



Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church



Southbridge, Massachusetts
www.stmichaelorthodox.com
December 2018



LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday

9:00am Divine Liturgy
10:00am Memorial Service
5:00pm Vespers

Sunday

9:00am Matins
10:00am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday

6:00pm Paraklesis

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

Feast days

Dec. 2nd – St. Porphyrios

Dec. 6th – St. Nicholas the
Wonderworker

Dec. 7th – St. Filofteia of Romania

Dec. 12th – St. Spyridon the
Wonderworker

Dec. 20th – Bishop Ignatius the
Godbearer of Antioch & St. John of
Kronstadt

Dec. 25th – Nativity of Our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ

Dec. 26th – Synaxis of the Most-
Holy Theotokos

Dec. 27th – St. Stephen the First
Martyr

The Nativity Sermon of St. John Chrysostom

Behold a new and wondrous mystery.

My ears resound to the Shepherd's song, piping no soft melody, but chanting full forth a heavenly hymn. The Angels sing. The Archangels blend their voice in harmony. The Cherubim hymn their joyful praise. The Seraphim exalt His glory. All join to praise this holy feast, beholding the Godhead here on earth, and man in heaven. He Who is above, now for our redemption dwells here below; and he that was lowly is by divine mercy raised.

Nature here rested, while the Will of God labored. O ineffable grace! The Only Begotten, Who is before all ages, Who cannot be touched or be perceived, Who is simple, without body, has now put on my body, that is visible and liable to corruption. For what reason? That coming amongst us he may teach us, and teaching, lead us by the hand to the things that men cannot see. For since men believe that the eyes are more trustworthy than the ears, they doubt of that which they do not see, and so He has deigned to show Himself in bodily presence, that He may remove all doubt.

For this He assumed my body, that I may become capable of His Word; taking my flesh, He gives me His spirit; and so He bestowing and I receiving, He prepares for me the treasure of Life. He takes my flesh, to sanctify me; He gives me His Spirit that He may save me.

Come, then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been planted on the earth, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels. Why is this? Because God is now on earth, and man in heaven; on every side all things commingle. He became Flesh. He did not become God. He was God. Wherefore He became flesh, so that He Whom heaven did not contain, a manger would this day receive. He was placed in a manger, so that He, by whom all things are nourished, may receive an infants food from His Virgin Mother. So, the Father of all ages, as an infant at the breast, nestles in the virginal arms, that the Magi may more easily see Him. Since this day the Magi too have come, and made a beginning of withstanding tyranny; and the heavens give glory, as the Lord is revealed by a star.

To Him, then, Who out of confusion has wrought a clear path, to Christ, to the Father, and to the Holy Spirit, we offer all praise, now and forever. Amen.



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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 Andreea

Clergy

Fr. John Downie fr.john_downie71@yahoo.com

Parish News & Events

Happy Birthday!!

God Grant You Many More Years!!

December 10th – Matthew Dowling
December 14th – Carol Porra
December 16th – Michael Pitsillides
December 18th – Thomas Richard Burren
December 20th – Scott Burren
December 23rd – Luke Yanka and Eva Pitsillides

Happy Name Day

Dec. 6th – St. Nicholas – Nick Thomo

Dec. 12th – St. Spyridon – Spiro Thomo

Dec. 27th – St. Stephen – Stephen Giavara

Dec. 31st – St. Melania Romana – Melania Collazo

Coffee Hour Volunteers Needed

We need more volunteers for each Sunday. If you volunteer, you can dedicate the coffee hour to the memory of a loved one. Any help would be greatly appreciated!

Please contact Deb Thomo to sign up.

December 31st

There will be a pot luck at Fr. John's home at 7pm, followed by vespers and litia for St. Basil at 10:30pm, and a thanksgiving service for the New Year at 12am.

All are welcome to come and celebrate together!!!

There will be a Divine Liturgy at 10am on January 1st for St. Basil.

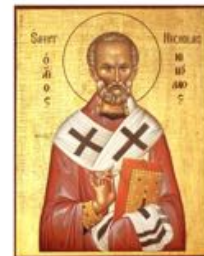
Saint Nicholas Albanian Church Feast Day

Let's support by participating in their church's feast day on

December 9th

Fr. John will be serving together with them on Sunday.

