

# St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church

March 2023



205 HIGHLAND AVENUE | DES PERES, MO 63122

*A parish of the  
Diocese of Chicago  
and Mid-America  
Russian Orthodox  
Church Outside of  
Russia*

## CLERGY

Archpriest Sergii Alekseev, Parish Rector  
Protopriest Radomir Chkautovich  
Priest Thomas Nichols  
Deacon Ephraim Galloway

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

- **Clean Wednesday, March 1**
  - Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts 8 A.M.
  - Great Compline with the Canon of St Andrew of Crete 6 P.M.
- **Clean Thursday, March 2**
  - Great Compline with the Canon of St Andrew of Crete 6 P.M.
- **Clean Friday, March 3**
  - Vespers with the Canon to St Theodore and blessing of kolivo 6 P.M.
- **First Sunday of Great Lent**
  - **Triumph of Orthodoxy**
  - Sat., March 4 Vigil 5 P.M.
  - Sun., March 5 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M. Followed by the Moleben for the Conversion of those Departed into Error
- **First and Second Finding of the Honorable Head of John the Forerunner**
  - Thurs., March 9 Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts 8 A.M.
- **Second Saturday of Lent**
  - **Commemoration of the Departed**
  - Fri., March 10 Matins 6 P.M. (at St Basil's)
  - Sat., March 11 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M. followed by General Panihida (at House Springs)
- **Second Sunday of Great Lent**
  - **Holy Hierarch Gregory Palamas**
  - Sat., March 11 Vigil 5 P.M.
  - Sun., March 12 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Wed., March 15 Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts 8 A.M.**
- **Third Saturday of Lent**
  - **Commemoration of the Departed**
  - Fri., March 17 Matins 6 P.M.
  - Sat., March 18 Panihida 9 A.M.
- **Third Sunday of Great Lent**
  - **Veneration of the Precious Cross**
  - Sat., March 18 Vigil 5 P.M.
- Sun., March 19 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Fourth Saturday of Lent**
  - **Commemoration of the Departed**
  - Fri., March 24 Matins 6 P.M. (at St Basil's)
  - Sat., March 25 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M. followed by the General Panihida (at House Springs)
- **Fourth Sunday of Great Lent**
  - **Venerable John of the Ladder**
  - Sat., March 25 Vigil 5 P.M.
  - Sun., March 26 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Wed., March 29 Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts 8 A.M.**
- **Wed., March 29 Matins with the Great Canon of St Andrew of Crete 6 P.M.**
- **Saturday of the Akathist**
  - Fri., March 31 Matins with the Akathist 6 P.M.
  - Sat., April 1 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M.

## PROSTRATIONS DURING THE LITURGY OF THE PRE-SANCTIFIED GIFTS

Below are instructions for when to make prostrations during the liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts.

- During the reading of the Third Antiphon when the curtain in the Royal Doors is closed for the first time during the Liturgy – at that time the Holy Presanctified Gifts are transferred from the Holy Altar Table to the Table of Oblation.
- When the priest comes out on the amvon with a lit candle and the censer and exclaims: “The light of Christ enlighteneth all”.

- During the singing of “Let my prayer be set forth ...” (when the Royal Doors are opened, and the priest censes in front of the Holy Altar Table): the faithful to prostrate when the reader chants the verses and arise when the choir sings the refrains. However, in the parish practice the faithful remain prostrated during the entire time when the hymn is sung by the reader and the choir.
- When the prayer of Venerable Ephraim is read by the priest.
- During the Great Entrance with the Holy Presanctified Gifts till we hear the priest say: “Let us with faith and love draw nigh...”
- When the priest comes out of the altar with the Holy Gifts and says: “With fear of God and with faith draw nigh”.

If, for reasons of age or/and health, you cannot make a prostration, then at the times when prostrations are to be made you should make a bow from the waist or stand with your head bowed low.

## ABOUT THE PRAYER OF VENERABLE EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

On the days of the Great Lent, with the exceptions of Saturday and Sunday morning, we hear the penitential prayer of Venerable Ephraim the Syrian “O Lord and Master of my life...” Many of us, who are accustomed to coming to church for the Lenten services are used to the prayer and know what bows accompany the petitions of the prayer. But let us ask ourselves, have we made St. Ephraim’s prayer a part of our daily prayer rule? If we have not, then this should be corrected. The prayer “O Lord and Master of my life...” should bring a natural closure to our prayers in the morning and in the evening. If you do not have the Jordanville Prayer Book, which contains the text of the prayer, please cut the prayer’s text given below and use it at home.

