



Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

August 2023



LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday

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

Sunday

8:30am Matins
9:30am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday

6:00pm Paraklesis

Feast days

August 1st - 15th – Dormition Fast

August 5th – St. John the Hozevite

August 6th – Holy Transfiguration

August 7th – St. Theodora of Sihla

August 15th – Dormition of Our
Most Holy Lady the Theotokos

August 16th – Holy Martyr
Constantine Brâncoveanu and his
four sons, Constantine, Stefan,
Radu, and Matei, and his counselor
Ianache

August 21st – Apostle Thaddeus

August 29th – Beheading of St.
John the Baptist (Strict Fast)

Sts. Constantine Brancoveanu and his sons (August 16)

Constantine Brancoveanu (1654 -1714) was a very faithful and brave Prince of Romania (Wallachia), who ruled longer than any other prince of Wallachia (1688-1714). He built many churches and monasteries and notably contributed to the Romanian architectural styles developing the "Brancovenesc style".

The circumstances and facts of Constantine's death are recorded in history, and his sanctification is recognized by all Eastern Orthodox Churches.

On 15 August 1714, the Feast of the Dormition, when Constantine Brâncoveanu was also celebrating his 60th birthday, he and his four sons and boyar Ianache Văcărescu were brought before Sultan Ahmed III of Turkey. Diplomatic representatives of Austria, Russia, France and England were also present. After all of his fortune has been seized, in exchange for the life of his family he was asked to renounce the Orthodox Christian faith. He reportedly said his sons and his adviser: "Behold, all my fortunes and all I had, I have lost! Let us not lose our souls. Be brave and manly, my beloved! Ignore death. Look at how much Christ, our Savior, has endured for us and with what shameful death he died. Firmly believe in this and do not move, nor leave your faith for this life and this world." After this, his four sons, Constantine, Ștefan, Radu and Matei and advisor Ianache were beheaded in front of King Constantine.

History also that the smallest child, Matei (12 years old) was so frightened after seeing the bloodbath and the heads of his three brothers lying on the ground that he started crying and asking his father to let him renounce Christianity and convert to Islam. At that moment, Constantine Brâncoveanu said: "Of our kind none have lost their faith. It is better to die a thousand times than to leave your ancient faith just to live few more years on earth." Matei listened and offered his head. After Brâncoveanu himself was decapitated, their heads were impaled on javelins and displayed in a procession. Their bodies were left before the gate and later on thrown into the waters of the Bosphorus. Christian fishermen took the bodies from the water, and buried them at the Halchi Monastery, in the city's vicinity.

Later they were transfer to Bucharest and their relics are to be found in St. George Church on Unirii Avenue.

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church
16 Romanian Avenue, Southbridge Massachusetts 01550
Telephone: (508) 909-6607

Website: www.StmichaelOrthodox.com

Email: stmichaelromanianorthodox@gmail.com

Facebook: St. Michael Orthodox Christian Church

2021 Parish Council

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

2021 Ladies Society Committee

President: Genevieve Boillard
Vice President: Katie Mironidis
Secretary: Debbie Thomo
Treasurer: Mary Andreea

Clergy

Fr. John Downie fr.john_downie71@yahoo.com ; cell: 774 230 2542

Parish News & Events

Happy Birthday!!

God Grant You Many More Years!!

August 4th – Anastasia Kelly

August 7th – Vasilika Tonka

August 8th – Ioanna Pitsillides

August 10th – Charles Panu

August 21st – Yannis Penna

August 22nd – Mary Grabosky

August 29th – Henrietta Panu

Please Pray for:

Fr. Vasile and Pra.
Claudia – **for visa**
Joy and George; Mihail
and Natalia ; Julian;
Christina and Spiro Kelly
– **for travel**

For health: Sandra,
Henrietta, Theodor,
Sophia

Happy Name Day

August 7th – St. Theodora –
Theodora Railean (Felicia);
Theodora Salhani

August 15th – Dormition of
the Theotokos – Mary
Dowling, Mary Andreea,
Maria Mironidis, Mary
Grabosky, Maria
Ransomnikis

Other sisters churches big events in August and September

Feast Day Vespers - St. Mary's Albanian
Church in Worcester – August 14 at 6:00pm
& Divine Liturgy , August 15 at 9:00am
Greek churches Festivals as follows:

- Sts. Anarghyroi – Marlborough –
September 1st – 3rd
- Sts. Constantine and Ellen – Webster
– September 9th-10th

