



Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church

Southbridge, Massachusetts
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

June 2018



LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Saturday

9:00am Divine Liturgy
10:00 am Memorial Service
6pm Vespers

Sunday

8:30am Matins
9:30am Divine Liturgy

Wednesday

6:00pm Paraklesis

Friday

6:00pm Akathist

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

Feast days

June 4th – June 29th

Fast - Holy Apostles Peter & Paul

June 11th

**St. Ierarch Luke, Bishop of
Crimea**

June 19th

St. Paisios the Great

June 24th

Nativity of St. John the Baptist

June 29th

Peter & Paul Holy Apostles

June 30th

**Synaxis of the Twelve Holy
Apostles**

The Lives of Saints Peter and Paul

THE HOLY APOSTLE PETER

The son of Jonah and brother of Andrew the First-Called, of the tribe of Simeon and the town of Bethsaida, he was a fisherman and was at first called Simon, but the Lord was pleased to call him Cephas, or Peter (Jn 1:42). He was the first of the disciples to give clear expression to his faith in the Lord Jesus, saying: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Mt 16:16). His love for the Lord was very strong, and his faith in Him went from strength to strength.

When the Lord was put on trial, Peter denied him three times, but it needed only one look into the face of the Lord, and Peter's soul was filled with shame and repentance. After the descent of the Holy Spirit, Peter became a fearless and powerful preacher of the Gospel. After his first sermon in Jerusalem, about 3,000 souls were converted to the Faith. He preached the Gospel throughout Palestine and Asia Minor, in Italy and Illyria. He performed many wonders, healing the sick and raising the dead, and even his shadow had the power of healing the sick. He had a major struggle with Simon the Magician, who declared himself to be from God but was actually a servant of the devil. He finally put him to shame and overcame him.

Peter was condemned to death on the order of the wicked Emperor Nero, a friend of Simon's. After installing Linus as Bishop of Rome and exhorting and encouraging the flock of Christ there, Peter went to his death with joy. When he saw the cross before him, he asked the executioner to crucify him upside-down, because he felt himself unworthy to die in the same way as his Lord. And so this great servant of the greatest Master went to his rest and received a crown of eternal glory.

THE HOLY APOSTLE PAUL

Born in Tarsus and of the tribe of Benjamin, he was formerly called Saul and studied under Gamaliel. He was a Pharisee and a persecutor of Christians. He was wondrously converted to the Christian faith by the Lord Himself, who appeared to him on the road to Damascus. He was baptized by the Apostle Ananias, named Paul and enrolled in the work of the Great Apostles.

He preached the Gospel everywhere with burning zeal, from the borders of Arabia to the land of Spain, among both the Jews and the heathen, and receiving the title of "The Apostle to the Gentiles." His fearful sufferings were matched only by his superhuman endurance. Through all the years of his preaching, he hung from day to day like a thread between life and death. Filling his days and nights with toil and sufferings for Christ, organizing the Church in many places and receiving a high level of perfection, he was able to say: "I live, yet not I but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). He was beheaded in Rome in the reign of Nero, at the same time as St. Peter.



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2018 Parish Council

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

2018 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

Happy Name Day

June 29th - St. Paul – Paul Yanka, Paul Porra, Paul Mayers

June 29th – St. Peter – Peter Bollard

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

June 26th – John DeAngelis

June 30th – Fr. John

Please Pray for:

Alexandra Malisory

Peter & Laureen Smith

Vasilios Nahn

ST. MICHAEL'S
94TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL

16 Romanian Ave. Southbridge, Ma 01550



SUNDAY JULY 29th
12 PM - 6 PM

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

508-756-5276

www.stmichaelorthodox.org

Find us on Facebook

Special Coffee Hour

Sunday – June 3rd

**Hamburgers and hot dogs
+ all fixings!!**

Games and a lot of FUN!!



**Let's support our local
churches by attending
their festival!!**

~St. Spyridon Greek Church

Worcester – June 1-3

~St. Nicholas Albanian Church

Southbridge – July 1st

~ Movie & Book Corner ~

Movie: Wonder (2017)

Based on the R.J. Palacio novel of the same name, “Wonder” follows a year in the life of August Pullman ([Jacob Tremblay](#)), Auggie, for short. He was born with a genetic abnormality that has required him to undergo surgeries and medical treatments since his earliest days.

