Max Irons) battles to survive famine, imprisonment and torture to save his childhood sweetheart Nataalka (Samantha Barks) from the "Holodomor," the death-by-starvation program which ultimately killed millions of Ukrainians. Against this tragic backdrop, Yuri escapes from a Soviet prison and joins the anti-Bolshevik resistance movement as he battles to reunite with Nataalka and continue the fight for a free Ukraine. Filmed on location in Ukraine, this epic love story brings to light one of the most devastating chapters of modern Europe. The film is produced by Ian Ihnatowycz, Stuart Baird, George Mendeluk, Chad Barager and Jaye Gazeley. Richard Bachynsky-Hoover is executive producer (Ukraine). Roadside Attractions released the film in the U.S. on February



### Book: "The Language of God" by Francis S. Collins

An instant bestseller, The Language of God provides the best argument for the integration of faith and logic since C.S. Lewis's Mere Christianity.

It has long been believed that science and faith cannot mingle. Faith rejects the rational, while science restricts us to a life with no meaning beyond the physical. It is an irreconcilable war between two polar-opposite ways of thinking and living. Written for believers, agnostics, and atheists alike, The Language of God provides a testament to the power of faith in the midst of suffering without faltering from its logical stride. Readers will be inspired by Collin's personal story of struggling with doubt, as well as the many revelations of the wonder of God's creation that will forever shape the way they view the world around them.



## Holy Archangel Michael Church Through Children's Eyes



**PASTORAL LETTER FOR THE FEAST OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION  
2018**

† NICOLAE

*by the mercies of God*

***Archbishop of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese of the United States of America  
and Metropolitan of the Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas***

*To the beloved clergy and Orthodox Christians of our holy Archdiocese, peace and holy joy from Christ the Risen Lord, and from us hierarchical blessings.*

*Let us purify our senses and we shall see Christ, shining in the unapproachable light of His Resurrection!* (Paschal Canon, Ode 1)

**Most Reverend Fathers, Beloved Faithful,**

**Christ is risen!**

After the journey of Great Lent, God has granted us once again to proclaim to one another the great joy of the Savior's Resurrection and to partake in the Light that radiated from the empty tomb. We went through Lent in sorrow for our sins and weaknesses, we asked to be freed from *the spirit of slothfulness, faintheartedness, lust of power, and idle talk* and we asked instead for *the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love* (Prayer of St. Ephraim). Grief over our sins is now conquered by the news of the Resurrection, for Christ *descended from on high to free us from the bondage of sin* and He is now *our Life and Resurrection* (Resurrection Troparion, 8th Tone).

The Paschal Vigil reveals the fulfillment of the journey through Lent as a prefiguring of our journey through this earthly life toward the eternal Kingdom of the Risen Christ. For our co-suffering with Christ is proclaimed to us first: *"Yesterday I was buried with You, O Christ; today I arise with You in Your Resurrection. Yesterday I was crucified with You: glorify me with You, O Savior, in Your*

*Kingdom!"* (Paschal Canon, Ode 3). The meaning of these six weeks of Lent, culminating in Passion Week, is precisely this co-suffering with Christ who took on our weaknesses in order to heal them. During Lent we prepare together with the catechumens for baptism so that we may proclaim together with them on the night of Holy Pascha the *illumination* of all those who have been buried together with Christ in the water of baptism, in order to be raised together with Christ to the new life *"justified, enlightened, sanctified, washed"* (the Baptism service). Through Baptism we are partakers in the renewal of the entire creation brought about by Christ through the Resurrection, as St. Paul the Apostle witnesses: *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new"* (2 Cor. 6:17).

The renewing power of Christ's Resurrection is then revealed in the songs of Matins about the descent of His soul into hell: *"O Christ, when You went down into the deepest abyss of the earth, You broke the indestructible chains that kept the souls prisoners in Hades"* (Paschal Canon, Ode 6). Christ conquered hell in His human soul that is united with His divinity, Fr. Staniloae informs us. For a moment hell had received another soul, but this one was filled with the eternal power of divinity and thus hell found itself conquered: *"It seized the visible, and was overcome by the invisible... O Hades, where is your victory? Christ is risen and you are abolished,"* says St. John Chrysostom in his Paschal Homily.

