

# Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts  
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

August 2020



## The Most Glorious Dormition of Our Most Holy Theotokos

The Feast of the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on August 15 each year. The Feast commemorates the repose (dormition and in the Greek *kimisis*) or "falling-asleep" of the Mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Feast also commemorates the translation or assumption into heaven of the body of the Theotokos. The Holy Scriptures tell us that when our Lord was dying on the Cross, He saw His mother and His disciple John and said to the Virgin Mary, "Woman, behold your son!" and to John, "Behold your mother!" (John 19:25-27). From that hour, the Apostle took care of the Theotokos in his own home. Along with the biblical reference in Acts 1:14 that confirms that the Virgin Mary was with the Holy Apostles on the day of Pentecost, the tradition of the Church holds that she remained in the home of the Apostle John in Jerusalem, continuing a ministry in word and deed. At the time of her death, the disciples of our Lord who were preaching throughout the world returned to Jerusalem to see the Theotokos. Except for the Apostle Thomas, all of them including the Apostle Paul were gathered together at her bedside. At the moment of her death, Jesus Christ himself descended and carried her soul into heaven. Following her repose, the body of the Theotokos was taken in procession and laid in a tomb near the Garden of Gethsemane. When the Apostle Thomas arrived three days after her repose and desired to see her body, the tomb was found to be empty. The bodily assumption of the Theotokos was confirmed by the message of an angel and by her appearance to the Apostles.

### 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

### Feast days

**August 1<sup>st</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>** – Dormition Fast

**August 5<sup>th</sup>** – St. John the Hozevite

**August 6<sup>th</sup>** – Holy Transfiguration

**August 7<sup>th</sup>** – St. Theodora of Sihla

**August 15<sup>th</sup>** – Dormition of Our  
Most Holy Lady the Theotokos

**August 16<sup>th</sup>** – Holy Martyr  
Constantin Brancoveanu and his  
four sons, Constantin, Stefan, Radu,  
and Matei, and his counselor  
Ianache

**August 21<sup>st</sup>** – Apostle Thaddeus

**August 29<sup>th</sup>** – Beheading of St.  
John the Baptist

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**Facebook: St. Michael Orthodox Christian Church**

**2020 Parish Council**

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

**2020 Ladies Society Committee**

President: Alexandra Nasto  
 Vice President: Louise Boillard  
 Secretary: Debbie Thomo  
 Treasurer: Mary Andreea

**Clergy**

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

**Parish News & Events**

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

- August 7<sup>th</sup> – Vasi
- August 8<sup>th</sup> – Ioana Pitsillides
- August 10<sup>th</sup> – Charles Panu
- August 12<sup>th</sup> – Louise Boillard
- August 17<sup>th</sup> – Costa Penna
- August 21<sup>st</sup> – Yannis Penna
- August 29<sup>th</sup> – Henrietta Panu

**Happy Name Day**

August 7<sup>th</sup> – St. Theodora –  
 Theodora Railean

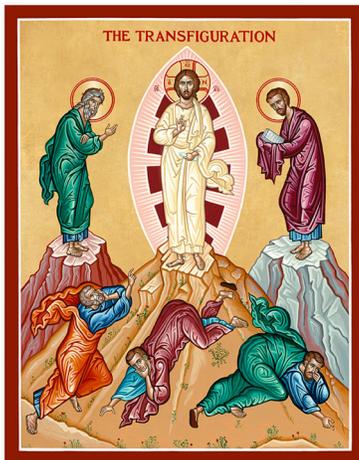
August 15<sup>th</sup> – Dormition of the  
**Theotokos** – Mary Dowling,  
 Mary Andreea, Maria Mironidis



**Coffee Hour Volunteers  
 Needed**

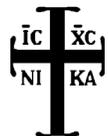
We need more volunteers for each Sunday. If you volunteer, you can dedicate the coffee hour to the memory of a loved one. Any help would be greatly appreciated!