They will be having a Feast Day Luncheon after Liturgy
Tickets are available - Contact Spiro Thomo



Please Pray for:

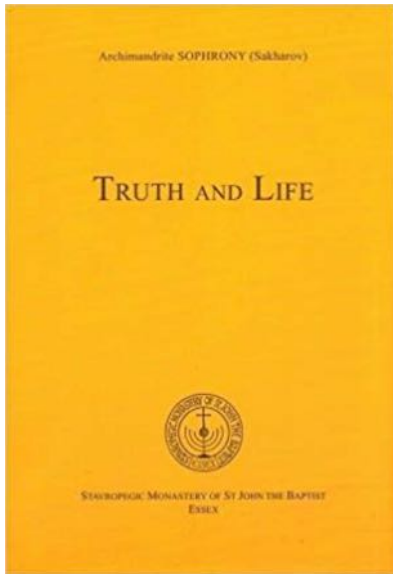
Our students,
Maria Mironidis and Matthew Dowling, for their final exams

Mary Grabosky

Peter & Lauren Smith

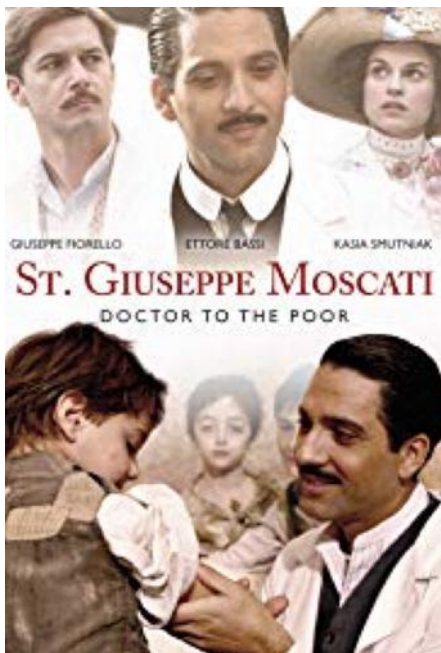
Paul Myers

~ Movie & Book Corner ~



Book: Truth and Life

'God is Truth and Life, and in Him the saints too become living and true.' 'Every religion, all the old and new para-religious forms, the lives of the mystics -- all have their ascetic culture, which varies in accordance with the underlying dogmatic consciousness. The dependence of the ascetic act on the form of dogmatic consciousness and, vice versa, the dependence of doctrine on spiritual experience, is a theme of great interest...' This book is a collection of texts which all demonstrate Archimandrite Sophrony's profound conviction that true life is based on true doctrine.



Movie: St. Giuseppe Moscati: Doctor to the Poor

Giuseppe Moscati was a medical doctor and layman in the early 20th century who came from an aristocratic family and devoted his medical career to serving the poor. He was also a medical school professor and a pioneer in the field of biochemistry whose research led to the discovery of insulin as a cure for diabetes.

Moscati regarded his medical practice as a lay apostolate, a ministry to his suffering fellowmen. Before examining a patient or engaging in research he would place himself in the presence of God. He encouraged his patients to receive the sacraments. Dr. Moscati treated poor patients free of charge, and would often send someone home with an envelope containing a prescription and a 50-lire note.

When Mount Vesuvius erupted in 1906, Dr. Moscati evacuated a nursing home in the endangered area, personally moving the frail and infirm patients to safety minutes before the roof of the building collapsed. He also served beyond the call of duty during the 1911 cholera epidemic and treated some 3,000 soldiers during World War I.

Moscati was outspoken in his opposition to the unfair practices of nepotism and bribery that often influenced appointments at that time. He could have pursued a brilliant academic career, taken a professorial chair and devoted more time to research, but he preferred to continue working with patients and to train interns.

Giuseppe Moscati died in 1927 at 46 yrs old.

Parish Life

Church Banquet



Thank you to our veterans!



Parish Life

Pilgrimage to Aghia Skepi & St. George's Church, Elena's Last Day, and Contra Dance Night



President's Corner

12/01/2018

President's Corner Report

As I begin this letter I want to wish everyone a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year! What a great year it's been and we are so happy to have had such an amazing 2018! December is such a great month and with all the holidays there will be much time spent with family and friends. I'm sure many of you have heard this saying before, but we must not forget the reason for the season. December is a time for us to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and while we may be excited to spend time with our friends and family we must make sure we spend time with Him this holiday season. Hallmark, Walmart, the television networks, and the like would want us to think about food, movies and presents, but the real reason for celebration is the birth of our Savior. Please let us not take that for granted this month as many of us have been extremely blessed; even just being in America makes us all extremely blessed. We must remember that there are so many people out there who are hungry, homeless and in need of some love, especially now. So let's not forget that though we may sometimes be distracted with our blessings, that Jesus asks us to bless others. We love and appreciate you all so much and I look forward to a great 2019!

—Luke Yanka, Parish Council President

“Let us glorify God! With the coming of the Son of God in the flesh upon the earth, with His offering Himself up as a sacrifice for the sinful human race, there is given to those who believe the blessing of the Heavenly Father, replacing that curse which had been uttered by God in the beginning; they are adopted and receive the promise of an eternal inheritance of life. To a humanity orphaned by reason of sin, the Heavenly Father returns anew through the mystery of re-birth, that is, through baptism and repentance. People are freed of the tormenting, death-bearing authority of the devil, of the afflictions of sin and of various passions.”

