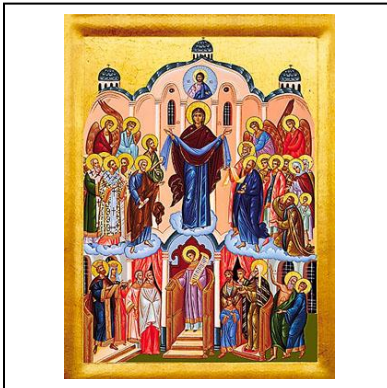




Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

October 2023



LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday

9:00am Divine Liturgy

5:00pm Vespers

Sunday

9:00am Matins

10:00am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday

6:00pm Paraklesis

Feast days

October 1st - Holy Protection of the Theotokos

October 6th - Apostle Thomas

October 14th - St. Paraskeva of Iasi, Romania

October 18th - St. Luke the Evangelist

October 20th - St. Artemius the Great Martyr

October 26th - St. Demetrius the Great Martyr of Thessaloniki

October 27th - St. Demetrius of Basarabov, protector of Bucharest

Holy Protection of Theotokos

From time immemorial, the Church has celebrated the Most-holy Theotokos as the patroness and protectress of the Christian people, who, by her intercessory prayers, implores God's mercy for us sinners. The help of the Most-holy Mother of God has been clearly shown numerous times, to individuals and to nations, in peace and in war, in monastic deserts and in densely populated cities.

The event that the Church commemorates and celebrates on October 1st confirms the Theotokos consistent protection of Christian people. On October 1, 911, during the reign of Emperor Leo the Wise, there was an All-night Vigil in the Vlachernae Church of the Mother of God in Constantinople. The church was full of people. St. Andrew the Fool-for-Christ was standing in the rear of the church with his disciple Epiphanius.

At four o'clock in the morning, the Most-holy Theotokos appeared above the people, holding her omophorion outstretched as a protective covering for the faithful. She was clothed in gold-encrusted purple, and shone with an ineffable radiance, surrounded by apostles, saints, martyrs and virgins. St. Andrew said to Blessed Epiphanius: "Do you see, brother, the Queen and Lady of all praying for the whole world?" Epiphanius replied: "I see, Father, and am struck with amazement!"

The Feast of the Protection was instituted to commemorate this event, and to remind us that we can prayerfully receive the unceasing protection of the Most-holy Theotokos in any time of difficulty."
(from: <http://www.westsrbdio.org/prolog/prolog.htm>)

While most of the Orthodox churches celebrate this feast day on October 1st according to ancient custom, Greeks celebrate the Holy Protection on October 28th as a special holiday in order to invite the secular government to honor the Theotokos for Her special protection over the Greek people during World War 2.



Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church
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Facebook: St. Michael Orthodox Christian Church

2022 Parish Council

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

2022 Ladies Society Committee

President: Genevieve Boilard
Vice President: Katie Mironidis
Secretary: Susan Silva
Treasurer: Debby Thomo

Clergy

Fr. John Downie fr.john_downie71@yahoo.com

Parish News & Events

Happy Birthday!!

God Grant You Many More Years!!

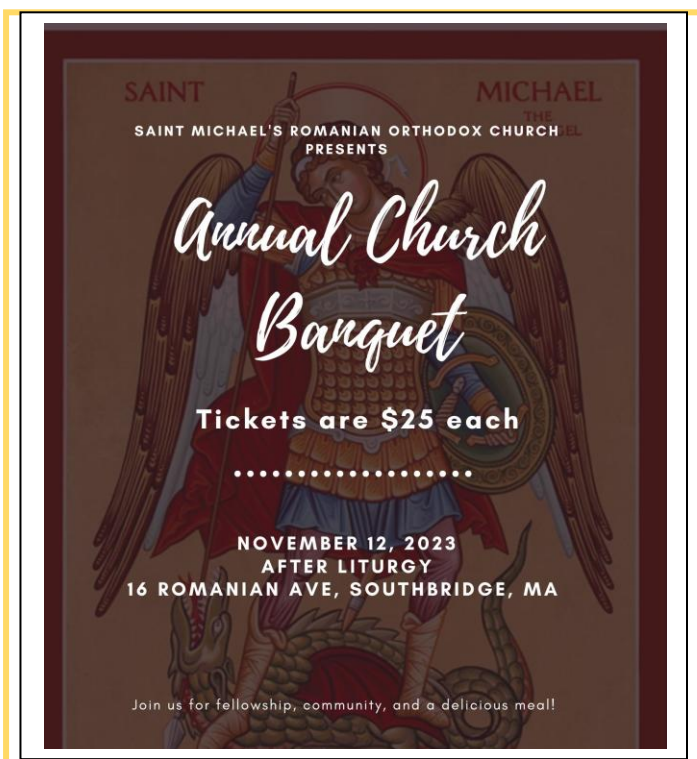
Oct. 2nd – Susan Silva
Oct. 5th – Stephanie Rapsomanikis
Oct. 11th – Shirley Yanka, Amanda Thomo
Oct. 12th – Richard Marcin
Oct. 15th – Loukas Mironidis, Spiro Kelly
Oct. 21st – Dimitry Downie
Oct. 22nd – Katie Mironidis
Oct. 23rd – Joy Rapsomanikis