Director [Stephen Chbosky](#) has managed to take a story that could have been painfully mawkish and made it genuinely moving in (mostly) understated ways. The makeup work here is solid and believable, revealing Auggie’s sad eyes behind downturned facial lines and nubs of skin for ears. He’s a prepubescent Rocky Dennis. The script, co-written by Chbosky, [Steve Conrad](#) and [Jack Thorne](#), is wise to establish quickly that Auggie is a regular kid in every other way. He loves “[Star Wars](#)” and Minecraft. He has an aptitude for science, a sly sense of humor, and an active imagination that helps him navigate uncomfortable situations. (“Wonder” occasionally dabbles in magical realism, but in ways that are more amusing than distracting.)

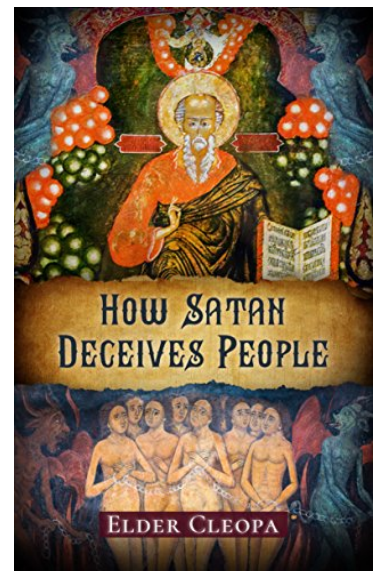
Uniformly strong performances help ground the story. Tremblay, who showed instincts beyond his years in the devastating 2015 drama “[Room](#),” provides both a sweetness and an intelligence to his 10-year-old character that make him accessible even when he’s wearing an astronaut helmet to hide his face. [Julia Roberts](#) and [Owen Wilson](#) find just the right notes as his supportive parents. But the real surprise here is [Izabela Vidovic](#) as Tremblay’s older sister, who’s been generous enough to allow her brother to be the center of the family’s attention at the expense of her own emotional need.



Book: “How Satan Deceives People by Elder Cleopa

Since the beginning of time, the tempter has restlessly sought to gain as many souls for the kingdom of darkness as possible. Many are his tricks and, unfortunately, many more are those who allow themselves to be deceived by them. He continuously misleads people, making them believe that everything he teaches is morally right or justifiable. He commands legions of demons to unleash their wrath upon us, humans, everyday, for they envy us and detest the fact that God created people in His Image and Likeness.

In the first book of The Patristic Heritage Series entitled How Satan Deceives People, Elder Cleopa exposes the devil's wicked and cunning methods used to trick people into committing sins and losing their salvation.



Congratulations Harris, Jessica and family on your newest member of your family Antonia Pitsilidis!!! She was born on May 28th .



~Prayer Group~

There is nothing more powerful than the power of prayer. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." We have resume our prayer group and we pray for family, friends, people in need, people who have passed away. Everyone is welcomed to participate and join the group!! There will be available copies of the prayer program in the Church. Ask Fr. John or Presbitera



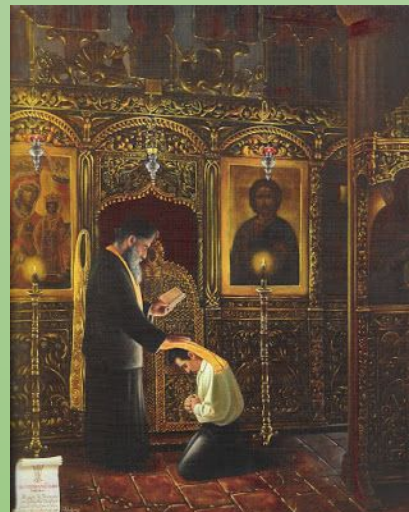
Photos from Pentecost



The Orthodox Church General

Recommendation for all members is to confess at least during all four fasting period over the year. (Pashca, Saint Peter & Paul, Dormition of the Holy Theotokos, Christmas)

Schedule time with Fr. John for Confession during St. Peter and Paul fast



St. Hierarch Luke of Crimea, the Holy Surgeon - life and recent miracles (1877-1961).

