

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE

SERVICES

Wed: Moleben to the Theotokos 6:00 AM

Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

Saturday: Great Vespers 5:00 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM



***Please note that attendance is currently limited by restrictions dictated by local response to the COVID-19 pandemic; if you are currently not assigned to an attendance group, please contact outreach@apostlethomas.org for information on when you may attend.**

November 8, 2020 | 22nd Sunday After Pentecost

Synaxis of the Archangel Michael & the Heavenly Hosts

To the Archangel Michael: Michael, a fitting song I wished to sing as is fit, but one free from matter I have not.

To the Archangel Gabriel: I behold Gabriel the Angel with great joy; in you I exceedingly rejoice and fly towards what I long for.

To the Assembly of the Nine Orders of Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Principalities, Powers, Archangels and Angels: what offering worthy of the nine orders could one the offspring of nine months pronounce?

Michael, the most glorious and most brilliant Chief Commander of the bodiless Powers, has shown much beneficence and grace to the human race, as much in the Old Testament as in the New due to the gospel. He first appeared to Patriarch Abraham. Then to Lot, when he rescued him with his daughters from the fire sent by God, and the destruction of Sodom. After this he appeared to Patriarch Jacob, when he rescued him from the murderous hands of his brother Esau. He went

before the encampment of the children of Israel, when they were liberated from bondage in Egypt, and together with the pillar of fire and of cloud, he made easier the difficulty of their journey. He appeared to the seer Balaam, when he went to curse the Israelite people, frightening him and clearly preventing him from doing such a thing. He also appeared to Joshua the son of Nun, and responded: "As the Chief Commander of the army of the Lord have I now come." Also during the time of new grace he brought together the rivers which once were released by the impious against the holy spring of Chonae and against its divine church. And many other things are recorded about him in the divinely inspired Scriptures. For this reason we have him as a protector and guardian of our lives for our defense, and we celebrate today his all revered festival, for which reason it is called a Synaxis.

The devil, who out of supreme pride exalted himself against the Creator and Master of all, and boasted of placing his throne on the clouds of heaven, and become like the Highest, as it is written about him in Isaiah (Is. 14:14), he therefore, upon having put his mind to do this, fell from heavenly glory and his archangelic office. For this reason the Lord said in the Gospel: "I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven" (Lk. 10:18). Together with him an order of Angels fell, who sprung away from God due to their pride, and fell with their leader the devil. And they were all darkened instead of illumined, becoming demons rather than Angels. Therefore it is said at that time the Chief Commander Michael, beholding the pitiful fall of the Angels, understood the cause of their fall. And through subjection and humility, which he showed as a grateful servant and faithful housekeeper towards his Master God, he carefully guarded his own glory and brilliance granted to him by God, as well as the glory of the other Angelic orders. Therefore by his subjection and courtesy, it was determined by God Almighty, that he should be the first among the Angelic orders.

Some teachers of the Church harmonize the fall of Lucifer and his demons and the bravery of the Archangel Michael with what is written in Revelation 12:7, 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6.

Gregory the Theologian says concerning this: "But since this movement of self-contemplation alone could not satisfy Goodness, but Good must be poured out and go forth beyond Itself to multiply the objects of Its beneficence, for this was essential to the highest Goodness, He first conceived the Heavenly and Angelic Powers. And this conception was a work fulfilled by His Word, and perfected by His Spirit. And so the secondary Splendors came into being, as the Ministers of the Primary Splendor; whether we are to conceive of them as intelligent Spirits, or as Fire of an immaterial and incorruptible kind, or as some other nature approaching this as near as may be. I should like to say that they were incapable of movement in the direction of evil, and susceptible only of the movement of good, as being

about God, and illumined with the first rays from God - for earthly beings have but the second illumination; but I am obliged to stop short of saying that, and to conceive and speak of them only as difficult to move because of him, who for his splendor was called Lucifer, but became and is called Darkness through his pride; and the apostate hosts who are subject to him, creators of evil by their revolt against good and our inciters" (*Oration 38 - On the Nativity of Christ*).

This is why the Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 6:12: "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." In their commentaries on this passage, both Theodoret and Jerome explain that the fallen angels did not all come from a single angelic order, but from various orders. However, Maximus the Confessor and John of Damascus say they fell from the ninth order only. Chrysostom, Augustine, Maximus, John of Damascus and Gregory the Dialogist say that Lucifer was the leader of the Angelic orders, while Tertullian specifically says he fell from the Seraphim order. Chrysostom also says that is on account of the multitude of Angels in the air that the Apostle Paul said that women should cover their heads when they pray.

