From The Ambon

St Michael Orthodox Church

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July 5th, 20265th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 4.

Ven. Athanasius, Founder of the Great Lavra and Cœnobitic Monasticism on Mt. Athos, and his six disciples (1000). Uncovering of the Relics of Ven. Sergius (Sérgii) of Rádonezh (1422). Martyr Anna at Rome (304) and Martyr Cyrilla, of Cyrene in Libya, a widow (304). Ven. Lampados of Irenopolis (10th c.). Hieromartyr Cyprian of Mt. Athos (1679).

Birthdays, Anniversaries, & Service Schedule for June

Birthdays: Roman Wytovich (7/5); Tammy Vrabel (7/10); Mia Keklak (7/14); Sandy Pregmon (7/11); David Barsigian (7/16); Silas Hart (7/17); Vitaliy Rakovsky (7/20); Maria Rakovsky (7/26)
Nameday: Patricia Jones (St Paraskeva of Rome 7/26)
Baptism:
Anniversary: Maria & Vitaliy Rakovsky (7/4)
Travelers:

Prosphora Schedule: PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE HELP! We need families to start baking prosphora at home. Please sign up. *The Church has a prosphora kit if you would like to borrow it. THE CHURCH NEEDS YOUR HELP. THIS IS AN OFFERING FOR THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE. Thank you to Maria Polzella for the offering this morning.*

July 5	July 19
July 12	July 26

Counting: HELP! Please sign up and count our donations. Please stay and help. Thank you David for assisting today.

July 5	July 19
July 12	July 26

Reader's Schedule

July 5 Uriel/Emilia H.	July 19 Silas/Uriel
July 12 Michael/Joseph	July 26 Blaise

AGAPE Meal Plan - Please sign up downstairs

July 5 Cold Cuts	July 19
July 12	July 26

Coffee Hour/Agape Meal: *Please stay and join us for a cup of coffee so we may break bread with each other. This will allow us to get to know each other and see how we can help each other.*

SAT, July 11th: 5:00 PM Great Vespers
SUN, July 12th: 9:10 AM - Hours & DL
6th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 5.
Venerable Paisios of the Holy Mountain

SAT, July 18th: 5:00 PM Great Vespers
SUN, July 19th: 9:10 AM - Hours & DL
7th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 6.
Fathers of the 1st Six Ecumenical Councils.
Blessing of Vehicles

Vladyka Mark's Episcopal Visit
SAT, July 25th: 5:00 PM Great Vespers
Parish Council will go to dinner with His Eminence after Vespers
SUN, July 26th: 9:10 AM - Hours & DL
8th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 7.
Repose of St. Jacob (Netsvetov), Enlightener of the Peoples of Alaska

DEAR GUESTS AND FRIENDS: *A most sincere and heartfelt welcome to you from our community. According to the ancient traditions of the Orthodox Church, the Sacrament of Holy Communion is to be administered only to Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves by prayer, fasting, and a recent (monthly) confession. If you have questions please ask Fr Michael! Visitors, if you did not introduce yourself to Fr Michael at Vespers, please refrain from Holy Communion.*

PLEASE SING ALONG! Singing the hymns and responses to the litanies throughout the services is encouraged!

Parish Prayer List

NEWLY DEPARTED: *Walter* Pritchyk (6/18)
DEPARTED: *Tom* Krenitsky (7/6); *John* Sokol (7/7); *Stella* (Minnick) Krenitsky (7/12); *Michael* Peregrim Sr. (7/08); *David* Manini (7/14); *William* Keslosky (7/15); *Justine* (Tinchey) Ludwig (7/19); *Steve* Serniak (7/20); *Helen* Elko (7/22); *Genevieve* Barile (7/31)

Please remember in your prayers LIVING:
Ill-afflicted *Archpriest(s) John Nightingale,* & *Theodore* Orzolek

All those caring for the sick and suffering at this time throughout the world, especially our families and friends: *Edward* Sevensky, *Margaret* Pregmon, *Daniel* Jones, *Michae*l Sokol, *Michael* Krenitsky, *Bernie* Elko, *Nadia* Macheska, *The child of God Abigail and the child of God Danielle,, Helen* Wytovich, *Marie* Pasternak, *Eli & Paula* Stavisky, *Marie* Pozella, *Hannah* Conover