**Please contact Deb Thomo to sign up.**



**Please Pray for:**

- Preoteasa Camelia
- Carol Porra
- Bill & Lauren Smith
- Mary Grabosky
- Henrietta Panu
- Jennifer Silva
- Alexander



## ~ Book Corner ~

### *Unseen Warfare*

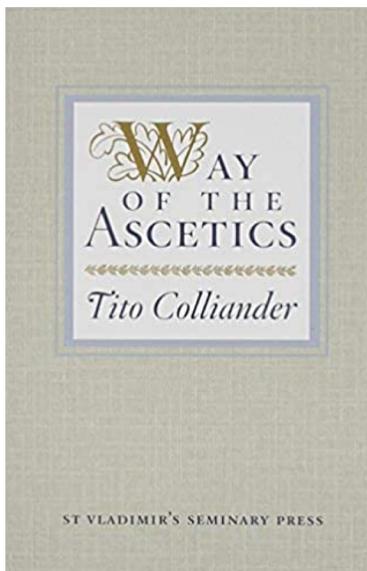
*Unseen Warfare*  
as edited by  
Nicodemus  
of the  
Holy Mountain  
and revised by  
Theophan the Recluse

This spiritual classic was written by Lorenzo Scupoli, a sixteenth-century Venetian priest. Immensely popular in its own day, it was ranked by Francis de Sales with the *Imitation of Christ*. In the general rapport between Western and Eastern Christendom, it reached Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, who first recognized its immense spiritual worth, and later, in the nineteenth century, Theophan the Recluse, both of whom edited and translated the work.

Rich in its references to the teachings of the saints and Fathers, *Unseen Warfare* combines the insights of West and East on that spiritual combat which is the road to perfection and the stripping away of all that militates against it. Staretz Theophan wrote in his foreword, "the arena, the field of battle, the site where the fight actually takes place is our own heart and all our inner man. The time of battle is our whole life."

*Unseen Warfare* is a perfect complement to the *Philokalia*.

### *Way of the Ascetics*



*Way of the Ascetics* is a rich, compact introduction for modern readers to the Eastern Christian spiritual tradition that has been an inspiration to millions for centuries. These compassionate and insightful reflections on self-control and inner peace are meant to lead the readers to fuller union with God. The author makes a generous selection of succinct yet profound extracts from the spiritual Fathers and provides an illuminating commentary and practical applications for daily devotion. He tempers austerity with common sense, warmth, and even humor, as he urges us on our journey toward God.

Written for laypersons living fully in the world as much as for clergy, *Way of the Ascetics* is an excellent resource for daily meditation, authentic spiritual guidance, and a revitalized religious life.

## The Antichrist: An Orthodox Perspective from the Church Fathers (Part 3)

Fr. Andrew J. Anderson

Tragically, many Christians who are not watchful, and many Jews too, will be deceived. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (fourth century) states that “since the true Christ is to come a second time, the adversary [*the devil*] makes use of the expectations of the simple, and especially of those of the circumcision [*i.e. the Jews*]... By this name ‘Christ’ he shall deceive the Jews, who are expecting the Anointed [*i.e. the Messiah (in Hebrew), the Christ (in Greek)*]; and he shall seduce the Gentiles...”

St. Paisios of Mount Athos taught that the Antichrist will present himself as the “savior” whom all the religions of the world are waiting for—all rolled into one man. He will say:

“I’m the Imam, I’m the fifth Buddha, I’m the Christ whom Christians are awaiting. I’m the one whom the Jehovah’s Witnesses have been waiting for. I’m the Jewish messiah.”

St. Ignatius Brianchaninov clearly states, “The world of man will not recognize Antichrist; it will acknowledge him to be Christ, it will proclaim him as Christ.”

This will be the great deception, that people, even many unwatchful Christians, may mistake the *false* christ—the Antichrist—for the *true* Christ, the Lord Jesus. People will flock to see the “Christ”, telling their friends, as Jesus warned: “Look, here is the Christ!” or, “Look, He is in the desert!” or, “Look, He is in the inner rooms!” Jesus warns us,

when that happens: “Do not believe it.” (Matthew 24:23, 26).