O Lord and Master of my life, a spirit of idleness, despondency, ambition, and idle talking give me not.

(Prostration)

But rather a spirit of chastity, humble-mindedness, patience, and love bestow upon me Thy servant.

(Prostration)

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my failings and not condemn my brother; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

(Prostration)

O God, cleanse me a sinner. (12 times, each time with a bow from the waist)

O Lord and Master of my life, a spirit of idleness, despondency, ambition, and idle talking give me not. But rather a spirit of chastity, humble-mindedness, patience, and love bestow upon me Thy servant. Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my failings and not condemn my brother; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

(Prostration)

## ST. BASIL’S HELPS MISSION IN ARKANSAS

Some of you might remember that two months ago, on the Sunday before the Nativity, the following portion of a letter written by Priest David Carder, the rector of the "Seeker of the Lost" mission in North Little Rock, Arkansas, to Fr Sergii was read from the amvon:

*"Our van caught fire today just as we arrived to serve Liturgy. We were all able to get out of the van, but it burned the entire front end down shortly after (and before the firefighters arrived to extinguish the blaze). We have only carried liability on the vehicle as the purchase price was relatively low. The van has since appreciated in value a few thousand dollars. The Lord is merciful and we are happy to be safe. We also had an unseasonably warm day today and walked home after the Liturgy."*

Archbishop Peter gave his blessing to the parishes in our deanery to take a collection to help Fr David purchase a vehicle for his family. The rectors of the parishes were glad to help the priest’s family in need and all together raised \$1,949.00 (\$709.00 was collected in St Louis).

Efrosinia, Fr David’s wife, searched far and wide to find a good minivan, and such a vehicle was found and purchased in Dallas, TX. We thank God and the benefactors for helping Fr David, Matushka Efrosinia and their four children to be able to travel safely.

*N.B.* Fifth Deanery of the Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America includes the parishes in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Southern Illinois.



# IS MORMONISM CHRISTIAN?: PART 2 ADAPTED FROM INSTITUTE FOR RELIGIOUS RESEARCH

## 4. Is God a Trinity?

The Bible teaches and orthodox Christians through the ages have believed that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost are not separate Gods or separate beings, but are distinct Persons within the one Triune Godhead. Throughout the New Testament the Son and the Holy Spirit, as well as the Father are separately identified as and act as God (Son: Mark 2:5-12; John 20:28; Philippians 2:10,11; Holy Spirit: Acts 5:3,4; 2 Corinthians 3:17,18; 13:14); yet at the same time the Bible teaches that these three are only one God (see point 1).

By contrast, the Mormon Church teaches that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three separate Gods (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 370; Mormon Doctrine, pp. 576-577), and that the Son and Holy Ghost are the literal offspring of Heavenly Father and a celestial wife (Joseph Fielding McConkie, Encyclopedia of Mormonism, vol. 2, p. 649).

## 5. Was The Sin Of Adam and Eve a Great Evil Or a Great Blessing?

The Bible teaches and orthodox Christians through the ages have believed that the disobedience of our first parents Adam and Eve was a great evil. Through their fall sin entered the world, bringing all human beings under condemnation and death. Thus we are born with a sinful nature, and will be judged for the sins we commit as individuals. (Ezekiel 18:1-20; Romans 5:12-21).

By contrast, the Mormon Church teaches that Adam's sin was "a necessary step in the plan of life and a great blessing to all of us" (Gospel Principles, p. 33; Book of Mormon — 2 Nephi 2:25; Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 1, pp. 114-115).

## 6. Can We Make Ourselves Worthy Before God?

The Bible teaches and orthodox Christians through the ages have believed that apart from the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross we are spiritually "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1,5) and are powerless to save ourselves. By grace alone, apart from self-righteous works, God forgives our sins and makes us worthy to live in His presence (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-6). Our part is only to cling to Christ in heartfelt faith. (However, it is certainly true that without the evidence of changed conduct, a person's testimony of faith in Christ must be questioned; salvation by grace alone through faith, does not mean we can live as we please — Romans 6:1-4).