Servants of God: *Mark* Bezhuly, *David & Kathy* Barsigian, *Alexa* Barsigian & *Bobby* Wolfel, *Patricia* Jones, *Anne* Buday, *Emily* Krenitsky, *Gregory* Krenitsky, *Barbara* Sevensky, *Beverly* Elko, *Nicole* Earl, *Anna* Tyrpak, *Sandy & Danny* Pregmon, *Marie* Pritchyk, *Michael & Euphemia* Keklak, *Justin & Elisabeth* Kane, *Maria & Vitaliy* Rakovsky, *Ekaterina & Anna*, *George, Natasha, Rosa, & Lucia* Coyoy, *Mat. Emilia, Reader Blaise, Maximus, Rodion, Savina* Shepherd, *Joseph, Emilia, Judah, Nadezda, & Silas* Hart, *Tammy* Wytovich, *Paulette* Ezbiansky, *Uriel* Vo *& Maura* Elko, *Mary* Krevko, *Elisabeth, Jacob, & Juliette* Halford, *Tammy, Justin, Niko, & Katya* Williams, *Paul* Dunay, *Anastasia, Sophia, & Luke, Darlene* Shaffer, *Sophia, & Anastasia* Polzella, *David* Jadick, *Sandra* Condone, *Timothy* & *Holly* Granville, *Maxim* Granville, *Christopher* Yeisley, and *Gabrie*l, Mother *Katherine*, *Diane,*
Catechumens: *Marley, Tulia, & Magnolia* Connolly, *Neva* Yeisely, *Zachary* Nikl,

Seekers: *Vincent* Bonello, *Rebecca* Burns, *Ken* Nikl, *Mitch, Christina, & James*

Treasury "... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." Jesus Christ

How Much is my tithe

Weekly	2%	4%	5%	10%
$200	$4	$8	$10	$20
$500	$10	$20	$25	$50
$750	$15	$30	$37	$75
$1000	$20	$40	$50	$100
$1500	$30	$60	$75	$150

WEEKLY GIVING UPDATE: We thank you for your continued giving in gratitude for all that our loving God does for each of us, for His Holy Church, **and** all the blessings we receive through her.
JUNE Income: $13,064.00
JUNE Expenses: $13,311.09
Weekly Cost to Keep the Church Open: $3,740.85
Monthly Cost to Keep the Church Open: $14,963.58

Words of Wisdom
From the Saints & Teachers

Today Readings

Epistles: (103) Romans 10:1-10
(213) Galatians 5:22-6:2 (Venerable One)
Gospels: (28) Matthew 8:28-9:1
(24) Luke 6:17-23 (Venerable One)

EPISTLE
Deacon: Let us attend!
Priest: Peace be unto all!
Reader: And to thy spirit.
Deacon: Wisdom!
Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 4th Tone, a Psalm of David: O Lord, how manifold are Thy works, in wisdom hast Thou made them all.
Choir: O Lord, how manifold are Thy works, in wisdom hast Thou made them all.
Reader: Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, Thou art very great.
Choir: O Lord, how manifold are Thy works, in wisdom hast Thou made them all.
Reader: In the 7th Tone: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.
Choir: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.
Deacon: Wisdom!
Reader: The reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Romans.
Deacon: Let us attend!

[(103) Romans 10:1-10] Brethren: My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. * I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. * For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. * For Christ is the end of the law, that every one who has faith may be justified. * Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on the law shall live by it. * But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in thy heart, "Who shall ascend into heaven?" (that is, to bring Christ down) * or "Who shall descend into the abyss?" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). * But what does it say? The word is near thee, on thy lips and in thy heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); * because, if thou shalt confess with thy lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. * For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.

[(213) Galatians 5:22-6:2] Brethren: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, * gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. * And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. * If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. * Let us have no self-conceit, no provoking of one another, no envy of one another. * Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted. * Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Priest: Peace be unto thee, Reader.
Reader: And to thy spirit.