### The true Christ will come from heaven, not on earth

The Lord Jesus at His Second Coming will appear to all IN THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY, **not on earth**. But the *false* “Christ” (Antichrist) will appear **on earth**. “The monks of Solovki Monastery have handed down an answer which St. Zosima gave to his spiritual children who asked him how to recognize Antichrist when he comes. The holy

monk gave this precise reply, ‘When you hear that the Christ has come to the earth or has appeared on earth, then know that it is

Antichrist’.” Jesus told the Jews that He would be seen coming on the clouds of heaven: “You shall see the Son on man sitting on the right hand of power, and *coming in the clouds of heaven*.” (Mark 14:62)

St. John the Evangelist said the same about Jesus in Revelation 1:7: “Behold, He *cometh with clouds*; and **every eye shall see Him**, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.” The angels who appeared to the Apostles when they stood gazing into heaven at the Lord’s Ascension said the same thing: “This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, *shall so come in like manner* as ye have seen Him go into heaven”(Acts 1:11). And, Jesus Himself clearly taught that His Return would be like lightning from out of heaven, a

**“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt.24:27).**

dramatic wonder for all to behold *instantly* around the world—“For *as the lightning cometh* out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt.24:27). St. Ignatius Brianchaninov explained: “It will be neither necessary nor even possible for men to give report to each other of the coming of the Son of God. He will appear suddenly; He will appear in His omnipotence to all men and the whole world at one time.” Thus, St. John of Damascus summarized correctly: “Let no one, therefore, look for the Lord to come from earth, but out of Heaven, as He Himself has made sure.”



### **The two witnesses - Enoch and Elias - will oppose the Antichrist**

While the Antichrist, with the help of the demons, is stirring up global lust for him to be their savior and ruler, God in His mercy will send two mighty prophets to warn everyone that this man is not the real Christ, but is the Antichrist. St. John of Damascus (in his *Exposition*) states the literal opinion of the Church Fathers that St. Elijah will return to earth with holy Enoch before Judgment Day. This will fulfill the ancient prophecy of the Prophet Malachi (4:5-6), which states:

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall

turn the heart of the fathers to the children...” (Malachi 4:5-6).

The coming of Elijah and Enoch will also fulfill the prophecy of St. John in the Book of Revelation (11:3-12), which speaks of the “two witnesses” (also known as the “two olive trees” and the “two candlesticks”—see verse 4) who

will tell the truth about the Antichrist and will warn the world about him, exposing his fake sanctity. This will continue for three and a half years (or, 1260 days), while the Antichrist’s political machine is ramping up and gaining power, during which time the Antichrist is pretending to be the nice guy

(Rev. 11:3). St. John of Damascus states that in fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy, “Elijah the Thesbite shall be sent and shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, that is, the synagogue to our Lord Jesus Christ and the preaching of the Apostles” St. John of Damascus believes that some Jews will be saved from following the Antichrist, and with the help of Elijah and Enoch they shall repent and turn to Jesus, the true Christ, and become Christians. The Jews who repent are the “fathers” (the Old Testament synagogue) who turn their hearts to accept and love their “children” (the New Testament Church).

*To be continued.*

## On the Plague (Part 3) St. Cyprian of Carthage

And Tobias, after his excellent works, after the many and glorious illustrations of his merciful spirit, having suffered the loss of his sight, fearing and blessing God in his adversity, by his very bodily affliction increased in praise; and even him also his wife tried to pervert, saying, "Where are your righteousnesses? Behold what you suffer." Tobit 2:14 But he, steadfast and firm in respect of the fear of God, and armed by the faith of his religion to all endurance of suffering, yielded