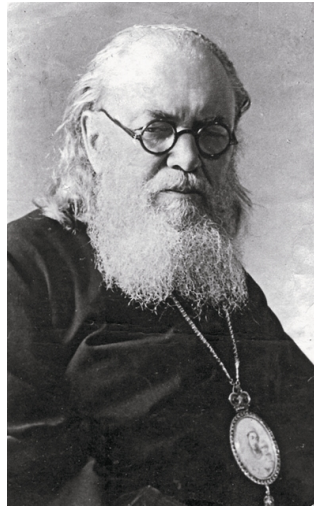
St. Luke was born Valentine of Felix Voino-Yassenetsky in Kertz on April 27th 1877. His faith was much influenced by both his proximity to the Holy Lavra of the Kiev Caves (which his family lived near) and a copy of the Holy Bible he received upon graduating High School. He had a great talent for and desire to pursue art, however, his desire to do something to help the poor peasants around him was overriding, and he attended medical school in Kiev, and graduated in 1903.

In 1904, the Russo-Japanese War brought Valentine to the Far East as a surgeon, where he met his future wife Anna Vasilievna Lanskaya. They married and had four children. During this time, as a surgeon, Valentine became specially trained in ophthalmological operations, along with regional anesthesia and the surgery of pyogenic infections (which later became areas of research for him). He also displayed immense faith in those difficult times. The family would entertain a nun from the Fiodorovski monastery once a month, and they would attend church regularly. Valentine would also refuse to perform an operation without first praying before an icon of the Theotokos in the operating room, and then signing the patient with iodine in the sign of the Cross. In fact, one time the Communist Party officials removed the icon, at which point Valentine refused to return to surgery until it would be returned. Soon, the wife of one of the party officials needed an operation, and specifically requested Valentine. He, however, refused to perform the surgery until the icon of the Panagia was returned. They complied with his request, and he returned to surgery.

Valentine's wife, who came down with tuberculosis, died prematurely. Though Valentine grieved deeply for his wife, he was able to see the hand of the Lord guiding him even through this difficult time, both by Him choosing one of the nurses to help raise his children, and by calling

him to the priesthood. In obedience to Archbishop Innocent, Valentine hastily followed Christ's divine call, and was ordained a deacon on January 26th, and a priest on February 2nd, 1921. In fact, because of the need for a bishop, Fr. Valentine also obeyed the call of the people and underwent the monastic tonsure (being given the name "Luke", after the Evangelist whom he resembled) and was consecrated a bishop.

This period of time was extremely difficult for the Russian Orthodox Church, as they were



constantly being assulted from the right (zealots and schismatics) and from the left (the athiest government and their heretical "Living Church"). Because of St. Luke's confessions of faith (and despite his immense medical and scientific achievements), he was imprisoned, tortured, and exiled for 11 years in total to Siberia, and other trecherous locales. Besides persecution from the government, he had to deal with heretics from the "Living Church" who masqueraded as Orthodoxy and drew people away from the Church, and schismatic individuals who also caused unneeded harm in those turbulent years.

St. Luke's virtues, struggles and achievements are staggering. As a Grace-filled hierarch of the Church, he re-opening many churches that had been closed by the Communists, produced deep theologic works, and supported the faithful while drawing many to Orthodoxy. In addition, his love, skill and devotion to his patients saved thousands, (especially injured soldiers in war), and his research techniques were award-winning, and were claimed to be important to his fellow surgeons fifty years later. After a lifetime of such medical accomplishments and spiritual struggles in his confession for the Faith, St. Luke reposed in the Lord as the Archbishop of Simferopol (Crimea) on June 11th (New Calendar) 1961.

“My name is X. P., I am 46 years old, and I live in Northern Greece. In 2004, I was operated on for a brain tumor. After three and a half years, it appeared again. I visited plenty of doctors, but none would agree to operate on me. I was very depressed and disappointed. Ultimately, I found a doctor who agreed to dare to try this difficult intervention. My relatives told me to go venerate St. Luke, who was a physician, and that he would help me, like he helped the others. I made the decision and went to venerate and to pray in the city G. where there is a church of St. Luke. There, I met a pious and humble priest, Fr. K. He gave me strength and courage, and served the Paraklesis for me. I confessed, communed, and left for surgery. One night, I saw in my dream St. Ephraim, and he told me not to worry, and that everything would go well. On March 13th 2007 I entered the operating room. Even though I was sedated, I could see the doctors that were operating on me, together with St. Luke and St. Ephraim. St. Luke was operating, wearing small circular glasses, and holding an old scalpel. St. Ephraim, however, was holding my hand, telling me not to be afraid, and with his left hand bombarded my head with light. When the surgery finished, I went to the ICU, and again St. Luke appeared before me, telling me: “I was there with you in the operating room.” I replied: “I know.” Exiting the operating room, I heard my surgeon tell me: “This is the first time I had such an easy surgery.” I want to note that I knew nothing about these two saints [before they appeared]. From then on, they became my guardian angels.”