The renewal of creation, the liberation of those held captive by hell, the victory of life over death through Christ's Resurrection are motives for universal joy: "*Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice. Let the whole world, visible and invisible, keep the feast, for Christ is risen, our eternal joy!*" (Paschal Canon, Ode 1). And this joy is accompanied by the *light of the Resurrection* which conquered the darkness of hell and restored the entire creation to the light of the glory of God: "*Now all is filled with light: Heaven and earth and the lower regions*" (Paschal Canon, Ode 3). We who have fasted and sorrowed over our sins are now illumined and we rejoice with the entire creation in our rebirth and renewal, in the chance to live together with the Risen Christ in His Kingdom. We begin this life in the Church through baptism; we continue it through the Holy Mysteries wherein we receive "*a new drink, not miraculously produced from a barren rock, but from the Fount of immortality springing forth from the tomb of Christ*" (Paschal Canon, Ode 3). And this journey is fulfilled in *the unwaning day of the eternal Kingdom*, as we confess at the Divine Liturgy after receiving Holy Communion.

**Most Reverend Fathers, Beloved Faithful,**

It is fitting that our journey through this world should be illumined by the joy of the Resurrection. This joy is proclaimed to us not only on the night of Holy Pascha, but every Sunday, which is precisely the *Day of Resurrection*. Sunday is the first day of the week, it is the day of our re-creation in the Risen Christ, but Sunday is also the 8th day, the day we rejoice in the joy and light of the Kingdom of God. Thus our time spent on earth is marked by the *Day of Resurrection* as a preparation and a fulfillment: preparation for eternity and fulfillment through participation in the Divine Liturgy on the *Day of Resurrection* in the Church.

Our life bears the sign of the Resurrection, therefore it is fitting that we be bearers of this sign in the world. The Christian who fasts and keeps the traditions of the Church should be the one who brings into the world joy and light through his luminous countenance, through forgiveness of his neighbor, through good words and deeds shown to those who are weak. St. Seraphim of Sarov gave the following greeting all year long: "*My joy in the Lord, Christ is risen!*" This shows that he had received not only the gift of the light and joy of the Resurrection in his life, but also the gift of discovering these in the countenance of his fellow man. The joy of the Resurrection can be shared; the joy of the proclamation of the victory of life over sickness, sin, and death can be the gift of the Christian to the world in which we live, a world ever more estranged from God, disoriented, and bereft of hope.

On this glorious feast it is my desire that all of you, priests and faithful of our Archdiocese, will have a part in the joy and light of the Resurrection. May you meet the Risen Christ in the Church, may you allow the light of the Resurrection to shine in your lives, may you be those who offer the joy of the Resurrection to your neighbor. This proclamation must begin with those close to us, the members of our family, our friends and acquaintances, in order to reach those estranged from God and the Church. We Christians who are "*justified and enlightened*" can be the means of sharing the light that will drive away the darkness of the lack of the knowledge of God.

I embrace you in Christ the Risen Lord and I wish you Happy Feast Days with health, peace, and joy in your families and parishes!

Your brother in prayer to God,

† **Metropolitan NICOLAE**

**Chicago, The Feast of the Lord's Resurrection, 2018**

**Our oldest parishioner Alexandra Melisory at  
her 109<sup>th</sup> anniversary – March 5<sup>th</sup>, and on St. Patrick's day 2018**



**Lazarus Saturday – We celebrated one year Memorial services for Loretta Malisory  
(Meagher)  
May be her memory eternal!**



## Monk Nicolae Steinhardt

He was a Jewish man who became Orthodox. Nicolae was baptized in the prison.

Nicolae Steinhardt was born July 12, 1912. He was Jewish and mostly known for his "Happiness' Diary". In 1934 he graduated from the Law and Literature School of the University of Bucharest. In the same year he published under the pseudonym of Antisthius the parody novel "The same way as Cioran, Noica, Eliade..." His refusal to align himself with communist ideas and his uncompromising loyalty to his literary friends and to traditional Romanian culture led to his sentencing to hard labor in the Communist prisons (for 6 1/2 years).

Shortly after he began his life in prison, his long-time attraction to Christianity crystallized in the decision to be clandestinely baptized Orthodox.

For the last nine years of his life, he lived as a monk in Rohia Monastery, where his literary gifts continued to bear fruit.

He died in March, 1989, before he got to witness the Romanian revolution against communism., and his autobiographic "Jurnalul Fericirii" (The Happiness Diary) was published posthumously. He wrote this Diary while he was in the prison, especially after he became Orthodox.

Excerpts from The Happiness Diary.