ALLELUIA
Deacon: Wisdom!
Reader: The Alleluia in the 4th Tone: Go forth, prosper and reign, for the sake of truth, meekness, and righteousness.
Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!
Reader: For Thou lovest righteousness and dost hate iniquity.
Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!
Reader: In the 6th Tone: Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in His commandments.
Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

GOSPELS

[(28) Matthew 8:28-9:1] At that time, when Jesus came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs met Him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. * And behold, they cried out, "What hast Thou to do with us, O Son of God? Hast Thou come here to torment us before the time?" * Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. * And the demons begged Him, "If Thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine." * And He said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. * The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. * And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they begged Him to leave their neighborhood. * And getting into a boat He crossed over and came to His own city.

[(24) Luke 6:17-23] At that time, Jesus stood on a level place, with a great crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases; * and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. * And all the crowd sought to touch Him, for power came forth from Him and healed them all. * And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said: "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. * Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be satisfied. Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh. * Blessed are ye when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of man! * Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven."

Galatians 5:22 Good Works Require Grace, Works Come From Distorted Freedom. Chrysostom: He didn't say "the works of the Spirit" but "the fruits." Therefore [it may seem that] the soul is superfluous. For if the statement mentions the flesh and the Spirit, where is the soul? Is Paul then speaking of soulless beings? For if the evil belongs to the flesh and the good to the Spirit, then the soul would be superfluous. Not at all; for the ordering of the passions is the work of the soul and concerns the soul. The soul is situated in the middle of the struggle between virtue and vice. If the soul uses the body as it should, it makes itself more spiritual. But if it departs from the Spirit and yields itself to evil desires, it renders it more earthy. Do you see how everywhere he is not speaking of the essence of the flesh but of moral choice that is inclined toward virtue or vice? So why does he refer to "the fruits of the Spirit"? Because evil works come from us alone, and hence he calls them works, while the good works require not only the resolution of our will but the kindness of God. Homily on Galatians 5.22. Edwards, M. J., ed. (1999). *Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians* (pp. 88–89). InterVarsity Press.

St Matthew 8:29-29 The Demons Cried Out. St Cyril of Alexandria: The divine nature of the only begotten Son was already scorching the demons in unspeakable flames. Christ was shutting up the fiercest demons in blocked roads. He was undoing the devil's tyranny. "You have come before the time," they cried out. For they knew from the Scriptures that Christ was going to come and would judge them. Treating the incarnation as if it had happened at the wrong time, they pled that he had come in an untimely way. This misrepresentation is not surprising. In their deceptiveness, they did not hesitate to say even this. Yet, although they know that vengeance is to fall upon them, they still say haughtily, "What have you to do with us?" They know that the final Judge in fact has a score to settle with them, inasmuch as they had broken his commandments. Fragment 101. Simonetti, M., ed. (2001). *Matthew 1–13* (p. 171). InterVarsity Press.

Announcements - Upcoming Parish & Diocesan Events Church Attendance

Silent Prayers and Confession: Every Wednesday 11:00AM - 1:30PM or you can make an appt for confession.

Remember that at the Great Entrance after each petition the priest will say "may the Lord God remember thee in His Kingdom……," the people should respond with "Amen." And at the end of the petitions, the priest will raise the chalice and say "You and all Orthodox Christians, may the Lord God remember thee in His Kingdom…… the people respond with "And to thy Holy Priesthood (Episcopacy), may the Lord God remember thee in His Kingdom always now and ever unto ages of ages." This is dialogue, a prayer if you will, between the concelebrant and the people.

Speaking the Episcopacy! Vladyka Mark will be here on the last Sunday of July. Please spread the word so we are all here early to greet our Archpastor.

Choir practice: July 11th 4:00PM

Parish Council Meeting: July 12th after Liturgy

WISH LIST! Please consider purchasing from our wish list as this will reduce our cost of expenses and will allow us to increase and focus our giving in other vital areas needed. Currently we are looking for small wooden boxes that we can dedicate at reliquaries. https://www.myregistry.com/giftlist/stmichaelsorthodoxchurcholdforgewishlist

St. Michael's Greeters Ministry *"I was a stranger, and you welcomed me."* Matthew 25:35 Our objective is to welcome visitors to the Parish, help them "feel at home" during the worship service, provide them with information about Orthodoxy and the Parish, invite them to Parish activities, introduce them to people of like interests, invite them back, follow-up to thank them for visiting us, and identifying whether we can help them in the future. Most people leave a church once they enter because no one greeted them. Please sign up to greet people.

