



Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts
www.stmichaelorthodox.com
November 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

Friday

5:30pm Akathist

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

Feast days

Nov. 1st - Sts. Cosma and Damian

Nov. 8th - Synaxis of the Archangel
Michael

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. 14th - Beginning of Advent

Nov. 15th - St. Paisios of Neamt

Nov. 16th - Evangelist Matthew

Nov. 21st - Entry 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 Archangel Michael & the other Bodiless Powers: Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Salaphiel, Jegudiel, & Barachiel

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.



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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!!

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 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

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.

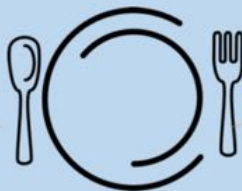
Annual Banquet

Sunday, Nov. 11th

Following Church Service

Catered Meal

\$25 (children eat FREE)



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:

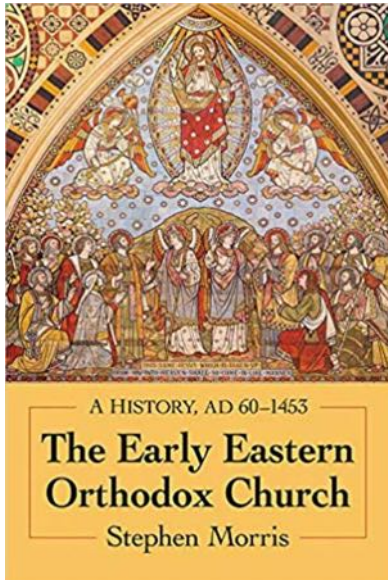
Mary Grabosky

Peter & Laureen Smith

Paul Myers

Thank You to all who participated in the Thanksgiving Turkey Raffle.

~ Movie & Book Corner ~



Book: *The Early Eastern Orthodox Church*

"It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us," the apostles declared at the conclusion of their council described in Acts 15. This apostolic council was the first of many councils to come as Christians sought to discern the will of God in the midst of historic challenges.

The faithful continued to struggle to express their new apostolic faith in new words, new languages, new places and new times. Many issues--the interaction of science and faith, divinity and humanity, Church and State--continue to be pertinent today.

This book tells the story of these struggles from the days of the New Testament to the fall of the city of Constantinople in AD 1453. It focuses on the Christian community in the eastern Mediterranean which eventually became known as the Byzantine Empire. Each chapter examines the personalities and theologies entwined at the heart of conflicts that shaped the medieval world as well as the modern cultures of Greece, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

User friendly text that presumes no previous knowledge. Each chapter includes suggestions for further reading if a reader wants to know more about certain periods or personalities.

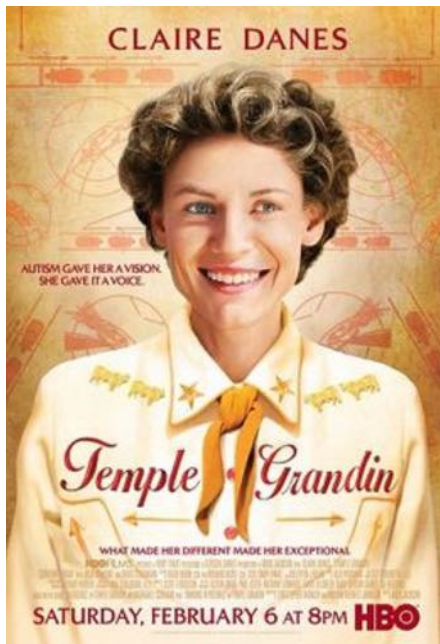
Movie: *Temple Grandin*

Temple Grandin is a 2010 American biographical drama film directed by Mick Jackson and starring Claire Danes as Temple Grandin, an autistic woman who revolutionized practices for the humane handling of livestock on cattle ranches and slaughterhouses.

Temple Grandin (Danes) is an uncommunicative child who is prone to tantrums and is diagnosed with autism. The medical consensus at that time was that autism was a form of schizophrenia resulting from insufficient maternal affection. Despite recommendations to place her in an institution, Grandin's mother (Ormond) hires therapists and works to help her daughter adapt to social interaction.