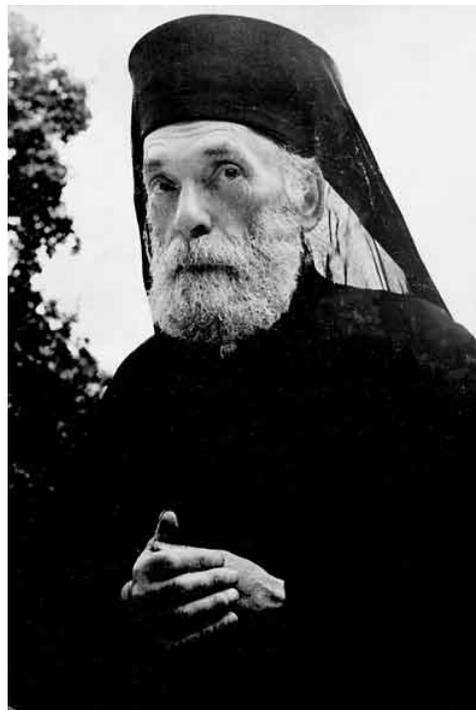
"7 March 1960: I didn't know. I had lived like an idiot, like a beast, like a blind man. In prison, toward dusk, I found what kindness was, heroism, dignity. Big words!

Empty words! Big and empty words for traitors and informers: big and priceless words and full of meaning when you feel their coolness in the depths of fire and you can taste their experimental charm. Believe what you wish, I have no right to speak of absolute values, I only know one thing: that these big

words and the qualities precious in prison than shoelaces, thread, a piece of paper, or any forbidden object that could make its owner happy.

H.C. Wells in *The Research Magnificent*: two big forces: fear and aristocracy. Now I understand him. Fear must be defeated. In this world there is one thing, only one: courage. And the secret is to behave aristocratically. Only gentleness and kindness have grace.

I'm starting to realize that only character matters. Political convictions, philosophical opinions, social origins, religious faith, are nothing more than accidents: only character remains after all the filtrations produced by years of prison – or of life – after all the wear and fatigue."



## Why should I confess? I am a good person.

"I know now, I know that any hatred, any abhorrence, any remembrance of the evil, any lack of pity, any lack of understanding, good will, sympathy, any behavior towards people that is not at the level of the grace and delicacy of a Mozart minuet...is a sin and a foul; not only the murder, the harming, the beating, the depredation, the swearing, the chasing away, but any vulgarity, any desconsideration, any glare, any despisal, any bad disposition is from the devil and it ruins everything. I know now, I found out myself...."  
Monk Nicolae Steinhart

Receiving Christ in Communion during the liturgy can never be routine, never something we deserve, no matter what the condition of our life may be. Christ teaches us that love of God and love of neighbor sum up the Law.

Examination of conscience, and going to confession is part of preparation for Communion. This is an ongoing process of trying to see my life and actions with clarity and honesty—to look at myself, my choices, and my direction as known by God.

Confession in the church differs from confession in your living room in the same way that getting married in church differs from simply living together. The person hearing my confession, an ordained priest delegated to serve as Christ's witness, who provides guidance and wisdom that helps each penitent overcome attitudes and habits that take us off course, who declares forgiveness and restores us to communion.

### Preparation for Confession and Holy Communion - Guide and advice

To examine yourself well, you must turn your attention to the three aspects of our active life.

These aspects are:

1) **the actions**, those isolated acts which are performed at a given time in a given place and under given circumstances. Listen to your conscience and all those actions which it exposes to you, without any excuse, acknowledge as sinful and prepare to confess them. Go over the commandments and see whether you carry them out or not.

2) **the disposition of the heart** and the characteristic tendencies which are concealed beneath the actions. Pride, vanity, selfishness, intemperateness, anger, hatred, envy, idleness, desire for sensual pleasures, gloom, and despair. Please examine yourself thoroughly to see if you have any bad inclinations and passions. Everyone possesses each one of them to a small degree. And everyone has one main passion around which all the others entwine themselves.

3) **the general character of life**. The spirit of your life, even though your life is still in an embryonic stage like a feeble baby bird, is defined by the characteristics of that to which you most incline. He who lives for God has a God-fearing spirit that endeavors to please the One God. He who lives only for himself has a spirit that is self-pleasing, egoistical, selfish, and carnal. He who lives for the world has a world-loving or vain spirit. Going by these characteristics, look and see what kind of spirit breathes in you.



