

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church



Southbridge, Massachusetts
www.stmichaelorthodox.com
December 2019



LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday

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

Sunday

9:00am Matins
10:00am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday

6:00pm Paraklesis

Feast days

Dec. 2nd – St. Porphyrios

Dec. 6th – St. Nicholas the
Wonderworker

Dec. 7th – St. Filofteia of
Romania

Dec. 12th – St. Spyridon the
Wonderworker

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

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

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

Dec. 27th – St. Stephen the
First Martyr

The Nativity Sermon of St. John Chrysostom

Behold a new and wondrous mystery.

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

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

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

Come, then, let us observe the Feast. Truly wondrous is the whole chronicle of the Nativity. For this day the ancient slavery is ended, the devil confounded, the demons take to flight, the power of death is broken, paradise is unlocked, the curse is taken away, sin is removed from us, error driven out, truth has been brought back, the speech of kindness diffused, and spreads on every side, a heavenly way of life has been planted on the earth, angels communicate with men without fear, and men now hold speech with angels.

Why is this? Because God is now on earth, and man in heaven; on every side all things commingle. He became Flesh. He did not become God. He was God. Wherefore He became flesh, so that He Whom heaven did not contain, a manger would this day receive. He was placed in a manger, so that He, by whom all things are nourished, may receive an infants food from His Virgin Mother. So, the Father of all ages, as an infant at the breast, nestles in the virginal arms, that the Magi may more easily see Him. Since this day the Magi too have come, and made a beginning of withstanding tyranny; and the heavens give glory, as the Lord is revealed by a star.

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

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

2019 Parish Council

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

2019 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

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.

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

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

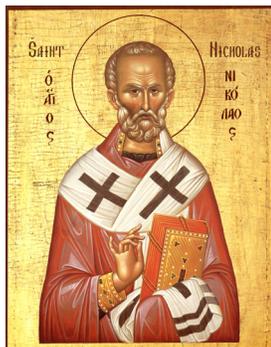
Happy Name Day

Dec. 6th – St. Nicholas – Nick Thomo
Dec. 12th – St. Spyridon – Spiro Thomo
Dec. 27th – St. Stephen – Stephen Giavara and Steven Sousa
Dec. 31st – St. Melania Romana – Melania Collazo

Saint Nicholas Albanian Church Feast Day

Sunday, December 8th

Luncheon to follow
Divine Liturgy.
Please see Spiro Thomo
for tickets.



Ladies Lunch

Saturday, December 7th

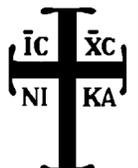
Publick House in Sturbridge

Please contact Sandra Nasto for more information.



Please Pray for:

Preoteasa
Camelia
Carol Porra
Bill & Lauren
Smith
Mary Grabosky
Henrietta Panu



~ Movie & Book Corner ~

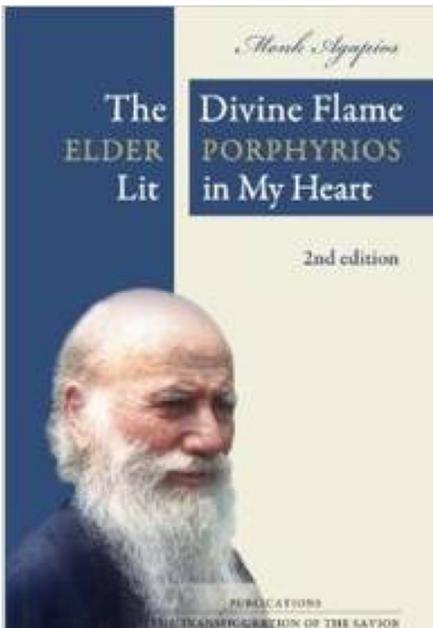


URL:

<https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2009/12/documentary-on-saint-john-of-kronstadt.html>