As a teenager, Temple travels to her aunt (O'Hara) and uncle's ranch to work. She observes cows being placed into a squeeze chute to calm them, and, during an anxiety attack, she uses the chute to calm herself. Inspired by her teacher, Dr. Carlock (Strathairn) to pursue science, she is admitted to Franklin Pierce College where she develops an early version of the squeeze machine to calm herself during stressful times. Her college misinterprets the use of the machine as a sexual act and forces her to remove it. In response, she develops a scientific protocol to test subjects' reactions to the machine, proving it to be a purely therapeutic device. Grandin graduates with a degree in psychology and pursues a master's degree in animal science.

Temple faces sexism while attempting to integrate into the world of cattle ranching but ultimately designs a new dip structure designed to allow cattle to voluntarily move through rather than being forced. Initially, the device works as intended, and garners favorable coverage in local press, but ranch hands, not understanding her design, dismissively alter it, resulting in the drowning of several cows. Angered, Grandin visits Carlock, and leaves the meeting encouraged to continue her efforts to improve the industry.

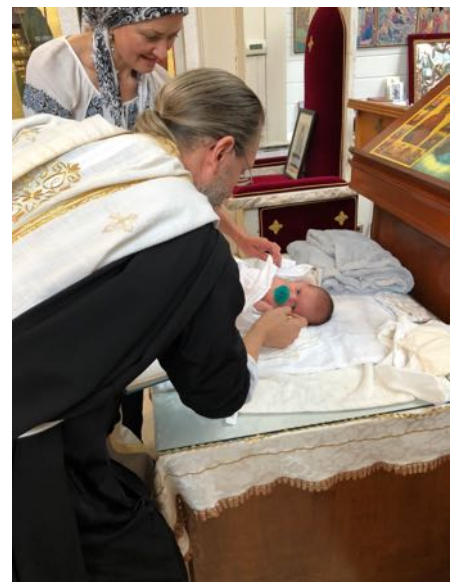


Parish Life

Birth of Sophie Haddad and Baptism of Sarah Aghayev



Congratulations to Dave and Briana Haddad (son and daughter-in-law of Maria Yanka Haddad) on the birth of their daughter Sophie Marian Haddad! She was born on October 17th, weighs 8 pounds and 7 ounces, and is 18.5 inches long.



Congratulations to Sarhan Aghayev and Felicia Teodora on the baptism of their daughter Sarah Aghayev! She was born on September 23rd and baptized on October 13th.

Parish Life

Thanksgiving Turkey Raffle



Thank you to all who participated!



President's Corner

11/01/2018

President's Corner Report

It has been an incredible year at Saint Michael's Church, God has truly blessed us! November begins the holiday season, and with that comes Thanksgiving, and we have much to be thankful for in Southbridge! We have seen an increase in attendance, stewardship, and overall enthusiasm for the future of our community! Our festival and golf tournament both broke all-time records as well; and thus, we have many people to thank!

First, I want to thank our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ because through Him all things are possible!!! Second, I'd like to thank Father John, Camelia and the boys, because with out their undying commitment to our community and faith we may not even be here! Next, I'd like to thank our church council: Spiro & Deb Thomo, Paul Yanka, Tom & Mary Dowling, Matt Dowling, Jose Collazo, Sam Yanka, Nick Thomo, Charles Panu, Sandra Nasto, and our Festival Chair, Deb Yanka. The emotional, physical, and financial investment you all make into this church can not be understated, and you make up the very fabric of what makes our community special. For that we all should be eternally thankful and grateful! Time and time and time again, event after event, you all make this happen. With that being said, we can not forget our cantors and our choir, starting with Loukas and Maria Mironidis. The amount of time and effort you put into every single service has given us a beautiful Liturgical experience week after week, and we are so grateful for you both and our whole choir as well as our Altar Boys. Lastly, we are thankful for all our members, friends and parishioners (both new and old) who faithfully attend and support our community! We look forward to a great end of year and wonderful start to 2019!

Who and what are you thankful for and have you told them lately? I encourage us all to tell those people in our lives that we are thankful for them and to thank our Lord and Savior for putting them in our lives! We wish you an amazing November and a blessed Thanksgiving!!