Please sign up for coffee hour! There are sign up sheets downstairs by the offering basket. Also, please donate at coffee hour. Donate what you would spend on a cup of coffee. This is to replenish our plastic wear and supplies for coffee hour.

SPONSORS - An appeal for sponsors for our relics. We need wooden boxes donated, reliquaries purchased and donations to pay for the cost to put the icon of the saint in the lid of the box. We are estimating $300 to complete one reliquary/box. If you would like to sponsor your saint and we have that relic; please let us know. There is a sign up sheet in the Narthex. We have one donor already.

Statement on the Occasion of the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America
Issued at the 2026 Spring Session of the Holy Synod of Bishops
April 30, 2026

To the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. GIVING THANKS TO GOD FOR THIS LAND

As the United States of America marks the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its founding, we, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, raise our hearts and voices in gratitude to God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift, Who in His inscrutable providence has planted His Holy Church in this land and caused her to take root, grow, and flourish.

We give thanks to Almighty God for the United States of America—a nation that has, by the grace of God, afforded its people the freedom to worship, to follow the way of Jesus Christ, and to bear witness to the Gospel without fear or compulsion. We do not take these gifts for granted. They are blessings of divine providence, entrusted to us as a sacred responsibility. The freedom to gather in our churches, to catechize our children in the Faith, to proclaim the Resurrection of Christ openly and without hindrance—these are gifts for which every generation must give thanks to God and remain worthy stewards.

While this statement is offered on the occasion of the United States' particular milestone, we note with gratitude that the Orthodox Church in America spans the breadth of this continent. Our dioceses in Canada and Mexico share with us in this moment of thanksgiving, giving glory to God for the freedom to worship and to serve the peoples of North America in all their diversity. The blessing we celebrate belongs, in different measure and manner, to the whole Church on this continent.

We call upon the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America to celebrate this historic milestone with prayers of thanksgiving, offered in your parishes, your homes, and in the quiet of your hearts, for this land and for all who dwell in it.

II. THE CHURCH PLANTED, GROWN, AND ESTABLISHED IN THIS LAND

The history of Orthodoxy in America is itself a testament to divine providence. From the earliest missionaries who brought the light of the Gospel to the shores of Alaska, to the generations of faithful who built parishes and communities across this vast continent, the Orthodox Church has been woven into the fabric of American life. She has welcomed the immigrant and the native-born, the seeker and the inheritor of the Faith, the learned and the simple—all those whom Christ Himself has called.

The granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America in 1970 was not merely an administrative act. It was an ecclesiological affirmation that this land has a Church of its own—a local Church, fully Orthodox, fully catholic, fully apostolic. The Orthodox Church in America is the Church for this land and for the people of this land. We are at home here, rooted in this soil, and the people of America—of every background, every heritage, every walk of life—are those whom Christ has entrusted to our pastoral care.

We embrace with joy the richness of our diversity. The Orthodox Church in America gathers faithful whose ancestors came from Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania—nations whose ancient Orthodox heritage now finds a new home on this continent—as well as from Eastern Europe more broadly, Greece, the Arab world, Africa, Asia, and the Americas themselves. This diversity is not an obstacle to unity but an icon of the Kingdom of God, where there is "neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free" (Galatians 3:28), but all are one in Christ Jesus. We treasure every thread even as we weave them together into a single garment: the local Orthodox Church in America.

III. THE GREAT COMMISSION AND OUR PARTICULAR CALLING

As our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, He entrusted to His disciples—and to His Church in every age and every land—a mission that admits of no exception and no delay: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20). This is not a mission given to us in the abstract. It is a mission given to us here, in this place, among these people, at this moment in history.

The early Christians understood this calling with a simplicity that still instructs us. As an anonymous disciple wrote in the second century, in the Epistle to Diognetus:

"They dwell in their own countries, but only as sojourners; they bear their share in all things as citizens, and they endure all hardships as strangers. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers."

We find in these ancient words a description of our own vocation. The Orthodox Church in America is at home in this land, fully engaged in its common life—and yet her citizenship is ultimately in heaven, her culture the culture of the Kingdom. It is precisely from this position that she can offer something to American society that no merely political or ideological force can provide—the presence of the living God.