+ St. John of Kronstadt, Sermon on the Nativity of Jesus Christ



From the Ladies Luncheon –
December 1st.

Santa Claus Visits St. Michael
December 16th
during Coffee Hour
Santa will be passing out presents to the children.

Pot Luck Coffee Hour

Contact Sandra Nasto or Debbie Thomo
to let them know what you can bring.

*Church
Potluck*

Consecration of the Cathedral of National Redemption in Bucharest November 25, 2018

The Cathedral of National Redemption was consecrated after eight years of construction work in Bucharest on Sunday, before an estimated 40,000 worshippers.

The first guests arrived on Friday, November 23. His Holiness Bartholomew, the Ecumenical Patriarch, accompanied by a delegation of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as well as the delegation of the Orthodox Church of Greece, led by His Eminence Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Patra, arrived on Friday, being welcomed by Patriarch Daniel, according to Basilica.ro.

On Saturday, November 24th, the reliquary containing the Honorable Hand of Saint Andrew, brought to Bucharest by the Greek Orthodox delegation, and a second reliquary with a fragment of the holy relics of the Holy Great Martyr Catherine were placed outside the People's Cathedral, where they remained until Sunday afternoon. Two religious services took place at the Cathedral later the same day.

On Sunday, November 25th, a religious service started at 08:00, followed by the consecration service of the Cathedral's Holy Altar at 09:00. The Act of Consecration was read. The Divine Liturgy began at 10:30 and it was celebrated inside the Cathedral.

Those who wanted to pray at the Holy Altar were allowed inside the Cathedral after the Divine Liturgy, November 25th, and in the following days (November 26-29).

Some impressions from pilgrims:

Ionut, worshiper (Romanian): "For me, the cathedral consecration is a once in a lifetime event, for at least our lifetimes, our generation, and we come here filled with joy to this wonderful consecration service. We thank God that the weather is on our side, more or less."

Worshiper (Romanian): "Now, exactly 100 years after millions of Romanians sacrificed their lives, with faith in God, if they hadn't had their faith they never would have laid down their lives, so that Romania can be great, now, one hundred

years later, a cathedral is being built, dedicated to the Ascension of the Lord, also the Heroes' Commemoration Day. I am convinced that they, from up there, at God's side, in Heaven, are now rejoicing. All the soldiers, all the rulers of the old days, people of faith, are rejoicing at the same time with us, because this people was finally able to build a cathedral for itself, to match its strong and true belief."



Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Unification of Romania – December 1st, 2018

BUCHAREST, Romania — Despite freezing temperatures, tens of thousands of Romanians turned out Saturday to celebrate 100 years since their nation became a modern-day state.

Romanians waving the country's flag attended huge military parades Saturday in Bucharest and Alba Iulia, the Transylvanian city that symbolizes Romania's 1918 reunification. Crowds braved temperatures of -5 degrees Centigrade (23 degrees Fahrenheit) to watch tanks and military vehicles drive under the Triumphal Arch built after World War I.

Romania entered World War I siding with Britain, France and other allies in 1916 but capitulated to the Central powers led by Germany. It re-entered World War I in 1918, and doubled its territory after the end of the war.

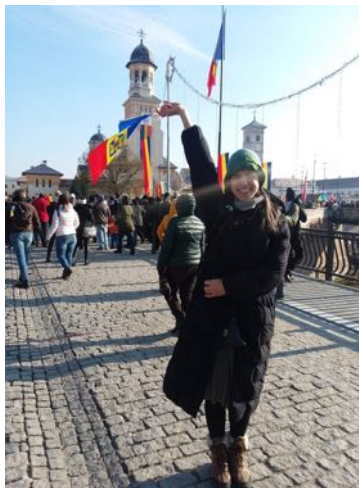
On March 27, 1918, the Country Council of Basarabia voted in favor of the union with Romania. It was one of the few major successes Romania had obtained in the Great War up to that point. Basarabia had declared its independence from Russia a few months before, in January 1918. It was the first of the historical Romanian provinces that united with the Kingdom of Romania.

Celebrated today as Romania's National Day, the 1st of December remains in the history of the country the Union Day. On this date, in 1918, more than 100,000 people, together with King Ferdinand and Queen Mary and 1,228 delegates, were present in the citadel of Alba Iulia where the National Assembly adopted the Resolution of the long-awaited union of Transylvania, including the regions of Banat, Crisana, Maramures, with the Romanian Kingdom.

Only a few days before, on November 28, the General Congress of Bucovina decided as well the union of this historical province with Romania.



Union Day 1918.



Elena celebrating in Alba Iulia.



Some of the festivities in Alba Iulia.



King Ferdinand.