Source: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/75865.htm>

A new miracle of St. Luke, Archbishop of Crimea, has occurred in the ancient Greek region of the Argolid, in the city of Argos, reports Romfea.gr.

A young man named Christos Argiropoulos, son of the Argos State Philharmonic Society's conductor, says that he took to St. Peter's Church a piece of cloth, saturated with oil from St. Luke's Relics.

On March 30 he met with his friend, the owner of a shop in Argos, and gave him a small piece of the cloth with the saint's

blessing, as his friend had had serious problems with his spine. Movements that would be ordinary for a healthy person were extremely difficult for him: in order to get into a car he had to bear 20 minutes of pain.

Less than half an hour later, the friend called him, weeping with joy: as soon as the sick man came home, his mother anointed him with the oil from the relics. The young man at once felt that something was coming out from within; all the pain that had been tormenting him for so long time were disappearing!

After some time, Christos Argiropoulos met with his friend again. The latter began performing acrobatic tricks before him right on the pavement, crying and laughing at the same time, reports Romfea.



Journey to the life after death

An interview with Dr. Adrian Cacovean, a Romanian cardiovascular surgeon born in July, 1967 in Sibiu, Romania. Adrian got a Phd in medical science, and he is also specialized in Doppler vascular ultrasound. Three years ago he was in coma for 11 days after a respiratory and two cardiac arrests. “ I have successively entered clinical death, coma, brain death, several times... It hurt me when they stumbled my eye to see if I had an eye reflex, then it was terrible when I was 100% hyperventilated with oxygen. They did my cerebral CT three times, several EEGs, and some hospital staff repeatedly tried to persuade my wife that I was already dead. I have survived because of God, my wife and loved ones and those who have done their duty to work as employees of the hospital where I was admitted.

You have to know that I felt the prayers of all who have prayed for me then”

Adrian is a physician, but not an ordinary one, he is a doctor in the medical science, specialized in cardiovascular surgery. With all his academic background, when he speaks to you, you forget that you are in a medical cabinet and believe you are in a monk's cell. Dr. Adrian Cacovean has a strong belief, I would say, indomitable, which he testifies everywhere, without the usual reserve that characterizes many of the intellectuals. But he was not always like this. Christ carried Adrian on the stormy sea of life and He allowed several trials in his life in order to bring Adrian closer to Him. The last one was the biggest one. He experienced clinical death three years ago. He traveled to the world beyond, saw the light of the river and the cold of hell, and now, around the Holy Easter, he decided to talk to us about this unusually journey.

Great trials

Q: "Doctor, since I know you, you are a man with a firm and clear faith, with any doubts. How did you get to this certainty despite the so-realistic "job" you are doing?"

“- I do not consider myself a very faithful person, because I know that if I would really have faith, I would not even have to prescribe treatments to my patients. I would only say to them like the Apostles - "Pick up your bed and walk!" That is the real faith! But I am certain about a few things and it is clear to me when I take the wrong way. I always thought there was God, life after death. I never had an episode of atheism, or fighting God, but I had episodes of neglecting the faith, of indifference. I grew up in a family with priests, and on the father's side, and on the mother's side,

priests whom I did not know, being already deceased when I was

born. But the most faithful family member that I met was my grandfather, from my father's side, who was a very zealous man - he went to the church every Sunday, held all the fasts, confessed, took communion, he did not swear, no one saw him arguing with anyone, not at home, with his wife. He was a man with an extremely balanced life. He never drank more than a glass of wine only at the evening meal. No one saw him stagger anywhere. That's why my grandfather did not know what disease means, not even a headache! At age 95, when he died, he died of old age not because of a disease. My grandfather was the most faithful family member, although for me a city boy (I was born in Sibiu), I was not impressed by his faith very much, I thought it was merely peasant narrow-minded. However, he has influenced me enough to never contest the existence of God.”

Q: "When did you first need God's help?"