—Luke Yanka
Parish Council President

Contra Dance Night - Live Music

Featuring Dr. Mark Ledoux's Band

Saturday, November 3rd

7:00-7:30pm - Dance Training

7:30pm-10:00pm - Dancing

\$10 for adults and \$20 for families

Free admission for kids

Entrance fee includes fruits, cakes, pies, crackers, and cheeses



Memorial Service for

Saturday of Souls

(Mosí de Toamna)

Saturday, November 3rd

following the Divine Liturgy

(~10:00 am)



Church Etiquette or Some Things You Should Know while in Church

In the Orthodox Church, there are a lot of customs and traditions that are important parts of our worship. Some are cultural; some are pious customs. Some are essential; some are not. From time-to-time, we need to address some of these various etiquette issues to inform our communities how we can best understand each other and work together to worship the all-holy Trinity.

Standing vs. Sitting

The traditional posture for prayer and worship in the Orthodox Church has been to stand. In the Orthodox "old countries", there are usually no pews in the churches. Chairs or benches on the side walls are usually reserved for the elderly and infirm. In North America, we have tended to build our churches with pews, and since we have them, we need to figure out when we may sit and when we should stand. First of all, it is fully acceptable (even preferable) to stand for the entire service. If you prefer this, it would be better to find a place closer to the back or side of the church so as not to stand out or block someone's view. When should you definitely stand? Always during the Gospel reading, the Little and Great Entrances, the Anaphora, the distribution of Holy Communion, whenever the priest gives a blessing, and the Dismissal. In many parishes, the Divine Liturgy books in the pew have suggested times when sitting is acceptable. Follow those instructions (it's probably safer than to follow



what the people are doing in the first couple of rows). When in doubt, stand. It is never wrong to stand in church.

Lighting Candles

Lighting candles is an important part of Orthodox worship. We light them as we pray, making an



offering to accompany our prayers. Orthodox typically light candles when coming into the church - and that is usually the best time to light them, but there are times when candles should not be lit. It is not proper to light candles during the Epistle or Gospel readings, during the Little or Great Entrances, the sermon, and most of the times when the faithful are standing. We do not have candle stands in front of the Holy Altar at Holy Archangel Michael's, but it is good to keep these practices in mind when visiting other churches.

Entering the Church (Late)

The time to arrive at church is before the service starts, but for some unknown reason, it has become the custom - or rather the bad habit - for some to come to church late. If you arrive after the Divine Liturgy begins, try to enter the church quietly - and observe what is happening. If the Epistle or Gospel is being read or the Little or Great Entrance is taking place, wait until it is finished to quickly find a seat. If Father is giving the sermon, stay in the back until he has concluded. If in doubt, check with one of the ushers to see if it is a good time to seat yourself. Try not to interrupt the Liturgy with your entrance. By the way, the best way to avoid this problem is to arrive on time - then you don't have to wonder if it's okay to come in or not. People who come late to the Liturgy should not partake of the Eucharist!

Crossing those Legs?

In some Orthodox cultures, crossing one's legs is taboo and considered to be very disrespectful. In our North American culture, while there are no real taboos concerning crossing one's legs, we tend to cross our legs to get comfortable while sitting. Should we cross our legs in church? No. Not because it is "wrong" to ever cross legs, but rather because it is too casual - and too relaxed - for being in church. Just think about it, when you get settled in your favorite chair at home, you lean back, cross your legs, and then your mind can wander anywhere it wants to. Remember that sitting in church is a concession, not the normative way of prayer. You surely don't want to get too relaxed and let your mind wander off too much. In fact, when you do sit in church, you should sit attentively - and not too comfortably. When sitting in church, keep those feet on the floor, ready to stand at attention (which is what "Let us attend" means). Cross yourself with your fingers and hand - but don't cross your legs!

In and Out

In and out? On some Sundays, it almost seems like we have a revolving door in the back of the church - and it is used by both children and adults. Use the restroom before coming to church. You shouldn't need to get a drink of water during the service (especially if you are taking Communion!). Don't come to church to go to the fellowship hall - come to pray.

Leaving Before Dismissal

Leaving church before the Dismissal - besides being rude - deprives us of a blessing. Worship has a beginning ("Blessed is the Kingdom...") and an end ("Let us depart in peace..."). To leave immediately after Communion is to treat church like a fast food restaurant where we come and go as we please. We live in a fast-paced world where we seem to be hurrying from place to place. But in God's presence, we need to make every attempt to fight this pressure to move on to the next thing on the day's agenda. We deprive ourselves of blessings by not being still and participating in God's holiness. Eat and run at McDonald's - but stay in church and thank God for his precious gifts.

Blot that Lipstick!