By contrast, the Mormon Church teaches that eternal life in the presence of God (which it terms "exaltation in the celestial kingdom") must be earned through obedience to all the commands of the Mormon Church, including exclusive Mormon temple rituals. Works are a requirement for salvation (entrance into the "celestial kingdom") — Gospel Principles, p. 303-304; Pearl of Great Price — Third Article of Faith; Mormon Doctrine, pp. 339, 671; Book of Mormon — 2 Nephi 25:23).

## 7. Does Christ's Atoning Death Benefit Those Who Reject Him?

The Bible teaches and orthodox Christians through the ages have believed that the purpose of the atoning work of Christ on the cross was to provide the complete solution for humankind's sin problem. However, those who reject God's grace in this life will have no part in this salvation but are under the judgment of God for eternity (John 3:36; Hebrews 9:27; 1 John 5:11-12).

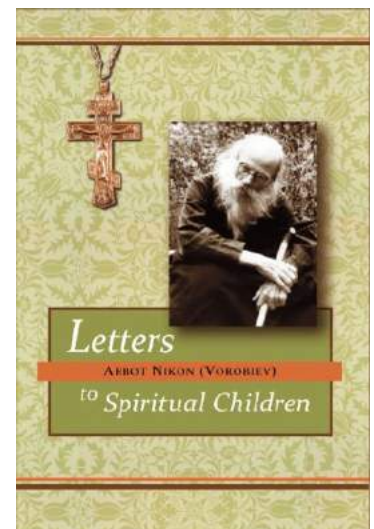
By contrast, the Mormon Church teaches that the purpose of the atonement was to bring resurrection and immortality to all people, regardless of whether they receive Christ by faith. Christ's atonement is only a partial basis for worthiness and eternal life, which also requires obedience to all the commands of the Mormon church, including exclusive Mormon temple rituals (Gospel Principles, pp. 74-75; Mormon Doctrine, p. 669).

*Conclusion is Forthcoming*

## LENTEN BOOK STUDY

Father Thomas will be leading a discussion group throughout Great Lent for anyone interested in reading "*Letters to Spiritual Children*". The book is a collection of letters written to Abbot Nikhon and his response to peoples spiritual struggles.

The group will meet weekly via Zoom online. Anyone that is interested should contact Father Thomas to receive directions on how join the virtual discussion.





### **On Fasting and Our Weakness**

You write: “What confuses me a great deal is the following: my poor health requires me to undergo treatment and to eat well, while the Church Fathers instruct us to abstain.” Everything should be done with discernment. The Church Fathers teach us not only to abstain but also to have concern for one’s body, so that it would not grow weak and become an obstacle for podvig (spiritual efforts).

Venerable Barsonuphius the Great says: “Do not be sorrowful over the fact that you cannot fast due to illness. God does not demand labors above one’s ability. Besides, what is fasting if not a punishment of the body to humble one’s health and to make it too feeble to sin, according to the apostle: “When I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor. 12:10). Sickness is a greater punishment, and it replaces fasting and can even be of a greater value than fasting. He who endures sickness with patience and with giving thanks to God, he obtains the fruit of his salvation through patience. Instead of weakening the bodily strength through fasting, it can be already weakened through illness. Thank God for freeing you from the labors of fasting. Even if you will have to eat ten times a day, do not be sorrowful; you

will not be judged for doing so, since you are not doing it out of self-indulgence”.

### **On Keeping Your Mind Focused on God**

If the circumstances of life do not allow you to keep the external expressions of piety, you should focus your attention on those which are internal. “We should keep our heart with all diligence” (Prov. 4:23) to never lose the thought about God and not to allow mundane thoughts to defile the remembrance of His miracles, but to keep within us the holy thought about God, as an inerasable seal, through continuous and pure remembrance of God in our souls wherever we go. For it is thus that we obtain the love for God, which propels us to fulfillment of the Lord’s commandments, and which is maintained by them and is growing ever more long-suffering and unshakeable” (Holy Hierarch Basil the Great). When we forget about God, then we encounter passions and sinful thoughts.

“Abba Theona said: we are enslaved by passions of the flesh because we mentally depart from contemplation of God”.

So what are we to do? We must compel ourselves to the remembrance of God. We find in the Paterikon: “To compel oneself to all goodness is a Divine path”. And again: “He who compels himself for the sake of God is likened to a confessor”.