“- It was 1994, I was an ambulance doctor in Sibiu (one of the major city in Transylvania), I had a baby, I worked a lot, but we barely survived, with that salary I could not afford my family. I was working on an Ambulance, I also worked shifts, but I still did not make enough money to cover the rent and all the expenses for our family, which seemed to me unacceptable. I would have needed at least double salary to make it. Then I thought to change my specialization, with a better paid one. I chose to become specialized as a cardiovascular surgeon. And then I was a resident in Bucharest for cardiovascular surgery. I come to work in Fundeni (a very large hospital in Bucharest), where, of course, as a resident you earn almost nothing (aprox 450USD per month). I found myself with a downgrade of

salary and living conditions. For two years I lived in a hospital room. It sometimes happened not to leave the building for three months in a row! I was there day and night, as if I had always been a doctor on duty, from morning till evening, and if they needed me, I woke up and I would come to help them in the night. And I prayed to God and said, "Help me, Lord, to take this exam, to be a cardiovascular surgeon, even if I'm only sleeping in a hospital bed and eating only in the canteen. But no matter how hard it is, in the end, to be able to support my family and be respected for what I do. " My only hope was in Heaven. Here, on earth, nobody understood me. I was practically arguing with everyone. I quarreled with my parents, I quarreled with my ex-wife, I got divorced, I was arguing with my colleagues, etc. I was passing through a period of enormous stress. At a certain moment I gave myself a psychological test that measured the stress level, and mine was over 7-8 times more than the level that you have when you are supposed to be hospitalized."

Q: "Who saved you?"

"- God. I had the chance to take care of an abbot (geronta) at Fundeni Hospital from a Moldavian monastery. I took care of him and I contributed decisively to his healing, with homeopathy, which I have been practicing since Sibiu, and his return to the monastery; he left the hospital alive, although he was seriously ill. I prayed to God, and I told the abbot my problems. I listened to the father, I did what he told me, and things settled very quickly. The most important moment was when I confessed to him. Until then, I had never done it before. A long time had passed, I do not remember details, but I know clearly that I was sitting under his epitrahilion (priest piece of vestments he is putting on people head during or at the end of confession), confessing what I did, and then, after I took the Holy Communion I felt a high release and joy inside. That moment was like a kind of cleansing. In 40 days almost all my life problems started to get set straight. Basically, every time when I asked God for something, I got exactly what I asked for. At some point, I was afraid to ask Him for something, because I knew He was meeting my demands. Now, every time, I say to Him: "Lord, do not according to my will, but how do You think it's better for me because I do not know what to ask

You and, rather than ask for something wrong and after that to fulfill my desires and get worse, better do as you know, you know better what I need! "

Q: "You told me a story that marked your life. You've seen the world beyond the death but you came back."

"- That happened three years ago, in February, 2015. I had a heart attack, two cardiac stops, clinical death, alternating with induced coma. At first I felt terrible pain, the feeling that life was running out of me, I knew my pressure was dropping, my heart was not pumping enough. I was cold, I had a cold sweat and a feeling of suffocation, and I was aware that I could not do anything to stop it, that my power was leaking out of me, and above all, fear, a very great inner fear. I had seen my heartbeat on the EKG and I knew what would happen next. I knew it would be a resuscitation that may or may not come back, but with all the fright, in those terrible moments, I said to myself: Hey, be careful if you go to the world beyond to know what to say if you make it back. It is the first time when I am talking about my experience after death. But you have to know that it is not easy to explain to you what I have experienced. Time does not exist and the sequence of events disappears. However I will try to tell you what I have been through.

At first, I saw myself somewhere on a hill, where I used to ride a bicycle when I went to my grandparents in Sibiu. A hill on which a space ship station appeared to me. They are very strange memories ... I waited for that ship to go twice, the first and second cardiac stop, practically the moments of my clinical death. Now I can clearly distinguish the moment when I was in clinical death from the induced coma moments, because, no matter how deep a coma is, you still hear the noise around you. I did not see a tunnel, as other people have seen, I do not remember the ship taking off, it was more like a kind of teleportation. I know I lost my consciousness, still waiting for the shuttle to leave, I remember I was cold and I was bleeding and I went down all the way until I got to a room. I was lying on a table like a bier, witnessing my own funeral. I could not move, I could not speak, the others did not hear me at all, but I was conscious and I was very cold and afraid. This is how hell was for me."



Q: “- And how did you get out of there?”