15th Annual Romanian Golf Tournament Saturday, September 9th, 2023

12pm Shotgun Start
Cohasse Country Club in Southbridge
18-Hole 4-Man Scramble
\$120/golfer (dinner included)
\$480/foursome
Hole Sponsorship \$100/hole
Dinner only (if not playing \$25/person)

PIZZA BIBLE STUDY AUGUST 31st

The Revelation of St. John (Apocalypse)
Chapter 3

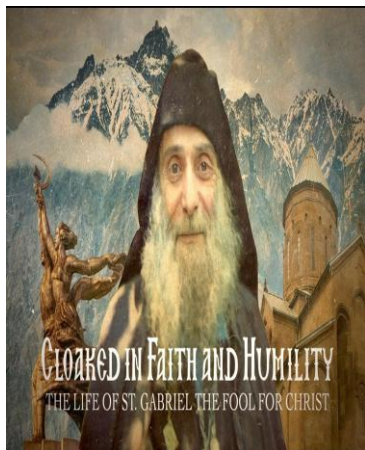
Free pizza & Bible Study for Young People
7:00 pm – 8:00pm St. Michael Church



**ZOOM BIBLE
STUDY
July 3rd at 7:00pm**

~ Movie & Book Corner ~

Movie: "Cloaked in Faith and Humility," The Life of St. Gabriel, the Fool for Christ - documentary



Could any of us be "Fools for Christ"?

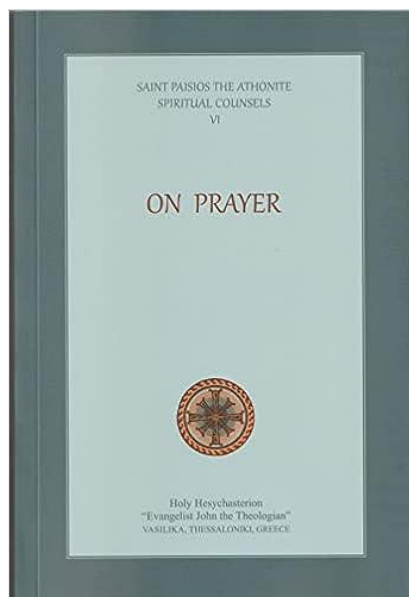
Could we suffer for Christ in the face of severe governmental persecution?

Many have in the past and among them was Saint Gabriel of Georgia in the Soviet Union.

today in America although many decry our culture and believe we are being persecuted the reality is we are NOT, not yet.

Watch this video to see how one man suffered for Christ!

Book: Saint Paisios The Athonite – *Spiritual Counsels VI – On Prayer*



In this collection of the teachings of Elder St Paisios of Mount Athos by the Sisters of the Holy Hesychasterion in Thessaloniki, Greece, the Elder expounds on all aspects of prayer: praise of God, petitions, struggles in prayer and more. The Jesus Prayer is also discussed. As with other volumes it has spiritual depth but is understandable for Christians of any age and spiritual experience.

We must repent and not justify our sins

From *Letters to Spiritual Children* by Abbot Nikon – pag 120-121

Dear M,. The Lord desires the salvation of each and every person. But not everyone wants to be saved. **In word they all desire it, but in deed they reject it. How do they reject it?** Not through sin, because there were many great sinners, like the thief, Saint Mary of Egypt and others. They repented of their sins and the Lord forgave them, and thus they achieved salvation. **The ones who perish are the ones who sin but do not repent and only justify their transgressions.** That is the worst, the most deplorable state. The Lord says, *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance* (Luke 5:32). **Everyone is a sinner, and the more holy a person is the more he notices his own sins.** The very reason the Lord came was to call sinners to repentance (i.e., those who consider themselves sinners and ask for forgiveness), and to grant them salvation through repentance. However, God shuns those who do not see their sins or try wickedly to justify themselves. For this reason, while He was on earth

the Lord condemned the Pharisees, who considered themselves to be righteous and even an example to others. Such an attitude is frightening. May God preserve everyone from such a state.

Saint Sisoies the Great, on his deathbed, asked the angels which had come for his soul to pray that the Lord would grant him a linger earthly life for repentance. Saint Poemen the Great said: "Believe me, brothers, where the devil will be, there I shall be thrown also." And he (Poemen the Great) raised people from the dead! In this way, all God-pleasers wept over their sins, over their insolvent debt to God, even unto the end of their days.

Then who are we to hide our sins out of self-love? Who are we to make excuses, to connive, when one of our feet is already in the grave? Examine your entire life, repent of all the sins that you are aware you committed. With tears and prostrations ask just as the Church does: "Grant me to see my own faults." **If a person is unable to see his sinfulness, it**

does not mean that he has not sins. It means not only that this man is a sinner, but that he is also spiritually blind. And if a spiritual father or another person accuses us of certain faults, we should not attempt to justify ourselves, but rather beg the Lord to reveal our sins to us and give us the opportunity to repent of them before death and to receive forgiveness here during our earthly existence.