Movie: Documentary on St. John of Kronstadt

Saint John of Kronstadt was a married priest, who lived with his wife in virginity. Through his untiring labours in his priestly duties and love for the poor and sinners, he was granted by our Lord great gifts of clairvoyance and miracle-working, to such a degree that in the last years of his life miracles of healing--both of body and soul--were performed countless times each day through his prayers, often for people who had only written to him asking his help. During his lifetime he was known throughout Russia, as well as in the Western world. He has left us his diary *My Life in Christ* as a spiritual treasure for Christians of every age; simple in language, it expounds the deepest mysteries of our Faith with that wisdom which is given only to a heart purified by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Foreseeing as a true prophet the Revolution of 1917, he unsparingly rebuked the growing apostasy among the people; he foretold that the very name of Russia would be changed. As the darkness of unbelief grew thicker, he shone forth as a beacon of unquenchable piety, comforting the faithful through the many miracles that he worked and the fatherly love and simplicity with which he received all. Saint John reposed in peace in 1908.



Book: The Divine Flame Elder Porphyrios Lit in My Heart

The text of this book was given to us by the monk Agaprios a little while after the venerable repose of Elder Porphyrios. For various reasons, we suppressed our love for Elder Porphyrios and as in the case of various other similar texts, we did not publish it. However, the constant requests of friends and colleagues that we publish all material gathered about Elder Porphyrios overcame our reservations. And thus, with this book, we began slowly to publish all such information for the benefit of pious Christians and for the glory of God.

Parish Life

Metropolitan's Visit



*A Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year
from the Saint Michael's Parish Council*



St. Porphyrios (+1991) and Science & Technology

No saint until today in the Synaxarion of the Orthodox Church has so much to do with modern technology as Saint Porphyrios of Kavsokalyva. The wisdom by the grace of God acquired by Saint Porphyrios was unique, and the way in which he did his miracles in this life and after his death was so significant that it leaves us "technologists dumbfounded," as our holy Church rightly says.

It is worth mentioning that Saint Porphyrios lived at a time when technology was growing rapidly together with various other sciences throughout humanity, to the point where some Orthodox thinkers of his time had begun to demonize and villainize technological progress.

Throughout the final 30 years of Saint Porphyrios' presence on earth, technology made major steps: man walked on the moon, developed radio and television, developed medicine and nanotechnology, research proceeded in elementary particles, computing and information technology developed, together with seismographic surveys, astronomy, technology of materials, etc.

There were very many cases when renowned scientists visited Saint Porphyrios to describe and announce to him with joy and intimate pride one of their scientific discoveries and they themselves would be left speechless by his scientific observations, advice and additions that the Saint made concerning their high-level scientific research.

Astronomers went to say that they discovered planets with powerful astronomical telescopes and he guided them to discover other more important ones adjacent to those discovered.

Professors of Medicine went with joy and enthusiasm to report a specialized and innovative medical method of treating a disease and they would remain speechless when with high medical terms and other scientific terminology he corrected their research.

When private radio came to Greece some other priests looked with skepticism upon the establishment and operation of the Radio Station of the Church of Greece,

but Saint Porphyrios rejoiced like a little child for such an evolution and daily he would hold a transistor radio to hear the Church Station.

Multiple miracles are recorded where Saint Porphyrios, with the help of God, saw while alive and recognized with his own eyes the geological layers of subsoil better than any seismological researchers, galaxies and the universe as a whole further than the most advanced astronomical telescope, and cells and virus diseases in more detail than the best electronic microscope.

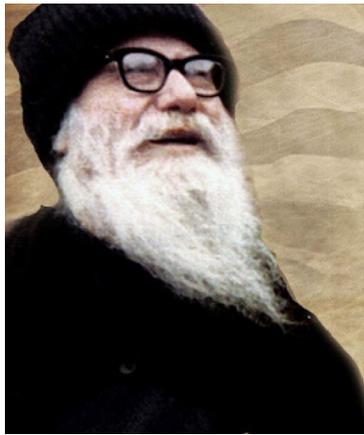
Shortly before his repose, in the early 1990's, he predicted the revolution the internet would bring to humanity. He would say: "How good it will be when computers talk to each other!" And indeed the greatness of the internet is based on this feature and function, where

"The way in which he did his miracles in this life and after his death was so significant that it leaves us 'technologists dumbfounded,' as our holy Church rightly says."

computers talk to each other in the global supergrid of the internet.