"I started ascending, and in that ascension there was something, a fact that would prove that everything I lived was not an illusion. I think I was in the space between our world and the world beyond, when I met a girl. I met her soul; she had a human face, she looked like an ordinary person, she was a very young girl, I remember her blond hair. Without changing a word, I suddenly knew what happened to her. I knew everything that had happened to her - that her life on the earth was short, that she did not live long, that she had an accident, that she was run over by a train, that she was brought to the hospital but they failed to save her. I had access to her life, to her fears and her mind. She was very scared, terrified even. It was as if the demons were ripping her, fighting for her with the angels. It was a dispute and I tried somehow, to squeeze between them, to keep her, not to let them take her away, but I could not do anything. Then I continued to ascend and arrived to what I believe was my judgment. I do not know who the people who judge me were, they could have been angels, apostles ... I remember that I was in a place where you could only see their eyes. I did not see the whole figure, it was as if a man looked deep inside you and you only saw his eyes for a very short period of time, because you had to turn your sight immediately, because you were ashamed, you felt fear ... From these eyes you received some kind of questions, and they corrected my thought: "See here you were wrong!" I did not even start thinking about something and I got the answer: it was not good. That's how I quickly learned how to think. One common thing about all those questions was that they were not related to anything that I confessed to the priest here on earth. All the things that I confessed were being wiped out. There were still the latest small things you did after confession, you get angry at the first car that cuts you off, you're not happy you're waiting for a traffic light ... That seems to me the most important thing that by the priest God removes our sins and relieves the burden we leave with. Those who do not believe me, they will only see that I am right when death will come for them too – because she is coming for all of us. The apostles received this gift directly from Jesus, the gift of the Holy Spirit, who wiped out and forgave the confessed sins in this world,



and then, by the laying on of their hands, they sent it to the bishops, and they send it to the priests when they ordain them.”

Q: “- Did you get to Heaven? Did that coma last so long?”

“- Yes, I think I got to the Heaven after my trial/judgment. Heaven is something very hard to explain, because, quite simply, I had a complete freedom, unimaginable here on earth, the freedom to move from one place to another, without any space or time restrictions! It was the opposite of hell, when you could not do anything. I could go anywhere, where my thoughts went, there, and I was getting in and out, in time and space. And I could hear, I could touch things, there was a consistency in heaven. It was also with travels, and reminders of the earth, I understood where I was wrong, what I should have done it differently ... Finally, I liked it so much there, that I did not even want to return. I know for sure that I did not want to go back. There a great light, with grass, trees, flowers, water, sea ... When I got there, above all, I felt the presence of God. I also felt His presence during the judgment, but I felt His presence afterwards, when I was practically in heaven. I felt His presence indirectly, not directly, like face to face. It's very hard to describe Him, it was a presence like a heat, like a light ... I knew He was there, but I did not see Him... I remember that at some point, up there, I saw the prayers that had been made on the earth, for me, of which the most powerful was the prayer from Prislop monastery. When I woke up, my wife confirmed that starting with the night I had my cardiac stop, and the next morning, prayers were made for me in several churches , including Prislop.”

Q: “- How did you come back from your trip to the world beyond?”

"I woke up suddenly, in waiting room, completely isolated from the rest of the hospital rooms, with my nurse from my own cabinet next to me. And the first thing I said after I came back was: "It's such a pity I could not help that girl who was hit by the train." My assistant was stuck and asked the other nurses from ER: "Is that true? Was anyone hit by the train?" And she found out that everything was true! That a girl died while I was in a coma, a girl hit by the train. Which was impossible for me to have known! After all, everything I told you can be

questioned, it could be the product of my mind, of my previous education or something suggested by someone else. The only thing really unthinkable is meeting the girl with the train. Because I had no way of knowing it. She was hospitalized elsewhere in the hospital, we never met here on earth, no one spoke about her next to me, and my nurse, who stayed non-stop with me, had no idea of her case. I had no way of knowing such details about her unless we met and talked. I met her, but not here on earth, but beyond.”

Student in theology

Q: “- Your journey to the world beyond is a miracle. How did you live after that? Has this marked you in any way?”