Have you ever looked at an icon in just the right light and seen the lip prints all over it? It's disgusting, isn't it? In fact, it's downright gross. Lipstick may look fine on lips, but it looks horrible on icons, crosses, the Communion spoon and the priest's or bishop's hand. Icons have been ruined by lipstick; and even though the cross can usually be cleaned after everyone venerates it, it just isn't considerate to others to impose your lipstick on them. What is the answer? If you insist on wearing lipstick to church, blot your lips well before venerating an icon, taking Communion, or kissing the cross or the priest's or bishop's hand. Even better, wait until after church to put it on. After all, God is not impressed with how attractive you look externally - your makeup or clothing - but how attractive you are internally, your adornment with good works and piety.

Venerating Icons

When you enter the church, it is traditional to venerate the icons. Usually there are icons at the



entrance to the church and many churches have icon stands in the front as well. When venerating (kissing) an icon, pay attention to where you kiss. It is not proper to kiss an icon in the face. You wouldn't go up and kiss the Lord or His mother on the lips, would you? You would kiss their hand, and only if they invited you would you even dare to kiss them on the cheek. Pay attention to what you are doing. When you approach an icon to venerate it, kiss the gospel, scroll, or hand cross in the hand of the person in the icon, or kiss the hand or foot of the person depicted. As you venerate an icon, show proper respect to the person depicted in the icon - the same respect you would show the person by venerating him or her in an appropriate place. And remember, blot off your lipstick before kissing.

Talking during Church

Isn't it great to come to church and see friends and family members? But wait until coffee hour to say "Hi" to them. It just isn't appropriate to greet people and have a conversation with them during the services. Besides being disrespectful towards God, it is rude towards the other people in the church who are trying to worship. Talk to God while in church through your prayers, hymns, and thanksgiving, and to your friends in the hall afterwards.

Kiss (Don't Shake) the Priest's or Bishop's Hand

Did you know that the proper way to greet a priest or bishop is to ask his blessing and kiss his right



hand? How do you do this? Approach the priest or bishop with your right hand over your left hand and say "Father (or "Your Eminence" in the case of the bishop), bless." This is much more appropriate (and traditional) than shaking their hands. After all, the priest and bishop are not just "one of the boys." When you kiss their hands, you show respect for their office - they are the ones who "bless and sanctify" you and who offer the holy gifts on your behalf. So next time you greet your priest or bishop, don't shake his hand, ask for his blessing.

Sunday Dress

Remember the time when people put on their "Sunday best" to go to church? In fact, dress clothes were often referred to as Sunday clothes. In some parts of the country, this is not common today. In fact, all too often, dress in church has become too casual. In all areas of our lives, we should offer Christ our best. And the same is true

of our dress. We should offer Christ our 'Sunday best', not our everyday or common wear. And we should dress modestly, not in a flashy way that would bring attention to ourselves. Our dress should always be becoming of a Christian - especially at church.

Here are some specific guidelines we use in our parishes:

Children

Only young children (under 5) should wear shorts to church - and then only dress shorts. Athletic shorts, cut-offs, and spandex shorts are never appropriate church wear (for children or adults!). Shoes or sandals should be clean and tied. No one should wear T-shirts with any kind of writing on them ("This Bud's for You!" is definitely out).

Women

Dresses should be modest. No tank tops or dresses with only straps at the shoulders, no short skirts (mini-skirts), and no skin-tight dresses. Dresses should have backs and not be cut low in the front. If women wear pants to church, they should be dress pants (not jeans, leggings, etc.). Shorts of any type are not appropriate for church.



Men

Men should also dress modestly. While coat and tie are not mandatory, shirts should have collars and be buttoned to the collar (the actual collar button may be left undone, but two or three buttons undone is inappropriate). Slacks should be cleaned and pressed. Jeans (of any color) are usually too casual for church, especially ones with patches or holes. Again, shorts are not appropriate church wear.

If you're going somewhere after church where you need to dress casually, bring a change of clothing with you and change after coffee hour. Remember, use your best judgment and good taste when dressing for church. After all, you don't go to be seen by everyone else - you go to meet and worship God.