***"The apostles maintained this discipline from the law of the Lord, not to murmur in adversity, but to accept bravely and patiently whatever things happen in the world."***

not to the temptation of his weak wife in his trouble, but rather deserved better from God by his greater patience; and afterwards Raphael the angel praises him, saying, "It is honourable to show forth and to confess the works of God. For when you prayed, and Sara your daughter-in-law, I did offer the remembrance of your prayer in the presence of the glory of God. And when you buried the dead in singleness of heart, and because you did not delay to rise up and leave your dinner, and went and buried the dead, I was sent to make proof of you. And God again has sent me to heal you and Sara your daughter-in-law. For I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, who are present, and go in and out before the glory of God." Tobit 12:11-15

Righteous men have ever possessed this endurance. The apostles maintained this discipline from the law of the Lord, not to murmur in adversity, but to accept bravely and patiently whatever things happen in the world; since the people of

the Jews in this matter always offended, that they constantly murmured against God, as the Lord God bears witness in the book of Numbers, saying, "Let their murmuring cease from me, and they shall not die." Numbers 17:10 We must not murmur in adversity, beloved brethren, but we must bear with patience and courage whatever happens, since it is written,

"The sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; a contrite and humbled heart God does not despise;" since also in Deuteronomy the

Holy Spirit warns by Moses. and says, "The Lord your God will vex you, and will bring hunger upon you; and it shall be known in your heart if you have well kept His commandments or no." Deuteronomy 8:2 And again: "The Lord your God proves you, that He may know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul." Deuteronomy 13:3

Thus Abraham pleased God, who, that he might please God, did not shrink even from losing his son, or from doing an act of parricide. You, who cannot endure to lose your son by the law and lot of mortality, what would you do if you were bidden to slay your son? The fear and faith of God ought to make you prepared for everything, although it should be the loss of private estate, although the constant and cruel harassment of your limbs by agonizing disorders, although the deadly and mournful wrench from wife, from children, from departing dear ones; Let not these things be offenses to

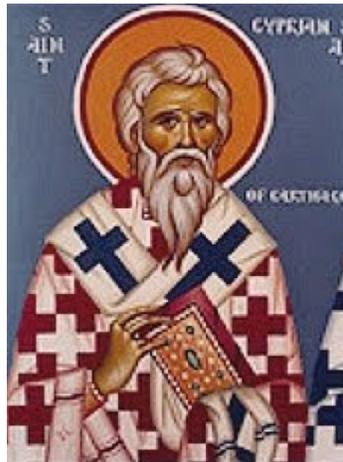
you, but battles: nor let them weaken nor break the Christian's faith, but rather show forth his strength in the struggle, since all the injury inflicted by present troubles is to be despised in the assurance of future blessings. Unless the battle has preceded, there cannot be a victory: when there shall have been, in the onset of battle, the victory, then also the crown is given to the victors. For the helmsman is recognised in the tempest; in the warfare the soldier is proved. It is a wanton display when there is no danger. Struggle in adversity is the trial of the truth. The tree which is deeply founded in its root is not moved by the onset of winds, and the ship which is compacted of solid timbers is beaten by the waves and is not shattered; and when the threshing-floor brings out the grain, the strong and robust grains despise the winds, while the empty chaff is carried away by the blast that falls upon it.

Thus, moreover, the Apostle Paul, after shipwrecks, after scourgings, after many and grievous tortures of the flesh and body, says that he is not grieved, but benefited by his adversity, in order that while he is sorely afflicted he might more truly be proved. "There was given to me," he says, "a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, that I should not be lifted up: for which thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me; and He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for strength is made perfect in weakness." 2 Corinthians 12:7-9 When, therefore, weakness and inefficiency and any destruction seize us, then our strength is

made perfect; then our faith, if when tried it shall stand fast, is crowned; as it is written, "The furnace tries the vessels of the potter, and the trial of tribulation just men." Sirach 27:5 This, in short, is the difference between us and others who know not God, that in misfortune they complain and murmur, while adversity does not call us away from the truth of virtue and faith, but strengthens us by its suffering.