### **On Sorrows and Peace in One’s Soul**

You are asking: “Is it possible to be visited by sorrows and still to retain peace in your soul?” In order to answer this question with more accuracy, we need to distinguish between the peace of soul and peace of the spirit given by the grace of God. For the most part, our sorrows always rob our souls of tranquility, but they can never disturb our God-given peace. Therefore, the acquisition of this peace should be our goal in the duration of all our earthly life.

Then you are asking: “Should I confess to the priest the thoughts I have against him?” If this is an average priest, you should not do that, for this will produce only harm and no good. It would be sufficient to confess this in more general terms without specifying whom you are talking about.

*Conclusion is following*

## NEW CATECHUMENS AT ST. BASIL’S

Father Sergii read the prayers for the making of a catechumen over the entire family of Reid and Amber Augustin with their son Charles. The family has started attending catechumen classes given by Parishioner Joseph Steineger and will continue to learn about the Orthodox Faith. Please keep this young family in your prayers that our Lord may continue to guide them in their Orthodox journey.

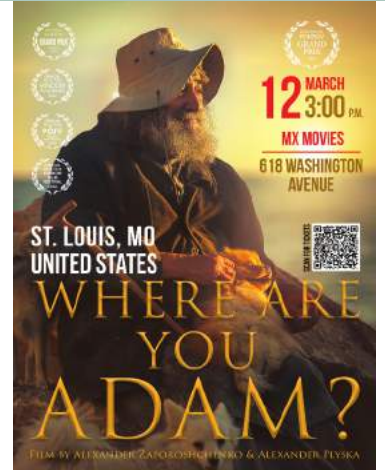


# ORTHODOX MOVIE SCREENING IN ST. LOUIS

"Where are you Adam?" will be screened on March 12th at 3:00 pm. at MX Movie Theatre, located at 618 Washington Avenue, St. Louis, MO.

This film is an immersion into the life of one of the monasteries of Holy Mount Athos. Secluded monastic life full of authentic characters and everyday saints comes forth onto the screen from under the wraps of our mundane priorities.

What emerges is a fascinating account of a completely unparalleled way of life within a thriving monastic community in the midst of the twenty-first century.



# REMEMBERING PARISHIONER GLORIA PAPPAS

Long time parishioner and dutiful handmaid of God, Gloria Pappas, fell asleep in the Lord on January 31st. She spent her last weeks at a hospice facility and was visited by many of our parishioners by whom she was much loved. She also received Holy Communion on various occasions by Father Sergii.

During the funeral services held at St. Basil's on February 3rd, Father Sergii recounted how her humility and service should be an example to all. Many remember how Gloria dutifully cleaned and even cut the grass and raked leaves at the old St. Basil's location on McCausland. She then continued her service for many years after the move to the new temple in Des Peres. Her labors and struggles on earth were sincere and constant. Therefore we pray that "the Lord will give rest to the soul of His handmaid where there is neither pain nor suffering, but life everlasting" (*Kontakion of the Departed*)



Praying for catechumens is a very important responsibility of an Orthodox Christian. So important, that a special litany or series of petitions in the Divine Liturgy is completely dedicated to asking the Lord to have mercy on all catechumens preparing for illumination. "Let us the faithful pray for the catechumens, that the Lord will have mercy on them."

Let us fulfill the words of the litany and pray for our fellow brothers and sisters:

**Alexander**  
**Alexander**  
**Rob, Melinda and family**

**Marshal**  
**Misty and children**  
**Tyler**

**Lauren**  
**Jeremy**  
**Reid, Amber, and Charles**

# CATECHUMEN CORNER

# PARISH PRAYER LIST

**Archpriest Martin Swanson — Repose**  
**Katherine Swanson — Health**  
**Archimandrite Seraphim — Health**  
**Jackie (Xenia) Peck — Health**  
**Photini Mills — Health**

Keep our parishioners, and those who ask us to pray for them, in your prayers this month. Contact Fr. Sergii to have yourself or your loved ones added to the parish prayer list. Let one of the Fathers know if you, a member of your family, or a friend is ill or hospitalized so that appropriate prayers and visits can be arranged. Please note: Hospitals do not notify clergy of patients, even if you list yourself as a parish member.

**Tatiana Zyryanova — Health**  
**Gloria Pappas — Repose**  
**Julianna Campbell — Health**  
**Dimitry Johnson — Health**  
**John Surgant — Health**