However, the greatest and in my opinion and the most unique miracle recorded that was done by Saint Porphyrios which shocked technologists and physicists is when he contracted time, not for a few milliseconds, as physicists today struggle to do when dealing with the theory of relativity and the physics of high energy, but for over an hour. The only reference to a similar type of miracle in our Orthodox Christian faith concerning the intervention of time can be found in the Old Testament, when Joshua the son of Nun raised his hands in the sign of the cross for the sun to stand still, so that the day would be extended for the Israelites to conquer on the hill of Gibeon. The difference in the case of the miracle of Saint Porphyrios is that the change of time took place only for a group of monastics and not for the whole world. Such a contraction of time can be carried out today with the theory of relativity for an object moving at a speed greater than the speed of light, and as a technologist and scientist it really leaves me speechless because even then it does not occur until some particles have mass.

The above miracle was witnessed by the nuns and the current Abbess of the Sacred Monastery of Saint John Makrinou in Megara, and is in one of the many books of miracles of the Saint. These nuns visited his Hesychasterion in Milesi and wanted to leave early in order to reach their Monastery before the outer door shut. But the Saint was having a lot



of fun and didn't want them to leave. The nuns told him that they had to leave, but he told them: "Stay a little longer; leave it to God." Eventually they were obedient to the Saint and after much time passed they left by taxi late for their Monastery. Not only were they delayed in leaving, but the taxi driver was going very slow because there was traffic on the road. The nuns fell into despair over the delay as they were going to the Monastery, because by the time they would arrive much time would have passed when the entrance to the Monastery would have closed. To their great surprise they found that they arrived to their Monastery on time, as if only fifteen minutes passed since they departed from Milesi. The above miracle

puzzled me for years because for me it is one of the few miraculous interventions in spacetime recorded in our Orthodox tradition and cannot be justified by conventional modern scientific knowledge.

I do not want to refer to the help the Saint offered and continues to offer in a miraculous way from 2001 to HELLAS-SAT nor to his other clairvoyant gifts that left those who received his grace motionless. Looking though the Orthodox Synaxarion one finds that there does not yet exist a patron saint of research and technology, and for this I think that Saint Porphyrios of Kavsoakalyva justly can be characterized as the wise Saint of modern science and technology.

- *Christodoulos A. Protopapas;*
Translated by John Sanidopoulos

The Word Became Flesh

A Christmas Sermon by St. John of Kronstadt (+1908)

The Word became flesh; that is, the Son of God, co-eternal with God the Father and with the Holy Spirit, became human – having become incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. O, wondrous, awesome and salvific mystery! The One Who had no beginning took on a beginning according to humanity; the One without flesh assumed flesh. God became man – without ceasing to be God. The Unapproachable One became approachable to all, in the aspect of a humble servant. Why, and for what reason, was there such condescension [shown] on the part of the Creator toward His transgressing creatures – toward humanity which, through an act of its own will had fallen away from God, its Creator?

It was by reason of a supreme, inexpressible mercy toward His creation on the part of the Master, Who could not bear to see the entire race of mankind – which, He, in creating, had endowed with wondrous gifts – enslaved by the devil and thus destined for eternal suffering and torment.

And the Word became flesh!...in order to make us earthly beings into heavenly ones, in order to make sinners into saints; in order to raise us up from corruption into incorruption, from earth to heaven; from enslavement to sin and the devil – into the glorious freedom of children of God; from death – into immortality, in order to make us sons of God and to seat us together with Him upon the Throne as His royal children.

O, boundless compassion of God! O, inexpressible wisdom of God! O, great

wonder, astounding not only the human mind, but the angelic [mind] as well!

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

through baptism and repentance. People are freed of the tormenting, death-bearing authority of the

devil, of the afflictions of sin and of various passions.

Human nature is deified for the sake of the boundless compassion of the Son of God; and its sins are purified; the defiled are sanctified. The ailing are healed. Upon those in dishonour are boundless honour and glory bestowed.

Those in darkness are enlightened by the Divine light of grace and reason.