This trial, that now the bowels, relaxed into a constant flux, discharge the bodily strength; that a fire originated in the marrow ferments into wounds of the fauces; that the intestines are shaken with a continual vomiting; that the eyes are on fire with the injected blood; that in some cases the feet or some parts of the limbs are taken off by the contagion of diseased putrefaction; that from the weakness arising by the maiming and loss of the body, either the gait is enfeebled, or the hearing is obstructed, or the sight darkened — is profitable as a proof of faith. What a grandeur of spirit it is to struggle with all the powers of an unshaken mind against so many onsets of devastation and death!

*To be continued.*



## Recipe for the Dormition Fast (August 1<sup>st</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>) Chickpea Soup

### Ingredients

- 1 cup dried (preferably peeled) chickpeas
- 8 cups (2 qts) water (with an additional 4 cups set aside)
- 4 dried sage leaves
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped white onions
- 3 tsps salt
- 1 1/2 tsps black pepper
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 cup parsley (or celery leaves)
- 4 large thyme stems
- 2 tbsps arrowroot flour (or AP flour)
- optional: 3 tbsp lemon juice

### Instructions

Cook dried chickpeas in 8 cups of water with sage and bay leaves at a low boil for 1 hour. Gently stir in any foam that rises to the top while cooking.

While chickpeas are on the stove, chop carrots, celery, onions and parsley.

At 1 hour, chickpeas should have boiled off most of the water so add an additional 4 cups of water to the pot. Chickpeas should be firm but squash if you pinch them. At the same time, add in all of your chopped veggies with the salt and pepper, keeping the chopped parsley and thyme stems aside for now. Cook on low boil for 20 minutes.

Add oil, parsley and thyme stems. Stir and remove 1 cup of hot broth into small bowl. Add 2 tbsp arrowroot powder (or all purpose flour) to the small bowl of hot broth and stir until completely dissolved. Add broth back to the pot and

stir well to incorporate. Continue to cook soup for 10 more minutes. When ready, chickpeas and vegetables should be tender, not mushy, and broth should be a creamy golden yellow. Remember to remove sage/bay leaves and thyme stems before serving!!

Serve from the stove with a nice crusty bread. Note: a thin skin may form over the top of this soup if left for a bit – just give it a quick stir to incorporate back into the soup. And feel free to add a squeeze or two of fresh lemon juice to your bowl or add in the optional 3 tbsp of lemon juice to the pot when cooking is done. For a pretty presentation, garnish with lemon zest and fresh thyme leaves.

Serves 6 with a total cooking time of 1 1/2 hours from start to positively wonderful soup.



# August 2020

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b> <b>Dormition Fast Begins</b>  Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am)  Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
<b>2</b>  <b>Matins</b> <b>8:30am</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy</b> <b>9:30am</b>	<b>3</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>4</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>5</b>  Vespers, Litia, Matins – Holy Transfiguration 6:00pm	<b>6</b> <b>Holy Transfiguration</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy</b> <b>9:00am</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>7</b>  St. Theodora of Sihla  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>8</b> Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am)  Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
<b>9</b>  <b>Matins</b> <b>8:30am</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy</b> <b>9:30am</b>	<b>10</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>11</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>12</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>13</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>14</b>  Vespers, Litia, Matins– Holy Dormition 6:00pm	<b>15</b> <b>Holy Dormition</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy</b> <b>9:00am</b> (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am)  Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
<b>16</b>  <b>Holy Brancoveni</b>  <b>Matins</b> <b>8:30am</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy</b> <b>9:30am</b>	<b>17</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>18</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>19</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>20</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>21</b>  Apostle Thaddeus	<b>22</b> Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am)  Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
<b>23</b>  <b>Matins</b> <b>8:30am</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy</b> <b>9:30am</b>	<b>24</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>25</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>26</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>27</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm	<b>28</b>  Vespers, Litia, Matins– St. John the Baptist 6:00pm	<b>29</b> <b>Beheading of St. John the Baptist</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy</b> <b>9:00am</b> (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am)  Vespers, Litia 5:00pm
<b>30</b>  <b>Matins</b> <b>8:30am</b>  <b>Divine Liturgy</b> <b>9:30am</b>	<b>31</b>  Paraklesis 6:00pm					