## Father Gheoghe Calciu Seven Homilies for Youth 3<sup>rd</sup> Homily

Fr. Gheorghe Calciu was imprisoned in the worst communist prison, which was referred to as “the hell of Pitesti.” He wrote the seven homilies for youth students from Politechnical and Technological Universities and he delivered these homilies starting every Wednesday (starting cheese fair week) during Great Lent. He truly believed God allowed him to deliver all seven homilies before he was imprisoned again. He mentioned he felt these words were inspired by Holy Spirit. Every Monday and Tuesday he didn't have any idea about he would write but Tuesday night when he stayed at his desk the words just flew and he managed to write each homily for the youth.

Heaven and Earth

March 22, 1978

We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein the righteousness dwell.

II Peter 3:13

Young man, I am addressing you again today because I have chosen you from all those to whom I could be speaking, for you are most ready to hear the word of Christ. You are noble and pure; atheist education has not yet managed to darken the heaven within you. You still look upward, you can still hear the summons from exalted realms. The soaring of your spirit heavenward has not yet been barred through arbitrary concepts. The desire for heaven still exists within you; materialism has not yet made you its prisoner.

Therefore, I call you, young man, seven times. Seven are the praises of the day to God, according to the Psalmist: Seven times a day have I praised Thee for

the judgments of Thy righteousness (Ps. 118:164).

Today we will speak of heaven and earth.

I will not frighten you, my friend, with colorful descriptions of the end of the world. We stand before death daily. Its presence is more suffocating than life itself, more real than life. Death is our nightmare every moment. You live with death by your side, friend, and yet you have not grown accustomed to its presence because you are alive and authentic—more alive and authentic than you realize yourself.

Heaven and earth—the concepts remind me of a poem I once heard recited by the poet himself on television. He held up his right arm as he spoke. His face was a picture of forced inspiration and

some kind of trance among his hearers. Each verse was supported by a chorus of children chanting an artificial litany spontaneously prescribed: “Can you count us, heaven, one, two ... three ...” and so forth up to ten. It was a curse, a defiance, thrown up at heaven. The poem was essentially saying that heaven might be able to count the poet and his companions one, two, three ... well and good, but it could not vanquish them. That was the basic idea. He was an atheist poet, patterned for the materialists.

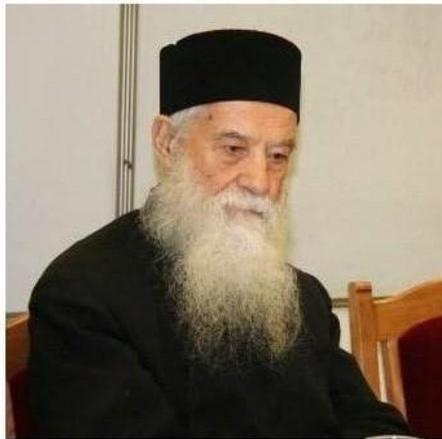
But to which “heaven” did he address himself?

Was it to the vault made up of the successive strata of the atmosphere? If so, his monologue was senseless. The poet was obviously addressing someone who could hear and even count, at least that is what one surmises from the conviction with which he spoke. How strange! For it was not a matter of inventing a trivial personification for the sake of the poem's rhythm, but the poet himself actually believed in the depth of his being that his appeal or invocation was being heard and that it was an act of

heroism. He addressed the metaphysical heaven which he was striving to diminish and to deny—by affirming it!

It is this heaven I want to talk to you about, my friend.

In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1). He created a heaven and an earth, a transcendence and an immanence, an aspiration for perfection and a material manifestation; a spaceless, timeless existence, on the one hand, and a space subjected to time, on the other. From the moment of creation to the present we have kept within ourselves the nostalgic memory of our union with God's heaven. We have never forgotten that there is a place in



*Pr. Gheorghe Calciu Dumitreasa  
(1925 – 2006)*

heaven to which we, or rather, heaven within us, aspires.

Tell me, young man, how much have you believed the statements which you have heard repeatedly to the point of obsession—at school, on the radio, on television, in the newspapers, and at young people's meetings—that you descend from apes? And how honored did this revelation make you feel?! Noam Chomsky[1] has said that the most stupid human beings can learn to speak, but the most intelligent ape has never reached such a height of achievement.