The Orthodox Church in America accepts this calling with humility and with urgency. We are called to be the presence of Jesus Christ in American society—in its cities and its rural communities, in its universities and its prisons, in its hospitals and its institutions, among its poor and its prosperous. We are called not to retreat from the complexity of our times, but to illumine it with the light of the Gospel. We are called to be, as our Lord taught, salt and light—preserving what is good and true, and shining in the darkness without being overcome by it.

IV. OUR COMMITMENT TO THIS NATION AND ITS PEOPLE

We, the Holy Synod of Bishops, reaffirm the commitment of the Orthodox Church in America to the well-being of this nation and all its people. We are committed to the cultivation of peace, the promotion of human dignity, the practice of charity, and the witness of reconciliation in a society that stands in great need of all these gifts.

In this regard, we recall with appreciation the aspiration expressed at the very founding of this republic. President George Washington, writing in 1790, articulated a vision of civic life that went beyond the mere tolerance of religious difference to something more generous:

"All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights."

This aspiration—that religious liberty is not a concession granted by the powerful to the weak, but an inherent right belonging to all persons equally—has made it possible for the Orthodox Church to take root and flourish in this soil. We receive this gift with gratitude, even as we acknowledge with honesty that the distance between founding aspiration and faithful fulfillment has often been great, and that this very tension is itself a summons to continued repentance and renewal. The Church does not exist at the pleasure of the state, nor does she seek dominion over it. Rather, she stands within society as a witness to a Kingdom that exceeds all earthly kingdoms, illumining the civil order with the wisdom of the Gospel and the witness of holy lives.

In a moment of rapid and, at times, unsettling change, we offer the unchanging Christ—the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). Our parishes are to be places of genuine welcome, of profound worship, and of selfless love where our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ is always manifested. Our contribution to America is not power, not politics, but the presence of the living God among His people.

V. A CALL TO REPENTANCE AND HUMILITY

Gratitude, however, is not the Church's only word on this occasion. The prophets of ancient Israel—those whom God raised up precisely because they loved their people—never ceased calling rulers and people alike to repentance and humility before God. It is a mark of genuine love for this nation that the Church, too, must speak this word.

Two hundred and fifty years is a span of time sufficient to accumulate both great achievements and grave failures. This nation—like all nations under God—has known the heights of generosity and the depths of injustice; the nobility of aspiration and the tragedy of betrayal. The Church does not pretend otherwise, nor would it serve this nation's good for her to do so. We bear witness to a God before Whom no nation and no person stands without need of mercy.

The promise spoken to Solomon rings out across the centuries with undiminished urgency:

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." (2 Chronicles 7:14)

It is in this spirit that we call the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America—and, through their witness, this nation—to repentance: repentance for injustices past and present; for the idols of wealth, comfort, and power that seduce every generation; for the divisions and enmities that tear at the fabric of common life; and for the ways in which we have failed to love our neighbors as ourselves. A true commemoration of a nation's founding is not mere self-congratulation; it is a moment of sober examination, of honest confession, and of renewed dependence upon God.

The Church does not speak this word from a posture of superiority. We acknowledge our own failures—in charity, in unity, and in the fullness of our witness to the Gospel. We, too, stand in need of God's mercy. But it is precisely because the Church has known the healing power of repentance that she cannot withhold this word from the world she is called to serve.

VI. A CALL TO THE DIOCESES

We encourage all dioceses, parishes, monasteries, and institutions of the Orthodox Church in America to mark the 250th anniversary of the United States of America in a manner befitting the occasion. Special services of thanksgiving, educational programs, civic engagement, and acts of charity are all fitting expressions of our gratitude to God and our love for this country and this continent.

VII. CONCLUSION

We close with a prayer offered in both gratitude and penitence—that this nation, conceived in aspiration toward freedom and formed through the struggles and sacrifices of many generations, may yet heed the ancient call to humility before God, and so continue to be a place where the Church of Christ flourishes, where the Gospel is proclaimed, and where all people are able to seek the face of God without fear.

To Him Who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.

Amen.

Issued by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America at its 2026 Spring Session, in the two hundred and fiftieth year of the independence of the United States of America, and in the year of Our Lord two thousand and twenty-six.