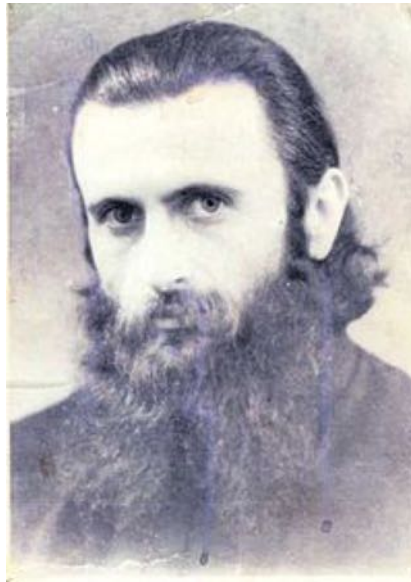


Map of Romania.

**Arsenie Boca's deepest life lesson:
"When life seems dire, make yourself a tea and drink it in the prettiest cup"**

The best-known story told by Father Arsenie Boca aims to bring relief to those in distress. The parable of the little cup of tea told by the spiritual guide from Prislop teaches people what they can do "if life is hard and they are hit, beaten, pushed almost mercilessly, when the world seems to be spinning uncontrollably and when they feel that they are in terrible suffering. "

Father Arsenie Boca (1910-1989) is considered one of the great spiritual guides of Romanians. *He became a monk in 1940, and was harassed by the Securitate secret police, detained and did forced labor on the Black Sea Canal, a notorious labor camp where tens of thousands of political prisoners worked in the 1950s. In 1959, he was banned from leading worship and the Prislop monastery, where he is now buried, was converted into a retirement home. He was forced to retire from the church in 1968 and spent 15 years painting religious images and icons in the small church of Draganescu in southern Romania. Elder Arsenie Boca reposed in the Lord in early 1989, a month before Romania's anti-communist revolt, aged 79. Though he is not yet canonized, Elder Arsenie's grave, located in Prislop Monastery, is visited by tens of thousands of pilgrims every year, where many miracles occur. One miracle which everyone can see is that the flowers over his grave never die or wither, neither in the hot summer nor the frigid winter.*



He left an impressive spiritual legacy to posterity. One of the most beautiful words of wisdom left by the former priest persecuted by the communist regime is the story of the tea cup, a parable intended to bring relief to sufferers.

Here is the story told by Father Arsenie Boca: A family went on a trip to England to buy something from a beautiful antique shop, for the celebration of their 25th anniversary of marriage.

The husband and wife liked antiques and clay products, ceramics, especially cups of tea. They observed an exceptional cup and asked: "Can we see that cup? We've never seen anything so beautiful!"

While the selling lady gave them what they had demanded, the cup of tea began to speak: – You cannot understand. I was not from the beginning a cup of tea. Once, I was just a lump of red clay. My Lord took me and I ran, I fought hard, I kneaded repeatedly, and I shouted: "Do not do that!", "I don't like it!", "Leave me alone!". But he just smiled and said gently: "Not yet." Then, ah! I was seated on a wheel and I was spun, spun, spun. "Stop! I feel dizzy! I will be sick!" I cried. But my Lord just shook his head and said quietly: "Not yet." He swirled me, kneaded me and hit me and he shaped up my form until He liked it... and then I was put in the oven. I never felt so much warmth! I cried, I knocked and slammed the door ... "Help! Get me out of here!" "I could see my Lord through an opening and I could read his lips while he slowly shook his head from side to side." Not yet. "

When I thought I could not stand another minute more, the door was opened. Carefully He pulled me out and put me on the shelf ... I started to cool off. Oh, I felt so good! "Well, so much better", I thought. But after I cooled down, He took me, brushed and stained me all over ... the smells were horrible. I thought I could not breathe anymore. "Oh, please, stop, stop!" I cried. He just nodded and said, "Not yet!" Then suddenly I was put back in the oven. But now it was not as the first time. It was twice as hot and I felt I would suffocate. I asked him. I insisted. I screamed. I cried ... I was convinced that I will not escape! I was ready to quit. Just then... the door opened and He pulled me out and again placed me on the

shelf, where I cooled and waited and waited, wondering, “What will He do with me next?”