“- My trip to the world beyond was an experience that made such an impression on me once I was discharged from the hospital, when I started to get out in the world, in society, it seemed to me that I did not belong here anymore. I felt that, in fact, I was no longer from here, from this world, that I came from another world where I really wanted to go back. Then I remained with a strong faith in the

fact that Jesus did not come in vain on the earth. Now I know very well that everything that the Orthodox Church teaches us is true. That Jesus has left us the Holy Spirit, who works through priests for the forgiveness of our sins, to relieve us of the burden we are carry from here, from the earth. Until this experience, I used to go for confession but rarely, I went to church, though not too often, I knew that all of these were important, but I was thinking that the time had not yet come to deal seriously with them. Life beyond was something far away for me. But after I experienced it, I realized that the departure from this world could happen at any time, unexpectedly. When I woke up from the coma, I realized how short our existence was, and I knew I had to do something with my life, so I took an examination at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology, and now I am a student in the first year. This experience has offered me the certainty of truths that I would like to share with all world, thus defending my belief and making a contribution to the spiritual fulfillment of my nation.

Last Words of Saint Luke

“My children, very much do I entreat you,

Arm yourselves with the armor that God gives, That you may withstand the devil’s tricks.

You can’t imagine how evil he is.

We don’t have to fight with people but with rulers and powers, in effect the evil spirits.

Take care!

It’s no use to the devil for anyone to think and feel that he is close to him.

A hidden and unknown enemy is more dangerous than a visible enemy.

O how large and terrible is the army of the demons.

How numberless is their black horde!

Unchanged, untiring, day and night, seeking to push all of us who believe
in the name of Christ, to lure us on the road of unbelief, of evil and of impiety.

These unseen enemies of God have made their sole purpose, day and night to seek our destruction.

But do not be afraid, take power from the name of Jesus.”

Science and Religion by: St. Luke, Archbishop of Crimea.

"When we examine contemporary science as developed by scientists such as Lamarck and Darwin, we see the antithesis and I would say the complete disagreement that exists between science and religion, on topics that concern the more basic problems of existence and knowledge. For this, an enlightened mind cannot accept at the same time both one and the other and must choose between religion and science".

A well known German Zoologist, Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919), who was a good follower of Darwin, wrote these words some 65 years ago, in his book, "The Riddle of the Universe" that was very successful and as it seemed, had proved that faith is absurd. So says Haeckel that every enlightened man must choose between science and religion and should follow either one or the other. He considered it necessary that such men should deny religion because a logical man cannot deny science.

Truly, is this necessary? No, not at all, for we know that many and great scientists were at the same time great believers. For example, such was the Polish astronomer Copernicus who laid the foundation of all contemporary astronomy. Copernicus was not only a believer but was also a cleric. Another great scientist, Newton, whenever he mentioned the word God, he removed his hat. He was a great believer. A great bacteriologist of our time and almost a contemporary, Pasteur, who laid the basis of contemporary bacteriology, he would start every scientific work with a prayer to God. Some 10 years ago a great scientist passed away, who was our countryman, physiologist Pavlov, who was the creator of the new physiology of the brain. He too was a great believer. Would Haeckel therefore dare say that these men did not have enlightened mind because they believed in God?

So what happens now? Why even today there are some scientists, professors at Universities whom I personally know and are great believers. Why don't all the scientists deny religion but only those who think the same as Haeckel? Because these people believe only in materials and deny the spiritual world, they do not believe in the after death life, they do not accept the

immortality of the soul and of course they do not accept the resurrection of the dead. They say that science is capable of everything, that there is no

secret in nature that science cannot discover. What can we answer to these?

We shall respond to them this way. You are totally right. We cannot limit the human mind that searches nature. We know that today, science knows only a part of the things we have of nature. We also understand that the possibilities of science are great. In this they are right and we don't doubt it. What then do we doubt? Why don't we deny religion like them and consider it contrary to scientific knowledge?

Just because we believe wholeheartedly that there is a spiritual world. We are certain that apart from the material world there is an infinite and incomparably superior spiritual world. We believe in the existence of spiritual beings that have higher intellect than us humans. We believe wholeheartedly that above this spiritual and material world there is the Great and Almighty God.

What we doubt is the right of science to research with its methods the spiritual world. Because the spiritual world cannot be researched with the methods used to research the material world. Such methods are totally inappropriate to research the spiritual world.

How do we know that there is a spiritual world? Who told us that it exists? If we are asked by people who do not believe in the Divine revelation, we shall answer them thus: "Our heart told us". For there are two ways for one to know something, the first is that which is spoken by Haeckel, which is used by science to learn of the material world. There is however another way that is unknown to science, and does not wish to know it. It is the knowledge through the heart. Our heart is not only the central organ of the circulation system, it is an organ with which we know the other world and receive the highest knowledge. It is the organ that gives us the capability to communicate with God and the above world. Only in this we disagree with science.