**It's high time to give serious thought to our eternal destiny,
pg.122**

Our salvation consists in this: to be saved from the grasp of demons, to be delivered from them, and to enter the Kingdom of Heaven - the happiness and blessedness of which is difficult for us even to imagine. It is worth struggling here; there is good reason to struggle so the demons will not have dominion over us. **Demons are proud and have power over those who are vain; they have power over those who resemble them in spirit. Demons are unforgiving, spiteful.** This only means that we must be ready to forgive and to be reconciled with those who

have offended us, being merciful to all. And likewise in everything.

We must drive out of ourselves all demonic traits and implant angelic ones, which are found in the Holy Gospel.

After our death, if our soul contains more demonic qualities than angelic ones, the demons will possess us. If, however, we realize our wicked tendencies while still here on earth and ask the Lord's forgiveness, forgiving others their fault, then the Lord will forgive us. He will wipe out all that is bad in us and will not give us up into the grasp of the demons. If we do not judge anyone in this life, the Lord will not judge us in the next. And so in everything.

Let us, therefore, live in harmony, forgiving each other and readily making peace with one another. **Let us repent before God for everything while there is still time, asking for His mercy** and for salvation from the demons and from eternal torment. **Let us not play games with our eternal destiny.** May the Lord grant you wisdom. Amen.

~Parent's School Corner~
Parenting Styles and their consequences on children future behavior as adults

| | Authoritarian | Authoritative (Democratic) Parenting | Permissive (Indulgent) Parenting |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Characteristics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ High expectations and strict rules ♦ Very demanding ♦ Punishments don't "fit the crime" ♦ Don't give children choices or consider their opinions ♦ Don't express as much empathy or caring ♦ Children are expected to respect authority no questions asked | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Listen to their children and consider their opinions ♦ Allow children to learn from natural consequences ♦ Encourage independence ♦ Set limits and expectations on their children ♦ Express love and empathy ♦ Offer consistent discipline that "fits the crime" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Have few rules and don't enforce them ♦ Expectations or rules are very inconsistent ♦ Very supportive and loving ♦ Often seem more like a friend, rather than a parent. ♦ Often uses bribery to get child to behave ♦ May coddle their child and/or excuse their behavior |
| Unintended Consequences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Children may believe love is conditional based on good behavior or performance. They can become more insecure adults and people pleasers. ◇ Some become more aggressive and oppositional with peers due to an attempt to claim some sense of power and autonomy for themselves. ◇ Most develop poor self-esteem. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Tend to be happier and have better coping skills. ◇ They tend to relate more effectively with others and manage their emotions and impulses. ◇ Children tend to be confident and more secure in their relationships. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Children tend to lack self-discipline, time-management skills, organization skills and have poorer work ethic. ◇ They can be viewed as entitled and demanding and may struggle with forming healthy relationships. ◇ They tend to feel insecure due to the lack of boundaries. Kids need limits to know that they are safe and cared for. |
| Unconscious Thoughts | "If my parents have made all decisions for me, I must not be capable enough to think or act for myself." | "I know from experience that I am capable of problem solving and handling my emotions so I won't be overwhelmed." | "If mom and dad can't even control me, how can they protect me from the bigger scarier things in the world?" |

"Instead of rebelling against God because He does not give us what we want, we'd better thank Him for not giving us what we deserve."
 St. Nicholas Velimirovici

Obtaining Joy Through Repentance By Bishop Augoustinos Kantiotes, (Surse: «Κυριακή» 16 Ἀπριλίου 2021 Translated by the Holy Monastery of St. Augustine, Florina, Greece.)

Rejoice thou through whom joy shall shine forth. Rejoice, thou through whom the curse shall be blotted out. [Akathist Hymn] † † † My beloved, there are people who don't love the Church. They criticize it, saying it's old fashioned and out of date, because with its strict sermons and prohibitions, its asceticism, fasting, and its supernatural theories, it doesn't inspire joy in people, they say. We need to give an answer to this. Our Orthodox Church is the source of light, love, freedom, righteousness and joy. The Akathist Hymn is proof of this, with all the Rejoice's that it contains. It is an echo of that joy that the Ever-virgin Mary felt when an Angel was sent from Heaven to cry: Rejoice! to the Mother of God. (Akathist Hymn). Indeed, the first Rejoice which is heard in this service is the hymn of joy: Rejoice thou through whom joy shall shine forth. Rejoice, thou through whom the curse shall be blotted out. Man, my brethren, is not a chance creation, he is the pinnacle of God's creation. God created man in His image and likeness (Gen 1:26) and He put him in Paradise, where everything was wonderful. Everything was beautiful, and man was the most beautiful of all, mentally and physically. It is a miracle how the mind, the nerves, the senses and all the different organs