Happy Name Day

October 1st – St. Romanos – Roman Alexander
October 6th – Apostle Thomas – Tom Dowling, Tom Andrea, Thomas Burren
October 18th – St. Luke – Luke Yanka, Loukas Mironidis
October 26th-27th – St. Dimitrios – Dimitri Mironidis, Dimitry Downie,

Please Pray for:

Health: Theodor
Henrietta
Sophia
Susan
Maria – New Job



SAINT MICHAEL
THE
SAINT MICHAEL'S ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
PRESENTS

Annual Church Banquet

Tickets are \$25 each

.....

NOVEMBER 12, 2023
AFTER LITURGY
16 ROMANIAN AVE, SOUTHBRIDGE, MA

Join us for fellowship, community, and a delicious meal!



Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church
Presents

Annual Turkey Raffle Party

Join us for
fellowship
& fun raffle

**27
OCT**

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm
16 Romanian Ave,
Southbridge, MA

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<https://www.stmichaelorthodox.com/>

How to cope with bad thoughts and failure in the spiritual life

by Bishop Athanasios of Limassol

Our spiritual state is rarely even, calm, and serene for any long period of time. Circumstances, thoughts, even the weather—all of this can easily darken the soul or, conversely, unexpectedly gladden it. How can we lead a spiritual life when man is so volatile? Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus spoke about this at a meeting with young people.

All the thoughts that affect the state of the soul come either from God (good changes), or from the devil (bad changes), or from a man himself (both good and bad). We know the good thoughts by their fruits. If we become more humble, more prayerful, meeker, more patient, warmer, nobler, more sensitive, this is the result of a good thought. But what should we do if not all of our changes are good?



A bad thought prevents us from thinking logically

A man himself also influences his spiritual world, producing good or bad thoughts depending on whether his internal “mechanism” is attuned correctly or not.

I’ll give you an example from the Gospels. When the harlot came into the house and anointed Christ’s feet with myrrh, many of the Disciples were indignant, especially Judas, who was a lover of money. He began to say: “Why is this woman wasting such expensive myrrh in vain to anoint the feet of

Gospel it says that he wasn’t concerned for the poor, but was simply avaricious and wanted to get money for this myrrh, put it in the money bag, and then use it for his own purposes.

People often ask me why we have so much luxury in the Church? But show me what we have that’s luxurious? If you want, cut yourself a piece of a candle stand and take it home, sell it, and get the money. Can’t you see that it’s bronze? You see, a bad thought doesn’t even let a man think logically.

Or someone gives alms. He gives five euros and starts thinking: “Maybe it’s not necessary? What’s five euros? Will a beggar get rich from this? It’s probably a scam.” Perhaps that’s so, but he immediately turns on a bad thought that inclines the soul towards evil, making it stubborn and opposed to

grace.

It happens that bad thoughts come from demons. However, there are also purely physiological changes. You think differently in the morning, day, evening, and after midnight; differently in the dark and in the light; when it’s a dreary day, when the south wind blows, or when it’s sunny. Many note that people are in a better mood on sunny days, and when you’re around happy and grateful people, you rejoice with them.

What to do if the soul is clouded?