Pew Blocking

Never heard of pew blocking? It's that practice of sitting right next to the aisle so that no one else can get by to sit in the middle of the pew. Everyone has seen it. In fact, the best pew blockers come early so they can get their coveted aisle seats and then be sure that no one can get past them. The most effective form of pew blocking takes place when two people take their places at opposite ends of the pew, occupying both the center and aisle seats. This effectively eliminates anyone else from sitting on that row. There are two solutions to pew blocking. The first is to move towards the middle of the pew, leaving the aisle seats for those coming later. And for those of you who just can't handle sitting in the middle of the pew [or those with small children who may need to make a fast exit - NTK], take the outside aisle spot and graciously allow those coming after you to go past (by moving out for them so they can get by). Remember, pew blocking isn't hospitable - nor is it an efficient method of seating. So don't be selfish. Move on over towards the middle. Don't be a pew blocker.

To Cross or Not To Cross

Anyone who has looked around on a Sunday morning will notice that different people cross themselves at different times (and sometimes in



different ways). To a certain extent, when to cross oneself is according to personal piety and not an

issue of dogma. But there are times when it is specifically proper to cross yourself, and times when you should not. Here is a brief list of when to cross and when not to cross:

To Cross

When you hear one of the variations of the phrase, "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit"; at the beginning and end of the liturgical service or your private prayers; entering or exiting the church, or when passing in front of the Holy Altar; before venerating in icon, the cross, or Gospel book.

Not to Cross

At the chalice before or after taking Communion (you might hit the chalice with your hand); when the priest or bishop blesses saying, "Peace be to all" - bow slightly and receive the blessing; when receiving a blessing from a bishop or a priest (kissing the right hand of the bishop or priest is appropriate, but not making the sign of the cross).

Touching the Hem of Father's Garments

Many people like to touch the hem of Father's phelonion (the outer cape-like vestment that the priest wears during the services) as he goes through the congregation for the Great Entrance. This is a nice, pious custom by which you "attach" your personal prayers to the prayer of the entrance with the holy gifts. At the same time, you need to be careful neither to grab too hard and trip up the Great Entrance, nor to push people out of the way. And be sure to help your children so that they observe these guidelines as well.

Fasting before Receiving Holy Communion

All adults should not eat or drink anything before or during church if they intend to receive Holy Communion. People with serious illnesses who need to take medication in the morning may, with the blessing of the priest, eat a frugal breakfast before coming to church to receive Holy Communion. This exception does not apply to people who take medication for a short-term illness like a cold or indigestion. Anyone who does so should not receive Holy Communion that Sunday. We keep these practices because when we hunger and thirst as we approach Holy Communion, we are reminded of how we should hunger and thirst for Christ in our lives.

Preparing to Receive Holy Communion

Receiving Christ into ourselves can never be routine, never something we deserve, no matter what the condition of our life may be. Receiving Communion every Sunday is not a requirement, but requires the proper preparation. Going to confession is part of this preparation. A few days before receiving Communion, we should examine our consciences and actions since our last confession, and be more vigilant with respect to our thoughts and actions. Prayer is another important part of this preparation. There are more prayers to read before receiving Communion than the three we read in church. The complete prayers are called the Canon Before Receiving Communion and may be found in many prayer books.

Snacks for Children

You can always tell where young children have been sitting in the church. The tell-tale signs are graham cracker crumbs, Cheerios, and animal crackers. Parents often bring snacks and a cup of fruit juice along for children during church. And for young children (0-2 years old), this is fine. But children 3 years old and older should not be eating or drinking anything in the morning before or during church. For those children who get snacks, please don't feed them while in the line for Holy Communion (this applies to holy bread as well). They need to come to Communion without food in their mouths. And one last note: try to keep the snack mess down to a minimum. The floor shouldn't be covered with Cheerios! Chewing gum during Liturgy is a No-No for everyone!

Handling the Holy Bread

After taking Holy Communion and at the end of the liturgy, it is traditional to eat a piece of holy bread or anaphora - the bread that was left over after Holy Communion was prepared. While anaphora is not Holy Communion, it is blessed bread and as such, should be eaten carefully so that crumbs don't fall all over the place. After taking Communion or kissing the cross at the end of the Divine Liturgy, take one piece of anaphora (you don't need four or five pieces) and when you return to your seat or get to a place where you can stop for a moment, eat the bread trying not to drop crumbs. If you want to give a piece to someone

else, go ahead and take an extra piece - don't break yours in half (it produces too many crumbs). And monitor your children as they take the anaphora and teach them to eat it respectfully.