The human mind is given the rational power of God – we have the mind of Christ (Cor. 2, 16), says the Holy apostle Paul. To the human heart, the heart of Christ is given. The perishable is made immortal. Those naked and wounded by sin and by passions are adorned in Divine glory. Those who hunger and thirst are sated and assuaged by the nourishing and soul-strengthening Word of God and by the most pure Body and Divine Blood of Christ. The inconsolable are consoled.

“And the Word became flesh!...in order to make us earthly beings into heavenly ones, in order to make sinners into saints...”

Those ravaged by the devil have been – and continue to be – delivered.

What, then, O, brethren, is required of us in order that we might avail ourselves of all the grace brought unto us from on high by the coming to earth of the Son of God? What is necessary, first of all, is faith in the Son of God, in the Gospel as the salvation-bestowing heavenly teaching; a true repentance of sins and the correction of life and of heart; communion in prayer and in the Mysteries [sacraments]; the knowledge and fulfillment of Christ's commandments. Also necessary are the virtues: Christian humility, almsgiving, continence, purity and chastity, simplicity and goodness of heart.

Let us, then, O brothers and sisters, bring these virtues as a gift to the One Who was born for the sake of our salvation – let us bring them in place of the gold, frankincense and myrrh which the Magi brought Him, as to One Who is King, God, and Man, come to die for us. This, from us, shall be the most-pleasing form of sacrifice to God and to the Infant Jesus Christ.

Amen.

From My Life in Christ

The Nativity of Christ.—He has come upon earth, He Who in the beginning created us from earth and breathed His Divine breath into us; He has come Who “giveth to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts xvii. 25.); He has come, He Who by a single word called all things visible and invisible from non-existence into existence, Who by a word called into

being birds, fishes, quadrupeds, insects, and all creatures, existing under His almighty providence and care; He has come, He Whom the innumerable hosts of Angels continually and joy. And in what humility has He come! He is born of a poor Virgin, in a cave, wrapped in poor swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. Riches, honours, glory of this world! fall down, fall down in humility, tearful devotion, and deep gratitude before the Saviour of men, and share your riches with the poor and needy. Do not pride

yourselves on your visionary, fleeting distinctions, for true distinction can only be found in virtue. Glory of this world! learn here, before the manger, your vanity. Thus, let us all humble ourselves; let us all fall down in the dust before the boundless humility and exhaustion of the Sovereign of all, of God, Who has come to heal our infirmities, to save us from pride, vanity, corruption, and every sinful impurity.

If God had not been incarnate upon earth, if He had not made us godly, if He had not taught us in His Own person how to live, what to hope for and expect, if He had not pointed out to us another perfect and eternal life, if He had not suffered and died and risen from the dead—then we should still have had some reason to live, as we all now live—that is to mostly lead a carnal, earthly life.

But, now, we ought to meditate upon higher things, and count all earthly things but dung, for, everything earthly is nothing, in comparison with heavenly things.



Nativity Fast Recipe

Chickpeas with Orzo

- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 1/2 cups chopped carrots (2-3 large carrots, peeled)
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 2 tsp dried marjoram
- 2 tbsp fresh thyme (leaves of 4-6 good sprigs) or 2 tsp dried thyme
- 1/3 cup white wine
- 2 cups orzo (uncooked)
- 1 can chickpeas (drained, 15 oz can)
- 6 cups good quality vegetable broth

Chop carrots and onions into small dice and sauté in olive oil for approx 5 minutes on low/medium heat. Add salt, pepper, marjoram and thyme sprigs and stir to combine. Add in white wine and then uncooked orzo. Stir to combine and cook on low heat for 5 minutes.

Add drained chickpeas and vegetable broth, stir to combine. Bring to a boil, this might take 5 minutes or a bit more. Reduce to a good simmer and cook for 10 minutes. Stir twice while cooking to keep orzo from sticking to bottom of the pan. Gently nudge any that might be sticking, they'll come right up!

Remove pan from heat and cover. Allow chickpeas and orzo to sit, covered, for 10 minutes before serving. Liquid should be almost fully absorbed. Fluff with fork and serve with crusty bread and a wedge of lemon.

Serves 6-8 well and leftovers keep, covered and refrigerated, for up to 3-4 days.



December 2019



Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church
Southbridge, Massachusetts



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