And now, behold, a voice from heaven addresses you: "You are My son!" And again, the voice confirms this for you, as it did before for Jesus when He lived in the world, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again (John 12:28).[2]

You are heaven and earth; darkness and light; sin and grace. I know, friend, that you are tortured by questions concerning the meaning of your life in this world, and concerning the purpose of the world in general. Do the ready-made authoritarian statements in answer to your limited questions satisfy you: namely that "heaven is fiction, matter is everything, and it is matter speaking to you through your internal and external senses"? Matter organized its own structure and evolution by certain laws of great complexity before even the slightest rudiment of the human brain was formed. Thus, once the higher brain of man appeared—the only means by which matter recognizes itself—it could no longer recognize itself. And from that time until now human intelligence has been struggling in a sterile and vain effort to discover laws which heedless matter fixed in a period when there was nothing but darkness and unconsciousness!

What do you think of this game of non-intelligence which annuls all human intelligence, even the collective one? Do you not see that the most elementary logic obliges you to admit the presence of an intelligence outside of this world?

But I call you to a much higher flight; to total abandonment; to an act of courage which defies reason. I call you to God. I call you to the One that transcends the world so that you might know an infinite heaven of spiritual joy, the heaven which you presently grope for in your personal hell and which you seek even while in a state of unplanned revolt.

This heaven, with its divine hierarchy and its divine light gradually descending only to return to its source which is God, does not count us in twos

or fives or tens. For, my friend, in the eyes of heaven you are not a piece in a machine which drives you around; in the eyes of heaven you are a soul, a whole being, so free in your actions, so priceless in your worth, that God Himself, the Second Person of the Trinity, came into the world to be crucified for you.

How ridiculous it seems to you now—the curse of the poet who believed so much in heaven that he needed to have a chorus of children to hide behind as a shield! Do not believe, my friend, in the all-powerful nature of matter. This earth is finite. We can destroy matter in minutes through fission and achieve oblivion if we do not admit the presence of God. The absolute claims of materialism are supported on a limited premise. You realize that the attributes of matter—such as infinity, eternity, and self-creation—are purely spiritual notions. To deny the existence of heaven is to deny all existence which does not fall into the orbit of my feelings. To deny the spirit means to admit that, for those moments when I close my eyes or block my ears, the world becomes non-existent.

And now, my friend, I want to recite to you the most beautiful poem ever written about heaven and earth. It is the beginning of the Book of the Evangelist John: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not (John 1:1–5).

How can darkness confine light, or matter confine the spirit, or atheism destroy faith and annul freedom? The heavens count each of you, one by one; for each of you is a unique and unrepeatable creation, my friend, O man.

Radu Voda Church

Second Wednesday of Great Lent

"To read the remaining three Homilies, please see Fr. George Calciu: Interviews, Homilies, and Talks, published by the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, and available at: <https://www.sainthermanmonastery.com/produ ct-p/fgc.htm>"

[1] Noam Chomsky (born 1928): a famous American linguist, the father of generative grammar.—Rom. Ed.

[2] Every Christian is, by virtue of the Mystery of Baptism, a son of God, not by being, but through adoption. In this context, "glorifying" has the meaning of theosis. "God became man so that man also becomes God. Not God by nature, but by grace" (St. Athanasius the Great).—Rom. Ed.

## “Are there proofs of the Resurrection? There are indeed!?”

By: Metropolitan Augoustinos (Kantiotes) of Florina

### Death and Resurrection

...

There is one lone word which causes everyone to quake with fear. What word is it? It is the word 'death'. When people hear the word 'death', they become agitated and uneasy. .... Death will come, however; it is a fact of life.

When will it come? It will come at the moment we least expect it. It comes at night - in the middle of the night; it comes in the morning; it comes while one is at work; it may come anytime. The hour when we will give up our soul to God is unknown to us.

What is death? Is it oblivion? Non-believers say that it is oblivion. You die, they say, and that's it; you are finished, gone! But we say that beyond the grave there exists another life. The body may dissolve into those elements from which it is composed, but the soul is immortal and eternal and lives on until one day the body will resurrect and the immortal soul will return to it. There will be a resurrection!