A Final Thought

North American society in the late 20th century



is rather casual in its approach to life. Don't allow this prevailing attitude to enter into your Orthodox Christian piety. There are surely a lot of other areas that could be covered here. Much of church etiquette is based on common sense and showing respect for God and others. Always remember that you are in church to worship God, the Holy Trinity. The priest says, "With the fear of God and faith and love, draw near." Let this be the way you approach all of worship. If you do, you will probably have good church etiquette.



*By Fr. David Barr with changes and additions
made by the editors of Holy Archangel
Michael's monthly bulletin*

From Letters to His Family
Archimandrite Sophrony of Essex (1896-1993)

38. *On the Lord's prayer. On forgiveness. On the consequences of not believing in Christ's resurrection.*

The Old Rectory
5th October 1968

...Concerning the prayer 'Our Father...'. A few years ago a woman in Paris told me that she didn't dare to read this prayer further than the words: 'Thy kingdom come.' She was so afraid that if she honestly said to God 'Thy will be done,' she would have to accept everything that happens in life with the readiness to bear it without grumbling, without faintheartedness or anything like that. Not long ago, another person said the very same words to me as you about 'and forgive us... as we forgive them that trespass against us.' I myself think that if we dare to say on the *first two words* of this prayer, that is 'OUR FATHER,' with understanding of their deepest meaning, then all our life – every level of life and every aspect – would change radically. If I am a *son* of the Father Who is without beginning, that means that I am beyond the power which death had over me; it means that instead of being a slave I am a *master*, in the image of the Lordliness of God Himself; it means that I am really free in the sole true meaning of 'free.' A man who remains in such a state perceives each of his fellow brothers as a 'son of the resurrection,' who ceases from then on to be a nobody or a stranger to me, but becomes my eternal brother. How can I murder such a brother? Will I not, whatever happens, meet him in eternity, without which the existence of time itself is meaningless? Or, as Staretz Silouan said: 'Our brother is our life.' In such a state a person easily and naturally forgives everybody and



everything, and really loves his enemies. But only real believers attain to this truly evangelical state. Prayer which proceeds from such 'childlike' direct faith opens up new horizons to man, before which everything else becomes devoid of meaning. But you are familiar with this train of thought, so let's pass to a different train of thought.

If man does not believe in the Resurrection, if this short and pitiful life is for him the only one, after which he departs into utter nothingness, then how can he forgive those who harm him in his destitution? He defends himself against blows, and he hates his enemies, and turns his back on everyone who uses violence against him. Worse than this: in his nothingness he wishes to feel that he is master, and powerful, and so he falls into criminal violence against his brother. Hence the ceaseless conflicts, fratricidal wars, wars of mutual annihilation, which never come to an end. In my understanding there is one way towards lasting and truly human peace in the world: that all mankind develops in likeness to the *Man Christ*.

49. *On contemporary church life. On his article, 'The Unity of the Church in the Image of the Holy Trinity.' On the correlation of general and particular in church life.*

The Old Rectory
24th August 1973

Dear Maria,

Peace be with you.

You told me that all of you would be interested to know how I see contemporary church life and the most significant problems of our time. In answer to your request, I propose to

set forth certain fundamental ideas, as I expressed them already in the 50's.

In the new edition of my article in French I somewhat further develop and substantiate those aspects which are becoming more and more pertinent. We see that the problem of the unity of all the Christian world is occupying the minds of the various branches of historical Christianity more and more, and in this connexion the question of what principle should be laid down as a foundation for universal union takes priority. Three chief courses present themselves. The first is 'ecumenism,' the World Council of Churches, founded on Protestant lines, with a lower level of stipulations in the field of dogmas and sacraments. The second is Roman Catholic 'Catholicism,' with one head, invested with full power, with the dogma of the infallibility of the pope. And the third is Orthodoxy, with its *conciliarity* and its recognition of the equality of the local churches. Naturally, this last I consider to be genuine unity. The words of the Lord: 'That they all be one as We are one.' demonstrate that there cannot be any other principle of unity than that which we have in the revelation about the image of the Unity of the Holy Trinity. Being is One. Consequently, the dogmatic teaching about it must be 'one.' It is impossible to resolve the question of the unity of the Church correctly unless the various dogmatic problems are resolved correctly. Thus, the dogma of the Holy Trinity, and consequently, of the procession of the Holy Spirit, have a cardinal importance for ecclesiology. In my article I try to show that in the Orthodox doctrinal consciousness there is no division between the Essence-Nature and the Hypostases. Both the Essence and the Hypostasis are identically absolute, remaining, however, irreducible one to another. This 'identity' or 'balance' between Person and Nature has been lost in the 'filioquist' perspective of Roman Catholicism, because they consider that the Nature has an ontological priority, a primacy, and the Hypostases are thought of as relationships of opposition within the One Essence. Inasmuch as Nature is given ontological pre-eminence, positively everything, changes in one's vision of Being, of the Godhead, and of what is created, formed 'in the image and likeness.' When such a vision of Divine being is transformed onto the plane of human life, onto the plane of spiritual

