

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church



Southbridge, Massachusetts

<http://www.saintmichaelorthodox.com/>

June 2017

Liturgical Schedule

Sunday

8:30am Matins
9:30am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday

6:00pm Paraklesis

Saturday

8:30am Divine Liturgy
6:00pm Vespers

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

Feast Days

**June 3rd
Saturday of Souls**

**June 4th
Pentecost**

**June 5th
Holy Trinity**

**June 29th
Saints Peter and Paul**

**June 30th
12 Apostles**

 Find us on
Facebook

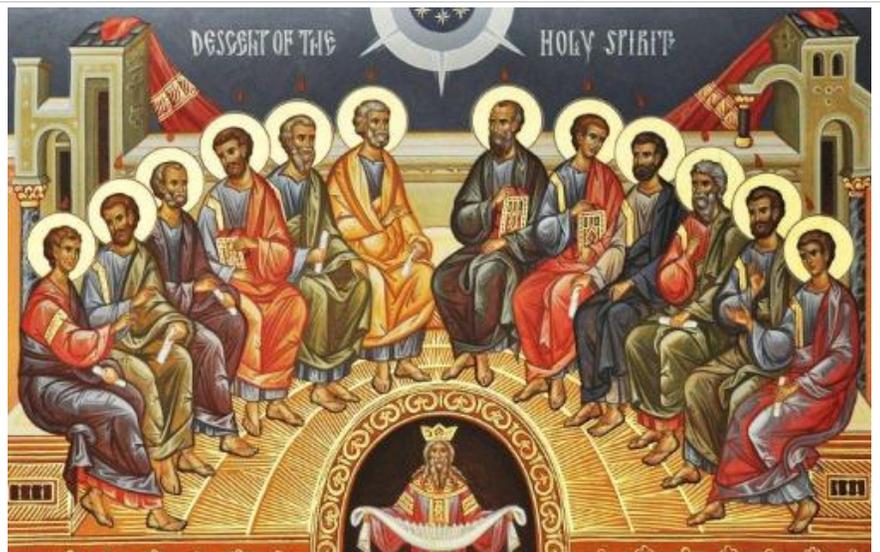
Visit the website and subscribe to have
the monthly bulletin emailed to you!

Holy Pentecost

After the Saviour's Ascension into the Heavens, the eleven Apostles and the rest of His disciples, the God-loving women who followed after Him from the beginning, His Mother, the most holy Virgin Mary, and His brethren-all together about 120 souls returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. Entering into the house where they gathered, they went into the upper room, and there they persevered in prayer and supplication, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit, as their Divine Teacher had promised them. In the meanwhile, they chose Matthias, who was elected to take the place of Judas among the Apostles.

Thus, on this day, the seventh Sunday of Pascha, the tenth day after the Ascension and the fiftieth day after Pascha, at the third hour of the day from the rising of the sun, there suddenly came a sound from Heaven, as when a mighty wind blows, and it filled the whole house where the Apostles and the rest with them were gathered. Immediately after the sound, there appeared tongues of fire that divided and rested upon the head of each one. Filled with the Spirit, all those present began speaking not in their native tongue, but in other tongues and dialects, as the Holy Spirit instructed them.

The feast of holy Pentecost, therefore, determined the beginning of the priesthood of grace, not the beginning of the Church. Henceforth, the Apostles proclaimed the good tidings "in country and town," preaching and baptizing and appointing shepherds, imparting the priesthood to them whom they judged were worthy to minister, as Saint Clement writes in his first Epistle to the Corinthians (I Cor. 42).



Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church
16 Romanian Avenue, Southbridge Massachusetts 01550
Telephone: (508) 765-5276
Website: www.StmichaelOrthodox.com
Email: stmichaelromanianorthodox@gmail.com
Facebook: St. Michael Orthodox Christian Church

2017 Parish Council

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

2017 Ladies Society Committee

President: Alexandra Nasto
Vice President: Louise Boilard
Secretary: Debbie Thomo
Treasurer: Mary Andrea