work. Man is a wonderful creation. There, everything breathed joy, and above all, the presence of God Himself, who "walked" amongst our forefathers Adam and Eve. So man was created to live in bliss. But suddenly, as we know, due to his disobedience, man lost Paradise. He left there and began a life of sorrows on this earth. But throughout the whole world, there remains that memory, that nostalgia and searching for the joy of Paradise. Each person—no matter where they live in the world or what century they live in— seeks joy. Fish were created to swim in water, birds were created to fly in the air and man was created to live in bliss. However, far from the light of God, men fell into delusion.¹ They believed that they would find joy in different things, either in riches, or high positions or glory, or in hedonism and entertainment, or in wisdom, in knowledge, in science, in the arts, etc. In the end, though, where is joy? Come here, you scientists, to wipe the peoples' tears! Not only did you not reduce the sufferings of the world, but you increased them, so that today peoples' faces are imprinted with sorrow.² But praise the Lord! When the fullness of time had come (Gal 4:4), Panaghia came along and gave birth to our Lord Jesus Christ and in an indescribable way lifted the curse of Eve;³ the curse shall be blotted out. Jesus brought joy and

peace into the world. Let us glorify God for that. In sorrows, in pain, in the ruins that the different world theories and systems left behind, the fake paradises, the false dreams and delusions, an other-worldly voice was heard. An angel told the shepherds of Bethlehem: Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, and chanted the anthem Glory to God in the highest. (Lk 2:10, 14). And after His resurrection, Jesus told the myrrh-bearing women and his disciples Rejoice and Peace be happy 14 times. A philosopher and poet of our times, when asked when it was that he felt happy in his life, said that the only time he felt happy was when as a hunter, he killed his first hare. Another person said he felt a little happiness when he won the first prize in the lotto, but that night he went into hiding, because his friends, relatives and even his enemies kept ringing him trying to get him to give them the money. So does happiness not exist? I once read a tale where a king sent his loyal knight to travel throughout his whole kingdom and to bring him the shirt of a person he finds who is happy and satisfied with their life. The knight went everywhere, but at whatever door he knocked, everyone was dissatisfied with their lives. In the end he found someone who said: "I am satisfied, Glory to God." "Give me your shirt," said the knight. "I only have one shirt, I'm not going to give it to you," the man answered. The tale wanted to show that often joy

exists in the huts of virtuous poor people, rather than in the palaces of the rich. These days, the number of people with mental illnesses have increased. The clinics are full. The psychiatrists make a lot of money prescribing antidepressants. One statistic showed that America, the country of riches and prosperity, had the highest rate of suicides; thousands commit suicide every year there, but also in England and other rich countries. If there is a century of sorrow and sighing for all the offspring of Adam and Eve, it is this century that we live in. And if an angel were to collect all the tears that young and old shed, a lake the size of Prespa⁴ would be formed. There isn't true and lasting joy anywhere except with God. Indeed, the kingdom of God is within you (Lk 17:21), God said. Do you want to see a contrast? In the palaces of Rome there lived a king who had everything he wished for: money, women, hedonism, entertainment etc., but he felt so miserable that he Orthodox Heritage Page 8 Vol. 21, Issue 05-06 wanted to commit suicide. Who was he? Nero. Close by, in a dungeon, was a prisoner condemned to death, waiting at any minute to be executed. And yet he was so happy that he wrote Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! (Phil 4:4). Who was he? The Apostle Paul. Read his epistle to the Philippians and see. [Spiritual] joy can not be found in riches, nor in entertainment, neither in sex,

pornography and adultery, or in science. Joy is not even in family life, which often has problems and fills people with bitterness and poison. The source of [real] joy, the clear and immortal water, is our faith in Jesus Christ. Do you doubt this? Whoever doubts, let him do what the famous Russian, Dostoyevsky, did. He was sorrowful, but when he started to believe in God, he felt Paradise blossoming in him. Man's sorrow and sighing is deep, Jesus is the only joy. He came to earth and lifted the curse of the forefathers. It's not a lie: whoever feels this will be convinced. That is what I had to say to you, in short. If you want to feel joy—I've said it before and I'll repeat it again now—Great Lent is a source of joy, this exceptional period of repentance. Unfortunately, we do not have repentance, we do not live the way Jesus, the son of the Most-Holy Theotokos, wants us to. Let us live Jesus! If we believe in God, if we repent and do His holy will, then we will experience happiness. We need to confess our sins, please do not put off going to confession. We need to be constantly watchful and ready. The book of Revelation says that great events will occur. There will be a final war, that of Armageddon (Rev 16:16) which will be worse than all the previous wars; much blood will be