ascetic Act, then the same division is created between the principle of the person and the principle of nature: this latter takes precedence over personhood, which leads in Roman Catholicism to the immoderate emphasis on the juridical aspect in soteriology, in the liturgical act *ex opera operato*, in ecclesiology (the infallibility of the pope *ex cathedra*, that is *ex officio*). All this is possible for them by virtue of 'the nature of things,' whoever is pope; it is a person who may be determined by nature, which stands above the principle of the person.

When the human soul is set in this outlook, this is reflected also on all knowledge generally, on the whole structure of any human society, on the spirit of the laws, on everything. And humanity is found in an impasse: supra-personal, impersonalist objectivity has suppressed personhood. The establishment, society, groups of people, prevail in people's consciousness, and personhood is subservient to these values. But since such a state of affairs cannot bring to nought what God has placed in creation, the conflict between the common and the particular remains insurmountable. And however much people may repress their own 'personal element,' this element will not cease from seeking justification for its own being, because, fundamentally, what really lives is the person, and not any depersonalized nature. So, as long as people do not have sure knowledge of the true vision of Divine Being – where each Person is bearer of all the fullness of Being, that is, where Nature and Person are one and the same absolute simple unity, where each Person is 'dynamically' equal to the whole Tri-unity, that is, the true and all-perfect God, in Whom each Person is absolutely equal to the other Persons and to the whole Union of Three, where there is full parity between the principles of Nature and of Person; unless people have this knowledge, the human problem of the correlation between 'general' and 'personal' will not be solved.

I do not close my eyes to the fact that such Godlike perfection of mankind is only a goal, set forth by commandments of Christ; nor that this perfection may never be realized on the historical plane. But even to admit the latter cannot lead us to resolve to abandon as 'utopian' the perfection given to us by God as a potential; it cannot lead us to diminish Christianity and then

pursue goals on a lower level, where we more quickly 'see results.' The realization of actualization of the commandments of Christ in the life of the Church – that is our task. In its ultimate realization the principle of the autocephaly of local churches, but also each member of the Church, each separate individual hypostasis-person, must become bearer of the Church's entire catholic fullness. In the new version I have developed this point rather more fully, basing it on references to the New Testament, to the Holy Fathers – among whom I particular quote from Gregory of Nyssa, Maximus the Confessor, and Symeon the New Theologian.

The contact of Orthodoxy with Protestant and Catholic ecumenism obliges us to look for the 'root' of the divergences between us. Without this all the quarrels about 'details' come to nothing. In the base case we reach a sort of 'psychological mollifying of relationships,' but real unity, as expressed in a united Liturgy, is not attained.

I often meet foreigners, Catholic and other denominations. From my experience of these encounters I have seen that in the depths of their souls there is always precisely the conflict that I speak about earlier in my letter. Particularly in Roman Catholics. They suffer keenly and deeply from the exterior authority imposed on them, any disagreement with whom gives rise to a painful situation on both sides.

Catholicism in our time, however outwardly successful, is going through one of its deepest crises. Seeing how the conflict between 'general' and 'personal,' insoluble to them, is resolved in Orthodoxy, they are attracted to the latter, albeit still timidly; out of fear they still hold on to their habitual forms of thinking and acting, but already they look towards Orthodoxy, not as something inferior, frozen, lifeless – which they used to do. The book of Benz, reviewed in the Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate no. 10, is by no means an exceptional phenomenon.