Clergy

Fr. John Downie fr.john_downie71@yahoo.com

Parish News & Events

Ongoing Church Projects

**Church beautifications.
Painting porch ceiling
Painting church ceiling where leaks were
& other spots**

**Please Pray for our Parish
Members** Alexandra Malisory
Henrietta Panu
Vasilios
Michael Boillard
Nancy Collazo

**AFTER CHURCH
COOKOUT**



JUNE 11th



**Come join us after church for
some summer fun!**

**Hamburgers, Hotdogs, Sides
Volleyball, Soccer, Lots of FUN!!**

**St. Nicholas Albanian
Church
Festival June 25th**

Let's go and support our local
Orthodox Church

General Assembly June 11th

ST. MICHAEL'S 93ND ANNUAL FESTIVAL

16 Romanian Ave. Southbridge, Ma 01550



SUNDAY JULY 30th
12 PM - 6 PM

Ethnic Food,
Drinks, Desserts
Music, Dancing
Kids MoonWalk
LOTS OF FUN!!!!

508-756-5276

www.stmichaelorthodox.org

Find us on Facebook

**Our Festival is coming up
in July!!**

**Volunteers are welcome to
come help, also spread the
news!!**

Raffle tickets are on sale.

Photos from Destiny & Jose's Wedding



Romanian Summer Camp

The Romanian Orthodox Metropolia of the Americas is opening registration for the annual “St. Filoteia” summer camp for children aged between 7-14, starting on July 8, 2017, for boys, and July 15, for girls.

The deadline for registration is June 15.

Mitropolia Ortodoxă Română a celor două Americi

Tabăra de vară
Sfânta Filoteia
2017

- pentru copii între 7-14 ani -
Pentru BĂIEȚI: 8 - 15 iulie
Pentru FETE: 15 - 22 iulie

ADRESA:
Faith and Heritage Center
4160 102nd Ave., Allegan, MI 49010

Acum, când copiii voștri sunt încă mici, trebuie să-i ajutați să înțeleagă ce este binele. Acesta este sensul cel mai profund al vieții. (Sfântul Paisie Aghioritul)

Pentru informații suplimentare și aplicație:
• Alina Mărginean - Tel: 773 290 7684 sau
• Ierom. Atanasie Popescu - la adresa de email: tabarasantafileia@gmail.com
Termenul limită pentru înscriere: 15 iunie
Donație sugerată: \$ 200

Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives: The Life and Teachings of Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

Elder Tadej talks about **how to communicate with departed loved ones and how to help them.**

Every Saturday we remember our departed loved ones by prayer and a memorial service after liturgy. This conversation below explains how our loved ones are always close by and how we can communicate with them through prayer.

Elder Tadej:

“Can we get into contact with our loved ones who passed away?”

As soon as we start to think about them we establish communication.

Those who have noble, peaceful and quiet spirit converse sometimes during their sleep with the souls they want to get into contact with. They get everything they wish. They ask something and a deceased person can answer their question.

We are not only related to the material world but also to the spiritual world... If one is focused, meek and humble, it happens.

If you feel very sorry for somebody who passed away and you pray for him [her], then he gains a lot in spiritual life, he receives energy. You give your life for somebody you are concerned about, you would like him or her to be fine.

You send them energy, divine energy, and you are connected with them...

We are all connected with divine energy but we don't think about it and don't pay attention.

We are not far away from each other.

We are so close.

What should we ask people who died, what do they tell us, how do we look like to them?

They ask us for help.

When they pass over to eternity they can't pray for themselves any longer, they can pray only for us...

When the end of somebody's life comes, he loses the right to pray for himself... because the time given to him for his repentance has expired.

Other people can pray for him and that is accepted by God.

Is the end of time getting closer?

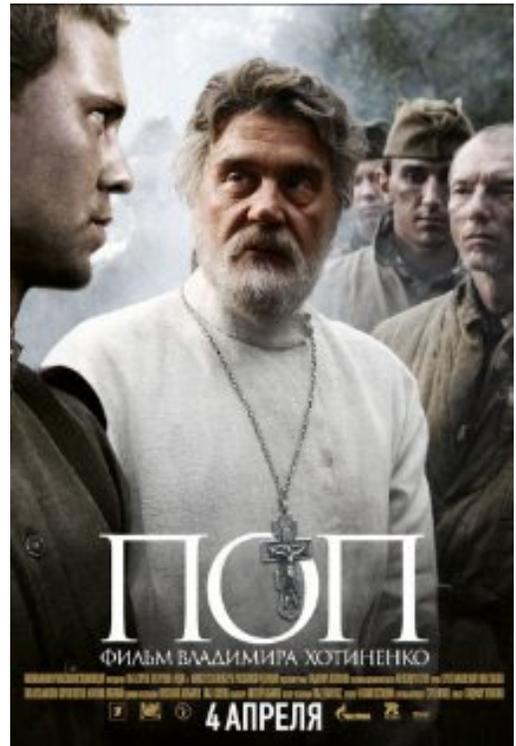
The end of the world is getting closer all the time. Every year it's closer and closer. We will see how Lord is going to arrange everything.