Gathering together and uniting the choirs of Angels, [Michael] cried out: "Let us be attentive!" By this was meant that we should take care and be mindful of what happened with the fallen demons due to their pride, who not long ago were among us Angels. And let us consider what God is, and what Angels are. God is the Master and Creator of us Angels. We Angels are servants and creatures of God. In this way he sang hymns and glorified the God of all, surely crying out that divine and angelic hymn to all the Angels: "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of Your glory." This mystery which we received from an ancient tradition, we presently celebrate. It is called a Synaxis of the Angels due to their carefulness, harmony and unity. Saint Nikodemos the Hagiorite defends this ancient tradition as being apostolic and should not be viewed as a myth, and that according to Basil the Great we should keep these ancient traditions as they were delivered to us, both concerning the fall of Lucifer and his demons as well as the nine angelic orders, with the highest illuminating the lowest, after which we have modeled our clerical orders.

Together with the Archangel Michael we celebrate today the most beautiful and graceful Archangel Gabriel. For he also showed much beneficence to the human race, as much in the Old as in the New Testament. The prophecy of Daniel gives us his name, when Daniel explained the vision of the King of the Medes and Persians and Greeks: "Gabriel, tell this man [namely Daniel] the meaning of the vision" (Dan. 8:16). Gabriel also revealed to Daniel that after seventy weeks of years, which is four hundred and ninety-seven years, Christ would come, as it says:

"While I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice..." (Dan. 9:21). It is he who proclaimed the good news to the wife of Manoah, that she would give birth to Samson. And he also proclaimed the good news to Joachim and Anna that they would give birth to the maiden and Lady Theotokos.

In the New Testament he proclaimed the good news to Zechariah, standing to the right of the altar of incense, that he would give birth to the great John the Forerunner. He fed the Ever-Virgin Mary for twelve years in the Holy of Holies with heavenly food. No one would dispute that it was he who proclaimed the good news to the Theotokos that she would give birth by the Holy Spirit to the Son and Word of God. He appeared in a vision to Joseph, and told him to not be afraid, but to take Mary as his wife, for that which will be born from her is from the Holy Spirit. He also appeared and evangelized to the shepherds that Christ the Savior of the world was born. In a vision he told Joseph to take the Child and His Mother and flee to Egypt, and later told them to return to the land of Israel. Many sacred teachers and hymnographers think that it was the divine Gabriel who was the Angel clad in white that came down from heaven and moved the stone from the door of the tomb of the life-giver Jesus and sat upon it, and he evangelized the Myrrhbearers regarding the resurrection of the Lord. We will say in general, that the most divine Gabriel served in the mystery of the incarnate economy of God the Word from beginning to end. For this reason the Church of Christ has received to celebrate him together with the Archangel Michael, and to call upon him for grace and help. (*adapted from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18

Brethren, see with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Luke 8:41-56

At that time, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, for he had

an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace." While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house*, saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher." But when Jesus heard *it*, He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well." When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, John, and James, and the father and mother of the girl. Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, "Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Little girl, arise." Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given *something* to eat. And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened.

A Word From the Holy Fathers

A psalm implies serenity of soul; it is the author of peace, which calms bewildering and seething thoughts. For, it softens the wrath of the soul, and what is unbridled it chastens. A psalm forms friendships, unites those separated, conciliates those at enmity. Who, indeed, can still consider as an enemy him with whom he has uttered the same prayer to God?

So that psalmody, bringing about choral singing, a bond, as it were, toward unity, and joining the people into a harmonious union of one choir, produces also the greatest of blessings, charity. A psalm is a city of refuge from the demons, a means of inducing help from the angels, a weapon in fears by night, a rest from toils by day, a safeguard for infants, an adornment for those at the height of their vigor, a consolation for the elders, a most fitting ornament for women.

It peoples the solitudes; it rids the market place of excesses; it is the elementary exposition of beginners, the improvement of those advancing, the solid support of

the perfect, the voice of the Church. It brightens the feast days; it creates a sorrow which is in accordance with God.

For a psalm is the work of angels, a heavenly institution, the spiritual incense.