Why did the Holy Fathers study all of this? To know when there's a true spiritual battle going on, and when it's possible to ignore internal changes. They tell us one main thing: We have to learn how to manage what happens to us.

If my soul is clouded, it's important not to allow myself to become downcast, not to start talking harshly, offensively, and nervously, or to turn away and not accept another person.

Whatever changes occur in our soul, we must maintain the routine of the spiritual life and be even in our communication with other people.

Man is created according to the image of God, "very good," and called to become like our Father. And the rest of what happens to us—bad behavior, nerves, words, nastiness—they aren't our true self.

What does it take to change for the better?

It's important to learn to behave in such a way as to not hurt other people, not to speak out disparagingly, not to be lazy, to maintain your way of life, no matter what happens. Precision in fulfilling our prayer rule helps with this.

Let's not say on Sunday morning: "I'm not in the mood for some reason. I'm not going to church today." Go, whether you're in the mood or not. Even if our mind starts reasoning: "Where are you going? You're just going to fall asleep there. You're full of thoughts, bad thoughts inside of yourself. Don't go!"—we shouldn't step back and change our rule because of a change in our disposition.

How to deal with bad thoughts, and should we scold ourselves for them?

It's better to immediately cut off bad thoughts and not engage with them. It's like a bag of trash: It's better to throw it out right away so you don't get soiled.

As for the question of whether we need to reproach ourselves for bad thoughts—we need discernment. If you can endure it, then good—the Holy Fathers did it. But for the young, it's better to maintain yourself in love and gratitude. And we need good discernment, a good spiritual father, otherwise it's easy to fall into despair.

If we're oversensitive and we condemn and berate ourselves, then we can start to despond or despair. Since in our time we can easily despair, it's better not to bring ourselves to this.

The gift of tearful repentance, which the saints had, comes from spiritual labor, not from self-reproach. Tears of repentance are the first stage—then they become tears of love!

Spiritual work and self-reproach are important, but it's the healthy man who can do it. But if a man is spiritually and mentally weak, has a weak nervous system, then he won't be able to stand it—he'll become despondent and hopeless.

Therefore, Christ told St. Silouan: "Keep your mind in hell and despair not!"

Metropolitan Athanasios of Limassol
Translation by Jesse Dominick



Parents' School Corner

From *Parenting Toward the Kingdom: Orthodox Christian Principles of Child Rearing* by Dr. Philip Mamalakis

Dr. Mamalakis encourages us to “Always parent with the end in mind.” Parenting with the end in mind requires that we think beyond the moment and our short-term goals (ie: for peace and quiet at the dinner table) to what our long-term goals for our children may be (ie: for them to learn to work out their disagreements in a godly manner) and act towards that end. To be able to do so, we need to think first of what type of adults we wish our children to be when they are grown. The author suggests that, as Orthodox Christian parents, we think far beyond earthly “success” as a goal for our children, and look instead to what will make our children successful followers of Christ. He urges that we parent patiently and consistently, always keeping our end goal in mind. He reminds us that we will struggle to succeed in this; but that our children need to see us struggle. The important thing is that we respond in an adult-like manner, and that our responses move all of us toward our mutual goal of godliness.

Parenting with the end in mind also requires that we give consideration to the way that children learn. Rather than learning about how they should live and conduct themselves best through lecture, our children are best able to learn this through their daily interactions with us. Struggling to acquire the values and virtues of the Kingdom of God will help our children to better learn and thus acquire them. In that sense, struggle is good. Our children need to experience everyday struggles with life while being guided by parents who are struggling as well but firm in our

convictions to lead our children to the Kingdom of Heaven. The author suggests that our **three most important parenting tools are our life example, our relationship with our children, and how we speak to them.** He states that the thing that **teaches our children the most is our own behavior.** Dr. Mamalakis advises us to remember that **our children are icons of Christ,** and that we must treat them as such, and thus teach them to treat others in the same way. He reminds us that because children are always learning, we must always be intentional in how we live our life, how we relate to our children, and in what we say to them.