It's better to sing than to lament. Sing. Those who sing don't think evil“.

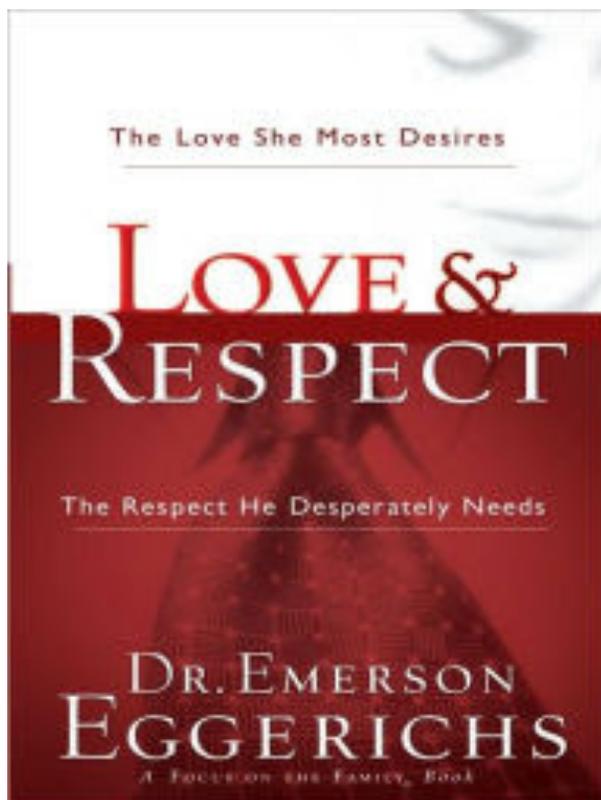
~ Movie & Book Corner ~

Movie: The Priest

The film begins in June 1941 in the backwater village of Tikhoe in Latvia. Priest Alexander carries out the duties of his ministry, helped by his wife, Alevtina. Two days later the Nazi invaders enter the village. The Nazi invaders are keen to reopen the Orthodox churches closed by the Soviet power. Alexander is offered a mission to Pskov oblast. An orthodox church building, confiscated and turned into a hall for film showings and the like, is restored to its former use, the church bell rescued from the lake etc. However life under the Nazis is ambiguous and the priest must walk a tightrope (metaphorically) between faithful Christian service and loyalty to his country and people. A poignant scene is the Easter service, celebrated along with POWs surrounded by German guards. Alexander and Alevtina also harbour Jewish orphans. Alevtina falls ill from contact with the POWs and puts the children first by losing herself in a snowstorm lest she infect the orphans. The plot concludes with the Soviet authorities back in power and the priest imprisoned by the [NKVD](#). The epilogue shows the priest decades later, visited by the orphans he saved many years before.



Book: Love & Respect



Psychological studies affirm it, and the Bible has been saying it for ages. Cracking the communication code between husband and wife involves understanding one thing: that unconditional respect is as powerful for him as unconditional love is for her. Now you and your mate can start fresh with the ground-breaking guidance that Dr. Emerson Eggerichs provides in this book. His revolutionary message is for anyone in marital crisis, wanting to stay happily married, or feeling lonely. Using Dr. Eggerich's breakthrough techniques, couples nationwide are achieving a brand-new level of intimacy. And if you'll take this biblically based counsel to heart, your marriage could be next!

Holy Confession

The gift of God's forgiveness is received through private prayer, corporate worship, the disciplines of prayer and fasting, penitential services and above all through the sacrament of Holy Confession. As we enter into the Apostles fast we are able to focus on our spiritual journey. Below explains how confession helps our soul, how to go about confession and goes over some important questions.