– St. Basil the Great

Guidelines for the Nativity Fast

The Nativity Fast is one of the four Canonical Fasting Seasons in the Church year. This is a *joyous* fast in anticipation of the Nativity of Christ. Because it begins the day after the commemoration of the Apostle Philip (Nov. 14th), it is often referred to as the Apostle Philip fast. Although it is as long as Great Lent, it is not as severe. Throughout the entire duration of these forty days there is no accommodation for meat, dairy products and eggs. However, fish is allowed to be consumed every day except Wednesdays and Fridays, from November 15th until December 17th. Fish is also allowed on the feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos, which falls on November 21st, no matter what day of the week it falls on. From the 18th to the 24th of December, which is Christmas Eve, oil and wine are the only relief from a strict fast, except Wednesdays and Fridays on which we adhere to a strict fast. We should keep a fast of dry foods (xerophagy) also on the first day of the fast on November 15th, as well as on Christmas Eve, unless of course they fall on a Saturday or Sunday. Strictly interpreted, xerophagy signifies that we may eat only vegetables cooked with water and salt, and also such things as fruit, nuts, bread and honey. In practice, octopus and shellfish are also allowed on days of xerophagy; likewise vegetable margarine and corn or other vegetable oil, not made from olives. But the following categories of food are definitely excluded: *Meat; animal products (cheese, milk, butter, eggs, lard, drippings); fish (i.e., fish with backbones); oil (i.e., olive oil) and wine (i.e., all alcoholic drinks).*

Do Not Fast

- if you are pregnant or nursing a newborn;
- during serious illness;
- without prayer;
- without alms-giving;
- according to your own will without guidance from your spiritual father.

Fasting from Foods and Passions

We must always keep in mind that in our Church true fasting is not only about abstaining from certain foods, but also abstaining from the passions and sins. Saint Photios the Great says: "Fasting that is acceptable to God is that which combines the abstention of food with the aversion of chatter, envy, hatred and other sins.

The one who fasts from food, but does not temper the passions, is like one who puts a splendid foundation to a house he has built, but allows snakes, scorpions and every poisonous reptile to live within." We thus aim for a spiritual fast during this period, to avoid sin and keep the will of God, being an embodiment of love and forgiveness and mercy, as well as striving to attain even greater virtue. In this way we will better understand and realize the words of Saint Basil the Great: "True fasting is to alienate ourselves from all evil, all sin, all impassioned thoughts, all unclean desires."

Repentance & Worship

Together with our fasting and our preparation for Christmas we also include repentance. An honest examination of ourselves, admitting our wrongs and participating in the sacred Mystery of Confession are prerequisites for a truly worthy participation in the Christmas Divine Liturgy. Indeed, it is good to take care and approach Divine Communion in a timely manner and not at the last minute. The preparatory period before Christmas gives us a great opportunity to understand well the misery that we hide deep within our being, in order to acquire a humble spirit and self-control, that we may be mentally transformed, to sincerely repent, and to dare undertake the great meeting with the Newborn Lord of Bethlehem.

During a time of spiritual preparation and anticipation, such as the forty days prior to Christmas, the prayers of the faithful and our participation in the worship of the Church play an essential role.... It is beneficial to participate in [as many services as possible] and prepare to receive Divine Communion. Here, therefore, before us is the path towards Bethlehem. "Come, believers, let us see where Christ is born," we chant in church. Let us follow the advice of our Mother the Church, and prepare ourselves properly throughout these days, that we may be found worthy to worship "the Ancient of Days Who becomes an Infant for us, for He Who sits on a Heavenly Throne on high is placed in a manger, He Who broke the shackles of sin is now wrapped in swaddling clothes, because this was His will" (St. John Chrysostom). (*adapted from Antiochian.org and johnsanidopoulos.com*)

SPF50 – Scripture, Prayer, Family

SPF stands for "Scripture, Prayer, Family" and is designed to equip families to read the Scriptures and pray together at home. Why "50"? Fr. David Mastroberte explains: "On average, if a family uses the recommended Bible readings and prayers, they will spend approximately 50 minutes per month in these spiritual exercises. This is not a time limit, but rather meant to encourage even the busiest family that they can make these a part of their life and learn to love encountering God in prayer and the Scriptures."