An hour later, he gave me a mirror and said: “Now look at you.” And I looked. “That’s not me; it cannot be me ... It’s beautiful. I’m beautiful! He spoke to me softly: “I want you to remember, I know you were hurt when you were mingled, hit, spun... but if I would have left you alone, you’d be dry. I know you felt dizzy when I spun the wheel... but if I had stopped, you would be broken into pieces, you would have crumbled. I know it hurt and it was very hot and uncomfortable in the oven... but I had to put you there, otherwise you would have cracked. I know it did not smell good when I brushed and I stained all over, but if I had not done that, you’d never really hardened. You would not have glow in your life. If I would not have stuck you for the second time in the oven, you would not have survived much, because that reinforcement would not hold. Now you are a finished product. You’re

what I had in mind the first time I started working with you. “

The moral of the story, said the confessor Arsenie Boca, is this:

“God knows what He makes from each of us. He is the potter and we are His clay. He will mold us, He will do and He will expose us to the needed pressures to be perfect to do his good, pleasant and holy will. If life seems hard and you are hurt, beaten, and pushed mercilessly; when your world seems spinning uncontrollably; when you feel that you are in a terrible suffering, when life seems dire, make yourself a tea and drink it in the prettiest cup, sit down and think about what you read here and then discusses a little with The Potter “.

His sepulcher and people in line to celebrate Fr. Arsenie on November 28, his burial day:



Fr. Arsenie Boca together with Fr. Dumitru Staniloae's family

Stories from *Wounded by Love* St. Porphyrios (1906-1991)

The Polyclinic Hospital in Athens

To begin with when I was appointed there I experienced a great temptation

I haven't told you yet, however, that to begin with when I was appointed as priest in the Polyclinic I experienced a great temptation, but God helped me.

On the first Sunday I went to celebrate the Liturgy full of joy. My desire to work in a hospital was about to be fulfilled. God had given me this gift. But what happened to me! Just as I was about to begin, I heard the noise of a gramophone blaring out love songs from just outside the church: 'I love you, I love you...' etc. I started the service...the noise boomed on unabated. I read the prayers, the Divine Liturgy. Outside the crooning continued relentlessly. Inside the church was full of people. I came to the Holy Doors and said, 'Peace be to all,' but the Liturgy was far from peaceful. When I finished in a state of despair, I consumed the Holy Gifts, took my vestments, folded them and went out at once. Opposite the church was a shop that advertised gramophones and gramophone records. I went politely to the shop-owner, Mr. Kouretas (that was his name), and I asked him, if possible, to switch off the gramophone, at least during the Divine Liturgy.

'I've got my living to earn,' he replied. 'There's no way I can do what you

want. I've children to look after and rent to pay.'

'Please,' I insisted. 'It's distracting for me and it's not right.'

'Mind your own business!' was his response.

What was I to do now? I thought about leaving the church and looking for another one. But I felt under an obligation because I had been given the post even though I didn't have the formal qualifications – I didn't have a primary school leaving certificate or even a report card from one of the classes. What would I say to the

archbishop who had done me the favor of giving his consent? What would I say to Professor Alivizatos who had done his utmost to have me appointed? I became deeply depressed. I sat in the sanctuary and thought. What would I do? I said to myself that I would have to leave; I couldn't stay any longer. How could I live in there? How could I celebrate the Divine Liturgy? Especially as someone who had come

from the desert, from complete and utter silence, how could I endure such a satanic noise? All the buses from Niakaia, from Peristeri and from Piraeus passed in front of the church door and you could hear the constant sound of their horns hooting as they went up and down. I resolved to leave. But how would I announce it? I returned home dejected. I didn't know what to do...

At the time I was living in the Lykavitos district, in Doxapatri Street. I went back there and wracked my brains...I didn't even want to eat. What was I to do? I had



been so overjoyed that I had found a post in a hospital and that I would see sick people, that I would be able to look after them, to hear their confessions and give them Holy Communion. Now what? Only God could extricate me from this difficult situation. And so in answer to the dreadful problem I was facing, I said to myself: 'Whatever God says.'

'My God,' I said, 'I don't want You to speak to me; I don't want You to show me a sign. But with Your own love reveal to me something simple that will enable to know whether I should leave or stay. Something very simple. I'm not asking for some miracle. I'm ashamed to.' And so I decided to fast for three days without even putting water in my mouth, praying in complete silence and waiting for an answer from God.

And the answer came. While I was in the chapel of Saint Gerasimos various people came in to light a candle. At one point a woman came in with her child. The boy would have been in the first year of secondary school. He was carrying his schoolbooks with him. One of them was his physics textbook. I asked him if I could have a look at it, because I was always curious to learn something new. As I was leafing through it I lighted on a page showing the following experiment: If you throw a small stone into a calm lake you see the water making ripples over a small area. If you then throw in a larger stone, the ripples become larger and extend over a larger area so that they outflank the first ripples. At that moment I received the answer to my dilemma. It was divine illumination. I reasoned as follows: the small ripples from the singing outside the church can be outflanked by the prayers of great spiritual intensity that are being said inside the church. And at the same time there came at once into my mind forcefully, very forcefully: 'And if you celebrate here and have your mind on God, who can cause you any harm?'