Repentance the Road to the Kingdom of Heaven.

A Communion-Centered Life

Attending the liturgy and receiving Communion on Sundays and the major feast days has always been at the heart of Christian life, the event that gives life a Eucharistic dimension and center point. But **Communion**—receiving Christ into ourselves—**can never be routine, never something we deserve, no matter what the condition of our life may be.**

Receiving Christ in Communion during the liturgy is the keystone of *living* in communion—with God, with people, and with creation. Christ teaches us that love of God and love of neighbor sum up the Law. One way of describing a serious sin is to say it is any act which breaks our communion with God and with our neighbor.

It is for this reason that **examination of conscience**—if necessary, **going to confession**—is part of **preparation for Communion**. This is an ongoing process of trying to see my life and actions with clarity and honesty—to look at myself, my choices, and my direction as known by God.

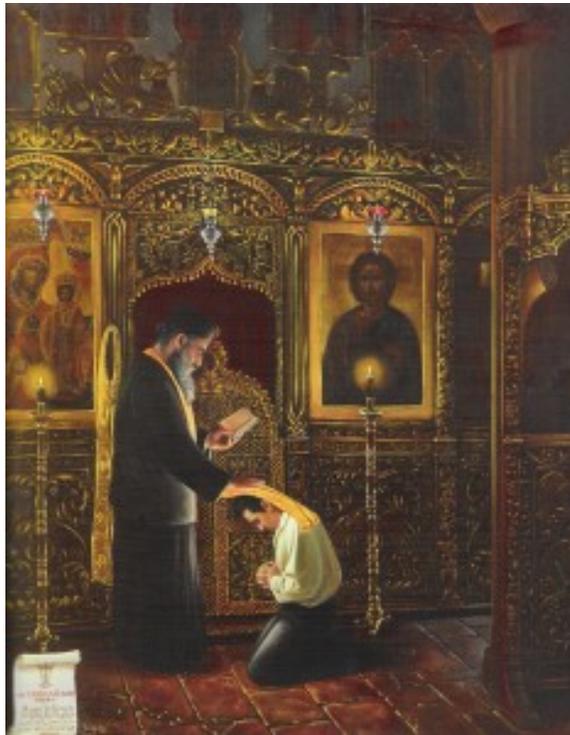
The examination of conscience is an occasion to recall not only any serious sins committed since my last confession, but even the beginnings of sins.

The word *conscience* derives from a Greek verb meaning “to have common knowledge” or “to know with” someone, a concept that led to the idea of bearing witness concerning someone, especially oneself. **Conscience is an inner faculty that guides us in making choices that align us with God’s will, and that**

accuses us when we break communion with God and with our neighbor. Conscience is a reflection of the divine image at the core of each person.

Conscience is God’s whispering voice within us calling us to a way of life that reveals God’s presence and urges us to refuse actions that destroy community and communion.

As often as we are confessing our conscience become more awake and able to catch even the smallest bad thought, desires or deeds, or those disguised sins that present



themselves as “nice and innocent deeds” but in fact they are ugly disguised sins.

Yet we spend a great deal of our lives trying to convince ourselves and others that what we did really wasn't that bad or could even be seen as almost good, given the circumstances. Even in confession, **many people explain what they did rather than simply admit they did things that require forgiveness.** “When I recently happened to confess about fifty people in a typical Orthodox parish in Pennsylvania,” Fr. Alexander Schmemmann wrote, “**not one admitted to having committed any sin whatsoever!**”

There are only two possible responses to sin: to justify it, or to repent. Between these two, there is no middle ground.

Justification may be verbal, but mainly it takes the form of repetition: I do again and again the same thing as a way of demonstrating to myself and others that it's not really a sin, but rather something normal or human or necessary or even good. “Commit a sin twice and it will not seem a crime,”

notes a Jewish proverb.

Repentance, on the other hand, is the recognition that I cannot live any more as I have been living, because in living that way I wall myself apart from others and from God. Repentance is a change in direction. Repentance is the door of communion. It is also a *sine qua non* of forgiveness. Absolution is impossible where there is no repentance.