'Are there proofs of this?' the atheists ask. There are, indeed! What are these proofs? There are three kinds of proofs, in fact: first, we have the testimony of nature; second, we have the various prophecies of the Holy Scriptures; and third, we have the relevant miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So there are proofs of the resurrection! Every seed proclaims this to us. What is a seed? It is but the tiniest little thing. You sow it in the earth, it decays, and then from it a little stem grows, eventually peeking out from the earth and sprouting sometimes thirty, sometimes sixty, sometimes one hundred bean sprouts. The whole of nature preaches the resurrection: the sun which rises in the morning, the moon which comes out at night, the stars which shine in the heavens; the whole universe proclaims this! Prophecies, too, announce the resurrection of the dead. We hear one such Old Testament prophesy read on Holy Saturday. What does it say?



The Prophet Ezekiel stood over a plain which was full of bones and suddenly heard a voice saying, "Can these bones live?" To this he replied, "Lord, you know." God then commanded him, "Preach, speak to these bones." Then the earth began to shake and the bones came back together forming skeletons, and sinews bound them together and skin covered them. They were yet missing souls, however, so lastly God commanded Ezekiel to preach again, and finally all those bodies resurrected. This vision is a prophesy concerning the resurrection of the dead.

But the greatest argument proving that death has been overcome lies in those miracles where Christ raised men from the dead. There are three such miracles that he worked on others: first, he raised Jarius' daughter; second, he raised the son of the widow of Nain - weeping loudly over the loss of her only child, Christ approached her and said, "Weep not;" and third, he raised his friend Lazarus who was four days in the tomb. Finally, after enduring death on the Cross and three days in the tomb, Christ then resurrected himself.

There is such a thing as the resurrection then! As certain as you are that tomorrow will be Monday, so certain should you be that the dead will rise! Accordingly, death should not be called 'death', but rather 'sleep'. When a mother sees her child sleeping does she weep? No! For she knows that he will wake up energetic and refreshed. ...Death is a sleep - this is what the Gospel, the Church, and Saint Kosmas all tell us - and therefore Christians should not weep inconsolably on its account. Just as one who sleeps eventually wakes up, so one day will all the dead be resurrected in order to be judged in accordance with their works, "...and these (those on the left) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

The resurrection of Christ and of every mortal man - the common resurrection - is a fact. And this we confess every time we say the Creed: "And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen."

# April 2018

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> <u>Palm Sunday</u>  Matins 9:00am  Divine Liturgy 10:00am  Bridegroom Matins 6:00pm	<b>2</b> <u>Great &amp; Holy Monday</u>  Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 3:30pm  Bridegroom Matins 6:00pm	<b>3</b> <u>Great &amp; Holy Tuesday</u>  Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 3:30pm  Bridegroom Matins 6:00pm	<b>4</b> <u>Great &amp; Holy Wednesday</u>  Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 3:30pm  Holy Unction 6:00pm  Bridegroom Matins 8:00pm	<b>5</b>  <u>Great &amp; Holy Thursday</u>  Divine Vespereal Liturgy (St. Basil the Great w/ Vespers) 9:00am  Holy Passion Gospel Matins 6:00pm	<b>6</b>  <u>Great &amp; Holy Friday</u>  Royal Hours 12:00pm  Great Vespers 3:00pm  Lamentations Service 6:00pm	<b>7</b>  <u>Great &amp; Holy Saturday</u>  Divine Vespereal Liturgy (St. Basil the Great w/ Vespers) 9:00am  Resurrection Service – 11:00pm Paschal Divine Liturgy 12:00pm
<b>8</b> <u>Paschal Sunday</u>  <u>12:00pm Agape</u> <u>Vespers</u>	<b>9</b> Bright Monday  Matins 9:00am  Divine Liturgy 10:00am  Vespers 6:00pm	<b>10</b>  Bright Tuesday  Matins 9:00am  Divine Liturgy 10:00am	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>  Vespers and Lita 6:00pm	<b>13</b> <u>Theotokos of the Life-</u> <u>Giving Spring with the</u> <u>blessing of Holy Water</u>  Matins 9:00am  Divine Liturgy 10:00am	<b>14</b>  Divine Liturgy 9:00am  Vespers, Litia 6:00pm
<b>15</b>  Matins 9:00am  Divine Liturgy 10:00am	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>  Paraklesis of Theotokos 6:00pm	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>  Divine Liturgy 9:00am  Vespers, Litia 6:00pm
<b>22</b> Holy Great Martyr George  Matins 9:00am  Divine Liturgy 10:00am  Vespers 6:00pm	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>  Paraklesis of Theotokos 6:00pm	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>  Divine Liturgy 9:00am  Vespers, Litia 6:00pm
<b>29</b>  Matins 9:00am  Divine Liturgy 10:00am	<b>30</b>					