The third installment of SPF50 started September 20 and ends November 14, 2020. It contains the appropriate prayers for families and a reading plan for the Gospel of St. Luke. There are also supplemental resources to help families get started and maintain participation. SPF50 is not meant to be separate from the ministry of the parish, but rather an extension of it. Under the guidance of their Priest, participating families are encouraged to meet on a monthly basis to foster fellowship and support. Quality time with our Lord is hard to come by. Quality time with your family is hard to come by. SPF50 intends to help families have both. Each week SPF50 will offer a new audio or video recording to help us to encourage us in our life of faith at home with our families. One will be posted each week. These can be found at <https://www.acrod.org/ministries/acrod-family/spf50>,

The Distinguished Diocesan Donor Program Needs YOU!

Covid has turned much of our life upside down, including our Distinguished Diocesan Donors Program! The 2020 Fund Drive is still under way and will continue through the end of November. However, there will be no Fall DDD Dinners. We encourage as many parishioners as possible to participate. Gifts of \$100 or more are asked. Proceeds from the DDD benefit Camp Nazareth, and because Covid has caused all events and programs to be canceled, DDD is basically our only source of Camp income. Checks are payable to: Distinguished Diocesan Donors and may be sent to:

Diocesan Chancery
312 Garfield Street
Johnstown, PA 15906.

May the Lord bless you and yours during these stressful times.

Sincerely in Christ,

Very Rev. Protopresbyter Frank P. Miloro, Chancellor



A Morning Prayer to your Guardian Angel

O Angel of God, my holy guardian, given to me from heaven, enlighten me this day, and save me from all evil, instruct me in doing good deeds, and set me on the path of salvation. Amen.





The Orthodox Theological Society in America

Annual Lecture in Honor of Georges Florovsky

Given by:

Very Rev. Dr. Michael Plekon

Professor Emeritus, Sociology, Religion and Culture
City University of New York–Baruch College



“Community as Church, Church as Community:
Death and Resurrection in the Parish Today”

Friday, November 13, 2020

7:30 pm

Registration is Free and Open to the Public

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-Wa3hCnpTDCXusfHpdO_AQ

Diocesan Parenting Workshop Series

Online Workshop: “Raising Believing Children”

Saturday – December 5, 2020



10am – 12:30pm

The Workshop will feature:

- **Presentations by His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory and Fr. Stephen Loposky**
- **Moderated Small Group Discussions, and**
- **Q and A Sessions**

His Eminence Metropolitan Gregory invites you to join him and other parents from around the Diocese as our Diocese seeks to help parents in their vocation to Raise Believing Children.

Register at: [Parenting Workshop - 12-5-20](#)

Registration closes on 12/2/20. The Workshop is free-of-charge.



Office of the Metropolitan

*312 Garfield Street
Johnstown, PA 15906*

November 3, 2020

Protocol No. 39/2020

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear Reverend Fathers, Parish Councils and Parishioners,

I greet you today as Your Metropolitan and as the Episcopal Liaison of the OCF (Orthodox Christian Fellowship) which is the college ministry of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America. The OCF is in the midst of a \$25,000 matching grant opportunity which is designed specifically for parishes, organizations, and businesses. If the OCF raises \$25,000 by November 19th the Renaissance Fund will match it.

With the greatest sincerity and earnestness, I encourage all of us to support this fundamental ministry which functions completely on the contributions of caring Orthodox faithful like ourselves. Contributions can be made by visiting www.ocf.net/matchmy donation or by check, payable to Orthodox Christian Fellowship, 50 Goddard Avenue, Brookline, MA 02445. **The deadline is November 19th.**

In 2020, Orthodox Christian Fellowship has been at the forefront of virtual ministry accommodating the needs of college students, largely to the resiliency of its students and leaders. OCF is making a difference in the lives of thousands of college students both on campus and virtually.

May the Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ who calls all of us to contribute to the ministry of His Church guide and strengthen all of our cherished and blessed Orthodox college students.

Working in His Vineyard,

+ Metropolitan Gregory
+Metropolitan Gregory of Nyssa

The American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of North America

ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

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You Tube: <https://youtube.com/acroddiocese>

In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Metropolitan GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri & Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Presbytera Katie Baker & family, Santiago Alzugaray, Patty Blaydoe, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana & Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Luke & Marlena Cooper, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Howl family, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Tucker Karl & family, Robert & Pam Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, Luke & Mia Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Nicholas Pavlik, Westin Perry & Parents, John Reece, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore & Christina Ristas, Robinson Family, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Bernie Takabayashi & family, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Joe & Darlene Waters, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Dcn. Nectaros & Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie & the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, and those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)