So I prepared myself to do just this – to abandon myself completely to Christ's love, to execute with great zeal and spiritual intensity the drama of the Divine Liturgy, the awesome drama of Golgotha. My joy was very great. I believed that God had found the solution for me. On the Sunday morning I arrived at the church full of hope. I gave the blessing to begin. My mind was focused solely on divine worship. I felt that I was in heaven as well as on earth and with me was the congregation, God's flock, initiates in the mystery of His Word. I felt that we were all embraced by divine grace. Outside the gramophone was blaring furiously. I heard nothing. For the first time I experienced a Divine Liturgy like that. It was the most beautiful of my life. And from then onwards all the Divine Liturgies were the same.

Saint Gerasimos's Walking Stick

The place where we lived in the Tourkovounia was on a very steep incline. I would get up very early in the morning, set off for the church, for Saint Gerasimos's, and would return late in the evening. The road outside our house was very tricky and descended very abruptly. One morning I fell down and broke my leg. It was Sunday morning, the sun hadn't risen above the horizon and all was quiet. So some people heard my groans of pain and came out and called an ambulance. The ambulance came and took me to the hospital. I had broken my left leg at the shin. All the bones had been shattered. The pain was excruciating. When they got me to the Polyclinic they took me out of the ambulance and put me on a bed. The doctors decided to put my leg in plaster. The people in the church were waiting for me to go and celebrate the Liturgy. In the end they had to leave.

After two weeks, during which I had been lying in bed, while I was praying I happened to cast a glance at my leg. With the grace of God I saw that they had set my leg

wrongly in the plaster. So I asked the doctor to remove the plaster. The consultant who heard about it said with a laugh:

‘Instead of looking after the church for which he’s responsible, that priest wants to criticize us, even though everything’s been done properly and his leg’s been x-rayed. What does he want now? Does he want to waste our time?’

Nobody showed any interest. I insisted on them looking at my leg. They paid no attention. When they brought me food at lunchtime, I didn’t eat it and said that I demand that they take me for an x-ray. I insisted on this, because the leg would heal askew and would stay like that for good. The consultant sent a message, ‘Tell him to occupy himself with his priestly duties! His leg’s perfectly fine.’

Evening came and again they brought me food and again I didn’t eat, insisting that they take a look at my leg. The next morning the consultant came by and said irately:

‘What’s all this nonsense, Papa? Are you trying to waste our time in here?’

In the end they took me down to the x-rays. They saw that they had indeed set my leg askew and, what’s more, it had healed. The consultant started to laugh.

‘Poor Papa,’ he said. ‘You must be a real sinner! Now I realize it too. Now you’ll see what you have to go through! We’ll have to break your leg again and reset it properly.’

They started to hammer the plaster to break it. I said nothing, but only prayed silently.

‘So you’re not saying anything now,’ he said to me. ‘But now I’m going to forgive all your sins!’

With a sudden movement they pulled and removed the plaster. I was in great pain. Two doctors held my leg and the consultant started punching my shin with his fist to break it.

‘Now you’ll see, Papa!’ he said. ‘I’ll forgive all your sins, and all my own will be forgiven me as well!’

They set about breaking the bone; it had already healed a little and I was in unbearable pain. I bit my lip. In the end they broke it. They laid me down once again under the x-ray, pulled my leg and brought it back onto its axis. Then they carefully put on the plaster and sent me back to my bed.

For two or three months – I can’t remember exactly – I remained stretched out in bed. After that they got me to sit up and gave me two crutches to walk with. I didn’t want them. The consultant said to me:

‘Take them to stand up, because you’ve been lying down so long.’

I didn’t use the crutches for long because I was soon able to keep my balance on my own. I was wary of the crutches in case I would get used to them and wouldn’t be able to do without them.

Then the consultant said to me:

‘Be sure to buy a walking stick.’

‘No,’ I said, ‘I don’t need one.’

‘You’re a priest,’ he said, ‘and yet you’re so disobedient! Listen to me, otherwise you’ll fall and break all your bones.’

So I was obliged to ask my sister:

‘Would you buy me a walking stick. We’re poor, but you’ll have to get me a walking stick so that I can get rid of those crutches.’

It was eleven o’clock in the morning and I went down on the crutches to the hospital chapel.

My sister got ready at once to set off to Aiolos Street to buy a walking stick. Just as she was about to leave, a woman holding a walking stick in her hand entered the church.

‘Is this Saint Gerasimos’s here?’ she asked.

‘Yes, dear, this is it,’ answered the lady who acted as caretaker.

‘Where’s the icon of the saint?’

‘Over there,’ she said pointing to the icon.

The unknown visitor knelt down before the icon of the saint and with tears in her eyes started to address the saint out loud in such a way that we could all hear:

‘Dear Saint, I didn’t know you. I’d never heard of you. I hadn’t even heard your name. And yet you did me the honour of visiting me and you asked me to bring the walking stick I had bought in Jerusalem to your house. And here I’ve brought it to you, my dear Saint. You said, “I want you to bring me the walking stick tomorrow morning!” I didn’t know where you were, but I asked and now I’ve found you.’