As St. John Chrysostom said sixteen centuries ago in Antioch:

Repentance opens the heavens, takes us to Paradise, overcomes the devil. **Have you sinned? Do not despair! If you sin every day, then offer repentance every day!**

Confession as a Social Action

It is impossible to imagine a healthy marriage or deep friendship without confession and forgiveness. If we have done something that damages a relationship, confession is essential to its restoration. For the sake of that bond, we confess what we've done, we apologize, and we promise not to do it again; then we do everything in our power to keep that promise.

In the context of religious life, **confession is what we do to safeguard and renew our relationship with God whenever it is damaged.**

Confession restores our communion with God and with each other.

It is never easy to admit to doing something we regret and are ashamed of, an act we attempted to keep secret or

denied doing or tried to blame on someone else, perhaps arguing—to ourselves as much as to others—that it wasn't actually a sin at all, or wasn't nearly as bad as some people might claim. In the hard labor of growing up, one of the most agonizing tasks is becoming capable of saying, “I'm sorry.”

Yet we are designed for confession. Secrets in general are hard to keep, but unconfessed sins

not only never go away, but have a way of becoming heavier as time passes—the greater the sin, the heavier the burden. Confession is the only solution.

To understand confession in its sacramental sense, one first has to grapple with a few basic questions: Why is the Church involved in forgiving sins? Is priest-witnessed confession really needed? Why confess at all to any human being? In fact, why bother confessing to God, even without a human witness? If God is really all-knowing, then He knows everything about me already. My sins are known before it even crosses my mind to confess them. Why bother telling God what God already knows?

Yes, truly God knows. My confession can never be as complete or revealing as God's knowledge of me and of all that needs repairing in my life.



Confessing sins, or even temptations, makes us better able to resist. The underlying principle is described in one of the collections of sayings of the Desert Fathers:

If impure thoughts trouble you, do not hide them, but tell them at once to your spiritual father and condemn them. **The more a person conceals his thoughts, the more they multiply and gain strength.** But an evil thought, when revealed, is immediately destroyed. **If you hide things, they have great power over you,** but if you could only speak of them before God, in the presence of another, then they will often wither away, and lose their power.

Confession is a Christian ritual with a communal character. Confession in the church differs from confession in your living room in the same way that getting married in church differs from simply living together. My confession is an act of reconnection with God and with all the people and creatures who depend on me and have been harmed by my failings, and from whom I have distanced myself through acts of non-communication. The community is represented by the person hearing my confession, an ordained priest delegated to serve as Christ's witness, who provides guidance and wisdom that helps each

penitent overcome attitudes and habits that take us off course, who declares forgiveness and restores us to communion. In this way our repentance is brought into the community that has been damaged by our sins—a private

event in a public context.

“It’s a fact,” writes Fr. Thomas Hopko, rector of St. Vladimir’s Seminary, **“that we cannot see the true ugliness and hideousness of our sins until we see them in the mind and heart of the other to whom we have confessed.”**

What does confession mean?

The very word *confession* makes us nervous, touching as it does all that is hidden in ourselves: lies told, injuries caused, things stolen, friends deceived, people betrayed, promises broken, faith denied—these plus all the smaller actions that reveal the beginnings

of sins. Confession is painful, yet a **Christian life without confession is impossible.**

Confession is a major theme of the Gospels. Even before Christ began His public ministry, we read in Matthew's Gospel that John required confession of those who came to him for baptism in the River Jordan for a symbolic act of washing away their sins: "And [they] were baptized by [John] in the Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matthew 3:6).

Then there are those amazing words of Christ to Peter: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19). The keys of binding and loosing sins were given not only to one apostle but to all Christ's disciples, and—in a sacramental sense—to any priest who has his bishop's blessing to hear confessions.

The Gospel author John warns us not to deceive ourselves: "**If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins**" (1 John 1:8, 9).

What Is Sin?

There are countless essays and books that deal with human failings under various labels without once using the three-letter word *sin*. Actions traditionally regarded as sinful have instead been seen as natural stages in the process of growing up, a result of bad parenting, a consequence of mental illness, an inevitable response to unjust social conditions, or pathological behavior brought on by addiction.

But what if I am more than a robot programmed by my past or my society or my economic status and actually can take a certain amount of credit—or blame—for my actions and inactions?

The Hebrew verb *chata'*, "to sin," like the Greek word *hamartia*, simply means straying off the path, getting lost, missing the mark. Sin—going off course—can be intentional or unintentional.