shed. And there will be a huge earthquake, we need to expect an earthquake. We all need to be ready. Please be vigilant and pray. Pray for our homeland, for the Church, for every person, for countries that are being tried and tested, and finally for me, the old bishop. May God have mercy on us. It is up to us, my brethren. During these holy days of Lent we should not seek the joys of this vain world. Let us repent. When someone is thirsty, he does not go to the ocean to drink water, he goes to fountains of clear water. We are all spiritually thirsty, we are melancholic and despondent because joy has left us. But joy is waiting for us: it is Christ.

† Bishop Augoustinos Kantiotes



“No human heart is capable of loving all people with such love as the Mother of God loves us. Only the purest heart can love all people, and among people, no one ever had a purer heart than the heart of the Mother of God.” St. John of Kronstadt

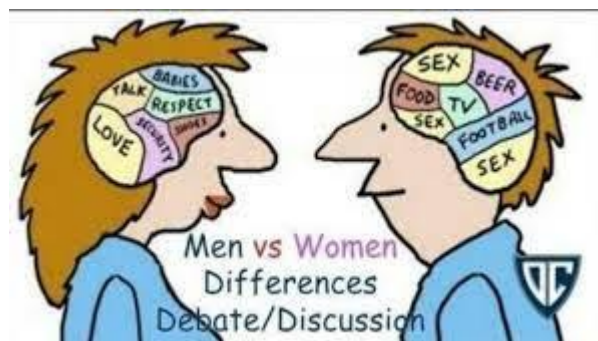
ST. SILOUAN YOUNG ADULTS RETREAT
FALL EDITION 2023
September 22nd - September 24th

Drops from the schedule

My Journey from Protestantism to Orthodoxy and from rock band to the Holy Altar – speaker Fr. John Downie

God's purpose for marriage – Fr. Josiah Trenham on zoom

Workshop and debate: Feminism vs. Masculinity.
Moderator: a surprise quest (will be revealed soon)



Full schedule and more details in the fliers that will be sent out next week.

Registration will be available starting with next Monday on our webpage.

Limited edition according to St. Michael's Hall legal capacity

~Parish Life~

St. Paisios Night Vigil; Extended Coffee hours

We thank our guests and parishioners for their contribution and effort



Julian enjoying the grace of the Holy Mt. Athos, Greece

~Parish Life~

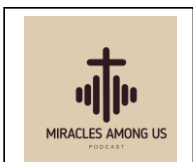
St. Paisios Night Vigil; Extended Coffee hours

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Stay tuned and do not forget to listen weekly to the wonderful miracles that God work actively nowadays through people like you!

Podcast: www.miraclesamongus.net



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| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| | | 1 Strict fast Dormition Fast Begins; | 2 Strict fast 6:00 pm Paraklisis | 3 Strict fast Zoom Bible Study 7:00pm | 4 Strict fast | 5 Fast day – oil & wine allowed St. John the Hozevite Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) |
| 6 Fast day – fish, oil, wine allowed Holy Transfiguration Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am | 7 Strict fast St. Theodora of Sihla Paraklisis 8:00pm | 8 Strict fast Divine Liturgy 8:00am Paraklisis 8:00pm | 9 Strict fast Paraklisis 8:00pm | 10 Strict fast Paraklisis 8:00pm | 11 Strict fast Divine Liturgy 8:00am Paraklisis 8:00pm | 12 Fast day – oil & wine allowed Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers 6:00pm |
| 13 Fast day – oil & wine allowed Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am | 14 Vespers – St. Mary Albanian Church Worcester 6:00pm | 15 Fast end Holy Dormition Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am | 16 Sts. Brancoveni | 17 | 18 | 19 Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) |
| 20 Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am | 21 Apostle Thaddeus | 22 | 23 No service – Priest Congress Ohio | 24 No service – Priest Congress Ohio | 25 No service – Priest Congress Ohio | 26 No Liturgy – Priest Congress Vespers 8:00pm |
| 27 Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am | 28 Vespers, Matins 7:00pm | 29 Beheading of St. John the Baptist (Strict Fast) Divine Liturgy 9:00am | 30 Paraklisis 6:00pm Pizza Bible Study 7:00pm | 31 | | |