Praising the great successes and achievements of science, we do not doubt at all its great importance and we do not confine the scientific knowledge. We only tell the scientists "You do not have the capability with your methods to research the spiritual world, we however can with our heart

There are many unexplainable phenomena which concern the spiritual world that are real (as are some type of material phenomena). There are therefore phenomena that science will never be able to explain because it does not use the appropriate methods.

Let science explain how the prophecies appeared on the coming of the Messiah, which were all fulfilled.

Could science tell us how the great prophet Isaiah, some 700 years before the birth of Christ, foretold the most important events in His life and for which he was named the evangelist of the Old Testament? To explain the far sighted grace possessed by the saints and to tell us with which physical methods the saints inherited this grace and how they could understand the heart and read the thoughts of a person they had just met for the first time? They would see a person for the first time and they will call him by his name. Without waiting for the visitor to ask, they would answer on what troubled him.

If they can, let them explain it to us. Let them explain with what method the saints foretold the great historical events which were accurately fulfilled as they were prophesied. Let them explain the visitation from the other world and the appearance of the dead to the living.

They shall never explain it to us because they are too far from the basis of religion- from faith. If you read the books of the scientists who try to reconstruct religion, you will see how superficially they look at things. They do not understand the essence of religion yet they criticize it. Their criticism does not touch the essence of faith, since they are unable to understand the types, the expressions of religious feeling. The essence of religion they do not understand. Why not? Because the Lord Jesus Christ says "No one can come to me unless My Father who sent Me draws him to Me.(John 6:44)

So it is necessary that we be drawn by the Heavenly Father, it is necessary that the grace of the Holy Spirit enlighten our heart and our mind. To dwell in our heart and mind through this enlightenment, the Holy Spirit and the ones who were found worthy to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, those in whose heart lives Christ and His Father, know the essence of faith. The others, outside the faith cannot understand anything.

Let us hear the criticism against Haeckel from a French philosopher Emile Boutroux (1845-1921). So says Boutroux, "The criticisms of Haeckel concern much more the ways, than the essence, which (the ways) he observes with such a materialistic and narrow view, that they cannot be accepted by religious people. Thus the criticism of religion by Haeckel is not referred to, not even in one of the principles that constitutes religion".

This is therefore our opinion regarding Haeckel's book "The Riddle of the Universe" which up to day is considered the "Bible" for all those who criticize religion, which they deny and find it contrary to science. Do you see how poor and tasteless arguments they use? Don't become scandalized when you hear what they say about religion, since they themselves cannot understand its essence. You people, who may not have much of a relationship with science and do

not know much about philosophy, remember always the most basic beginning, which was well known by the early Christians. They considered poor, the person who knew all the sciences yet he knew not God. On the other hand, they considered blessed the person who knew God, even if he knew absolutely nothing about the worldly things.

Guard this truth like the best treasure of the heart, walk straight without looking right or left. Let us not bother with what we hear against religion, losing our bearings. Let us hold on to our faith which is the eternal indisputable truth. Amen.

St Luke, Archbishop of Crimea,
Topics and Discussions,

June 2018

Saint Michael's Romanian Orthodox Church
Southbridge, Massachusetts
www.stmichaelorthodox.com

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia 6:00pm
3 Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am	4	5	6 Paraklesis & Akathist of Theotokos 6:00pm	7	8	9 Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia 6:00pm
10 Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am Vespers, Litia 7:00pm	11 Saint Luke Akathist 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:00am	12	13 Paraklesis & Akathist of Theotokos 6:00pm	14	15	16 Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia 6:00pm
17 Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am	18	19 St. Paisios the Great	20 Paraklesis & Akathist of Theotokos 6:00pm	21	22	23 Divine Liturgy 9:00am (Memorial Service following Liturgy 10:00am) Vespers, Litia 6:00pm
24 Nativity of St. John the Baptist Matins 8:30am Divine Liturgy 9:30am	25	26	27 Paraklesis & Akathist of Theotokos 6:00pm	28	29 Holy Apostles Peter & Paul <u>*Fr. John will be in Chicago attending Romanian Archdiocese Congress, there will be no Liturgy.</u>	30 Synaxis of the Twelve Holy Apostles