I was sitting with my sister and the caretaker in the seats next to the candle bench. The woman approached us and said:

‘What’s all this about? Why did the saint ask for my walking stick? What does he want it for?’

The caretaker replied:

‘Listen and you’ll see why the saint wants your walking stick. He doesn’t need it himself, but the saint has a servant and his servant is this priest here that you see. He’s broken his leg and he’s been suffering dreadfully for months. Today is the first day he’s out of bed and doctors have told him to get a walking stick. Come, then, take the walking stick from the saint and give it here to his servant.’

The woman, overcome with emotion, brought me the walking stick and kissed my hand.

‘Take it, Father,’ she said, ‘and forgive my sins. I bought it in Jerusalem. It’s from the Holy Sepulchre. I come from the Probona district at the bottom of Patisia. That’s where I live. I saw the saint there in my sleep.’

I thanked her. I took the walking stick and, setting aside my crutches, used it at once. I called it Saint Gerasimos’s walking stick and was very fond of it. I take care of it

so that I don’t lose it. It’s very miraculous. When someone has a pain somewhere, I tap the painful spot a little with the walking stick and they get better. It’s truly miraculous. Can you believe it! The saint took care of someone as insignificant as myself! He appeared as large as life to the woman who had heard neither of Saint Gerasimos nor of me. The saints work the most incredible miracles. That’s why we must honour them. And I venerate Saint Gerasimos who, with his saintliness and grace, is the staff of the sick.

Saint Nicholas Kallisia

I bent down and drank water mentally

We started digging the foundations and building without water. It wasn’t easy to obtain a reliable supply of spring water at the outset. So we constructed a large cistern which held six hundred and forty cubic metres of rain water. In spite of this, the water from the cistern was not enough, and for five or six years we were obliged to buy water from Kifisia. We spent a lot of money each year on water. We had planted trees which we watered with purchased water. It was necessary, therefore, for us to exploit the water which I saw beneath the site. But for this a lot of money was going to be required because the water was very deep down and a suitable person would have to be found to do the work. The matter occupied my mind. A solution would have to be found. God found the solution. Listen to what happened.

One day a man came to ask my advice about a certain matter. For his benefit Christ revealed to me certain things about his family affairs. He was taken aback and said to me:

‘No one apart from my wife knows about these things you are telling me. They are very secret.’

In his enthusiasm he said to me:

‘What would you like me to bring you, elder?’

‘Nothing,’ I replied.

‘Have you water at the monastery?’ he asked.

‘No,’ I said, ‘we don’t.’

‘Then I’ll bring up water for you. I have well-drilling equipment.’

‘What will it cost?’ I asked him.

‘Nothing,’ he replied. ‘I’ll meet all the costs of drilling, and I’ll bring a pump.’

‘Very well,’ I said. ‘You are saying this before Christ.’

And he left.

A few days later he appeared with a drilling machine. He drilled down to a depth of thirty-eight metres, but he came on a hard rock and didn’t want to proceed any further. I implored him and he brought another, better, drill and went down to a depth of eighty metres, but without finding water. Again he came upon a hard rock and the drill wouldn’t progress any further. In despair he said to me:

‘I can’t find any water, Elder. I am going to leave.’

‘You mustn’t leave!’ I told him.

‘I’m going to have to leave,’ he repeated.

Then, because I was blind, I asked one of the sisters and she took me down behind the point where they were drilling, about twenty-five metres from the drill-head, to a place hidden among the pine trees so that they wouldn’t see me. There I prayed and went and found the stream of water mentally. I made the sign of the cross and prayed. From there I measured mentally how deep down the water was, just as I was accustomed to do. Because on other occasions, when I was younger, I had found water for people who asked me to. And not only did I find it, but I tasted it mentally to check the quality of the water, whether it was good, whether it was sea water, salty or fresh and so on. I took a measuring stick and measured downwards –

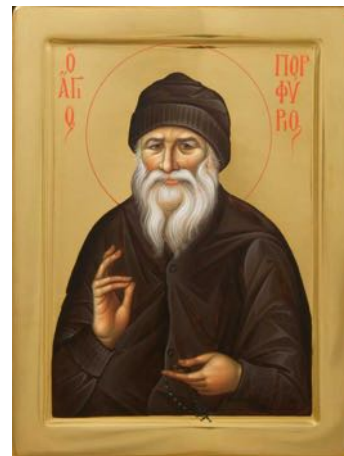
mentally, that is. I measured, ‘one, two, three...’ The water was very deep down, and so I started to count with a ten metre measuring stick – mentally, of course. I said, ‘Ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred...’ I felt great exultation. I had found the water, even though it was so deep down! I felt inexpressible joy. Immediately I thought of tasting it to see whether it was good. I bent down and drank it mentally. It was exceedingly good! Pleased and excited, I returned to my cell. After a short time I called in Nicholas Mitas – that was the name of the man with the drilling equipment – and I said to him:

‘You’ll have to go very deep down.’