Here are some quotes:

“Sometimes our short-term goals can distract us from our long-term goals. Parents are tempted to intervene to stop misbehaviors in the short term in a way that undermines our long-term goals. That is like giving your child the answer to his math homework. In the short term, he finishes his work more quickly and without struggle, but in the long term, he doesn’t learn math. Getting a child to stop misbehaving can solve the short-term problem of misbehavior, but it does not necessarily teach him, long-term, how to control his own behavior. Sometimes we need to give up our short-term desires to work toward our long-term goals.” (pp. 18-19)

“God’s desire is for us to raise children who know Him, who live in His love, and who walk in His ways. God wants our children to know who He is and grow up near Him, to become saints. That is success.” (p. 20)

“Successful children are those who internalize the values and virtues of the kingdom of God, so that when they go away to college or get married they live according to these values—not because we are watching or because we say so, but because they believe these things deeply in their hearts.” (p. 23)

“Parenting requires patience—not the patience that puts up with inappropriate behavior, but the patience that intervenes effectively, repeatedly, as long as our child struggles. This allows our children the opportunity to struggle to grow, to learn, to love, and to acquire the values and virtues they will need as adults. Patience means we respond consistently and appropriately every time they struggle, because we have our long-term goals in mind.”(p. 25)

“If we love our children, we walk with them through the struggles; we don’t remove the struggles.” (p. 28)

“Parenting itself is a struggle we cannot escape... Children need human parents who struggle to learn with them. If you’ve taken a moment to consider your long-term goals for your children, or God’s long-term goals for them, you’ve already taken the first step toward helping your children. We should expect children to act like children. The best we can do as parents is to act like adults in the way we respond, and choose the response that moves us toward our long-term goals.”(p. 28)

“Children are shaped in and through each interaction we have with them.... God gives us each interaction with our children as a means of communicating His truths.

“More specifically, children learn most by how we respond when they misbehave. Children learn that we love them no matter what when we respond respectfully and

effectively when they fight, talk back, disobey, or stand on tables...”(p. 31;)

“The three most important tools we have as parents are:

- The way we live our own lives,
- the way we relate to our children, and
- what we say to them.” (p. 32)

“Children will learn what is true by how they see us behave more than by what they hear us say.” (p. 34)

“The truth is that God loves us deeply and cherishes each and every one of us, no matter how we behave. Each of our children is uniquely loved and adored by God... Our children are incredibly valuable and special to God, not because they are perfect and no matter what they say or how they act. God simply loves them...

“Children will internalize this truth about themselves and God if we treat them with love and respect—all the time, but particularly when they misbehave. Children can only learn unconditional love when they experience their parents’ love and respect when they misbehave.” (p. 35)

“Parenting is about raising children who understand themselves and others as icons of Christ. This is true self-esteem.” (p. 36)

“If we want to teach our children respect, they need to feel respected by us, even when they talk back. If we want them to learn how to listen, they need to feel heard, even when they don’t listen to us. If we want them to know the nature of God’s love for them, they need to experience God’s love from us, particularly when they are unloving toward us. Children really do learn what they live—most deeply when they struggle and misbehave.” (pp. 37-38)

St. Silouan Young Adults Retreat Fall edition – September 22th – 24th, 2023
All three lectures from YAR will be available on our website next week



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Thanks to all sponsors who made possible St. Siluoan Young Adults Retreat Fall 2023:

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Holy Protection of the Theotokos Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	2	3	4 St. Innocent of America	5 Zoom Bible Study 7:00pm	6 Apostle Thomas	7 Divine Liturgy 9:00am
8 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	9 Apostle James, Son of Alphaeus	10	11	12	13 Vespers, Litia – St. Paraskeva 6:00pm	14 St. Paraskeva of Iasi Divine Liturgy 9:00am Vespers 5:00pm
15 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	16	17 Prophet Hosea	18 St. Luke the Evangelist	19 Prophet Joel	20 Great Martyr Artemius St. Gerasimos of Kefalonia	21 St. Hilarion the Great Divine Liturgy 9:00am
22 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	23 Apostle James, Brother of Our Lord	24	25 Vespers, Litia, Matins – St. Demetrius of Thessaloniki 6:00pm	26 St. Demetrius the Great Martyr of Thessaloniki Divine Liturgy 9:00am Vespers and Litia– St. Demetrius of Basarabov 6:00pm	27 St. Demetrius of Basarabov Divine Liturgy 9:00am	28 Divine Liturgy 9:00am Vespers 5:00pm
29 Matins 9:00am Divine Liturgy 10:00am	30					