The author of the Book of Proverbs lists seven things God hates: "A proud look, / A lying tongue, / Hands that shed innocent blood, / A heart that devises wicked plans, / Feet that are swift in running to evil, / A false witness *who* speaks lies, / And one who sows discord among brethren" (6:17–19).

Tools of Self-Examination

In the struggle to examine conscience, we have tools that can assist us, resources that help both in the formation and the examination of conscience. Among these are the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes, and various prayers, as well as lists of questions written by experienced confessors.

Key Elements in Confession

Fr. Alexander Schmemmann provided this summary of the three key areas of confession:

Relationship to God: Questions on faith itself, possible doubts or deviations, inattention to prayer, lack of daily personal prayer, neglect of liturgical life, fasting, Bible and spiritual books readings, etc.

Relationship to one's neighbor: Basic attitudes of selfishness and self-centeredness, indifference to others, lack of attention, interest, love. All acts of actual offense—envy, gossip, cruelty, looking down to others, etc.—must be mentioned and, if needed, their sinfulness shown to the penitent.

Relationship to one's self: Sins of the flesh with, as their counterpart, the Christian vision of purity and wholesomeness, respect for the body as an icon of Christ, etc. Abuse of one's life and resources; absence of any real effort

to deepen life; abuse of alcohol or other drugs; cheap idea of “fun,” a life centered on amusement, irresponsibility, neglect of family relations, etc.

Finding a Confessor

Just as not every doctor is a good physician, not every priest is a good confessor. Sometimes it happens that a priest, however good his qualities in other respects, is a person not well suited for witnessing confessions. God has given us freedom and provided each person with a conscience. It is not the role of a priest to take the place of conscience or to become anyone’s drill sergeant. A good confessor will help us become better at hearing the voice of conscience and become more free in an increasingly God-centered life.

Fortunately, good confessors are not hard to find. Usually your confessor is the priest who is closest, sees you most often, knows you and the circumstances of your life best: a priest of your parish. Do not be put off by your awareness of what you perceive as his relative youth, his personal shortcomings, or the probability that he possesses no rare spiritual gifts. Keep in mind that each priest goes to confession himself and may have more to confess than you do. You confess, not to him, but to Christ in his presence. He is the *witness* of your confession.

Don’t imagine that a priest will respect you less for what you reveal to Christ in his presence, or imagine that he is carefully remembering all your sins. “Even a recently ordained priest will quickly find that he cannot remember 99 percent of what people tell him in confession,” one priest told me. He said it is embarrassing to him that people expect him to remember what they told him in an earlier confession. “When they remind me, then sometimes I remember, but without a reminder, usually my mind is a blank. I let the words I listen to pass through me. Also, so much that I hear in one confession is similar to what I hear in other

confessions—the confessions blur together. The only sins I easily remember are my own.”

Prayer of Repentance

O Lord my God, I confess that I have sinned against You in thought, word and deed.

I have also omitted to do what Your holy law requires of me.

But now with repentance and contrition I turn again to Your love and mercy.

I entreat You to forgive me all my transgression and to cleanse me from all my sins.

Lord, fill my heart with the light of Your truth. Strengthen my will by Your grace.

Teach me both to desire and to do only what pleases You. Amen.

**Schedule Confession with
Father John**

Email or Call

For more information about confession guidelines visit the website under resources.

June 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Saturday of Souls Divine Liturgy 8:30am Vespers 6:00pm
4 Holy Pentecost Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am Vespers 11:15am	5 Holy Trinity Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am	6	7 Paraklesis 6:00pm	8	9	10 Fr. John will be serving Divine Liturgy at Romanian Church in Connecticut Vespers 6:00pm
11 Sunday of All Saints Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am	12	13	14 Paraklesis 6:00pm	15	16	17 Divine Liturgy 8:30am Vespers 6:00pm
18 Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am	19	20	21 Paraklesis 6:00pm	22	23	24 Divine Liturgy 8:30am Vespers 6:00pm
25 Divine Liturgy at St. Nicholas Albanian Church	26	27	28 Vespers, Litya, Matins 6:00pm	29 Peter and Paul Akathist 8:15am Divine Liturgy 9:00am Vespers 6:00pm	30 12 Apostles Divine Liturgy 9:00am	