In my contacts I have known not a few cases where I was convinced that every diminution of Christianity brings upon itself some catastrophe, either to the individual or generally. This lowering is the sole explanation for the flight from the church's enclosure of many people who are sincerely seeking universal 'catholic' Righteousness, or universal 'catholic'

Truth. I am not speaking of those who are corrupt, but of those who deeply search for a solution to the great problems of human existence, those who strive towards the integral and even absolute knowledge, which is *natural* for man.

All this, in a somewhat disorderly lack of sequence, I want to put across to you all, so as to facilitate your understanding of my article by giving you to understand the reasons behind it. I know that for the Russian Church in the present time another task takes first place, which has been correctly discerned and wisely put into action. I have in mind its tendency to preserve and to restore. That's why I don't want to draw the attention of Russian people to my article, and I am only sending it to all of you. But it seems to me that the moment is not very far away when the whole Christian world will be expecting from the Russian Church, rich in experience of prayer, and in her liturgical life as a whole, the answer to the question: What principle of union must be accepted as the one most closely corresponding to the New Testament revelation?

Whether because of the real weakness of my health, or perhaps because of my laziness or the unfavorable conditions of my life at present... anyhow, I am not working enough, that is, I am not productive enough. The weeks go by, but I cannot take even one day to sit down to my writing from the morning, so as to finish somehow or other the book I intend to publish in French on the dogmatic bases of our asceticism. I would like to show more clearly and in greater detail that any change in our dogmatic vision is reflected inevitably on all our being. That the loss, even if only partial, of what has been given to us by Revelation, brings with it a change in the life of the whole 'body' of the church concerned. Although the overwhelming majority of people live in a state of 'pre-dogmatic' faith – that is, still only in a surge of the soul towards God – in their life too, is reflected the dogmatic knowledge or teaching of the denomination to which they belong.

Your Sophrony.



Fasting Recipes (for Advent)

Ratatouille

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled and sliced
- 1 small bay leaf
- 1 small eggplant, cut into 1/2-inch pieces (about 3 cups)
- 1 small zucchini, halved lengthwise and cut into thin slices
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into slivers
- 4 plum tomatoes, coarsely chopped (about 1 1/4 cups)
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 cup shredded fresh basil leaves
- freshly ground black pepper



Step 1

Over medium-low heat, add the oil to a large skillet with the onion, garlic, and bay leaf, stirring occasionally, until the onion has softened.

Step 2

Add the eggplant and cook, stirring occasionally, for 8 minutes or until the eggplant has softened. Stir in the zucchini, red bell pepper, tomatoes, and salt, and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, for 5 to 7 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Stir in the basil and few grinds of pepper to taste.

Homemade Hummus

Ingredients

- 2 cans of chickpeas (strain and rinse them)
- Juice from 1 lemon
- 4 garlic cloves (crush them before you put them in the food processor)
- Salt (to taste)
- 3 tablespoons of olive oil
- 2 tablespoons of tahini paste (any kind)



Put everything in a food processor and mix it till it is creamy.

Serve it with vegetable sticks - carrots, pepper, celery - or just spread it on bread.

Tip: Save some juice from the chickpeas in case you need to add more liquid while you are mixing the ingredients.

November 2018

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts

www.stmichaelorthodox.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Sts. Cosma and Damian	2 Akathist 5:30pm	3 Divine Liturgy – Saturday of Souls 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
4 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	5	6	7 Vespers, Litia, Matins for Archangel Michael and Gabriel – To be announced	8 Archangel Michael and Gabriel Feast Day Divine Liturgy To be announced Vespers, Litia, Matins for St. Nectarios 6:00pm	9 St. Nectarios Divine Liturgy 9:00am Akathist 5:30pm	10 Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia for St. Michael's parish 5:00pm
11 St. Minas the Great Martyr (St. Michael's Banquet) Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	12	13 St. John Chrysostom and his mother Antuza	14 Apostle Philip and St. Gregory Palamas; Advent Begins Divine Liturgy 9:00am Paraklesis 6:00pm	15 St. Paisios of Neamt	16 Akathist 5:30pm	17 Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
18 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	19	20 Vespers, Litia 6:00pm	21 Entrance of the Holy Theotokos into the Temple Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am Paraklesis 6:00pm	22	23 Akathist 5:30pm	24 Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
25 St. Catherine the Great Martyr Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	26	27	28	29 Vespers, Litia 6:00pm	30 Apostle Andrew, St. Andrei Shaguna, and St. Sebastian Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am Akathist 5:30pm	