‘It’ll be solid rock, Elder,’ he replied. ‘There won’t be any water. I don’t have that many pipes. I’m going to leave.’

‘You won’t leave,’ I told him. ‘Go and bring pipes. I won’t let you leave.’

The next day he brought pipes and went down to the depth I had told him. There he found a spring with an abundant flow of good and satisfying water. He was pleased himself. And we were all overjoyed. It was a blessing of the Lord. A spring of holy water. We sang a service of *Paraklisis* at the church of the Transfiguration of the Saviour in thanksgiving to the Lord for the great miracle. It was a miracle of the Transfiguration of the Lord.



Fasting Recipe (for Advent)

Chiftele de dovleac/Kolokithokeftedes/Squash Fritters

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp Bob's Red Mill Flax Meal or flax meal of your choice
- 1/2 cup room temperature water
- 2 large zucchinis (approx 2 lbs or 4 cups shredded/pre-squeezed)
- 1/2 cup shredded potato (approx 1 medium potato)
- 1/2 cup shredded carrot (approx 1 medium carrot)
- 1/2 cup shredded onion (approx 1 small yellow onion)
- 1/3 cup chopped herbs (I use 2 tbsp each of mint, dill and parsley)
- 1 tbsp lemon zest
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs, fine-crushed and unseasoned
- 1/2 cup all purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder (or baker's ammonia/ traditional Greek leavening)
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
- approx 1/2 cup light olive oil or vegetable oil for frying

Instructions

Shred zucchini into colander and sprinkle with about 2 tsp of salt (this amount is in addition to above 1/2 tsp). Allow to drain over the sink for 20 minutes or so.

Mix flax meal and water until completely combined. Set aside and allow mixture to sit for about 10 minutes as you prepare the rest of your recipe.

Shred onions, carrots and potatoes. Squeeze out liquid from onions and potatoes by ringing them in a clean kitchen/tea towel over the sink. Set aside.

Chop herbs, measure out breadcrumbs and spices (leaving out the AP flour), zest lemon and combine all in large bowl.

When flax meal is ready, mix into large bowl with herbs/crumbs/spices until completely combined.

Rinse (just very lightly) shredded zucchini and ring out any liquid in a kitchen/tea towel, my method of choice. Add all shredded veggies to bowl with flax/herbs/etc mixture and stir to combine completely.

Lastly, add the flour and, now working with your hands, combine everything once more. Set aside to rest for at least 10 minutes on the counter and for up to 3 days, covered in the refrigerator.

Add 3 tbsp oil to shallow frying pan and bring to medium heat. Watch the pan so your oil does not burn! I keep my pan at number 5 on my induction stove and remove pan from heat for about a minute between batches.

When ready to fry, scoop up squash mixture (I use a 1/3 cup measure) and roll into a ball your hands. Add ball to hot pan and gently pat into a patty.

Make sure there is room around each for you to be able to flip them easily. Depending on the temp of your oil, frying should take about 2-3 minutes per side and come out a nice crispy golden brown. Add 2 tbsp oil to the pan between each batch.

Serve these immediately!



December 2018

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts

www.stmichaelorthodox.com



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Divine Liturgy – Saturday of Souls 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
2 St. Porphyrios Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	3	4	5 Vespers at St. Nicholas, Shrewsbury 6:00pm	6 St. Nicholas the Wonderworker Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas, Shrewsbury 10:00am Vespers, Litia 8:00pm	7 St. Filofteia of Romania Divine Liturgy 9:00am	8 Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
9 Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas Albanian Church 10:00am	10	11 Vespers, Litia, and Communion Prayers 6:00pm	12 St. Spyridon the Wonderworker Divine Liturgy 9:00am Paraklesis 6:00pm	13	14	15 Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
16 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	17	18	19 Vespers, Litia, Matins, Communion Prayers 6:00pm	20 St. Ignatius the Godbearer & St. John of Kronstadt Divine Liturgy 9:00am	21	22 Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
23 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	24 Royal Hours 2:00pm Vesperal Liturgy of St. Basil the Great 3:30pm	25 <u>Nativity of Our Lord</u> Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am Vespers, Litia 6:00pm	26 Synaxis of the Most-Holy Theotokos Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am Vespers, Litia 6:00pm	27 Archdeacon Stephen Divine Liturgy 9:00am	28	29 Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
30 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	31 Vespers, Litia 10:30pm Thanksgiving Service for New Year! 12:00am	Jan. 1 St. Basil & Circumcision of Our Lord Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am				