



## St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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Rector

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Services Schedule

Please see our [online calendar](#) for dates and times of Feast Day services.

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Bulletin for Sunday, February 14, 2021

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### Welcome



Jesus Christ taught us to love and serve all people, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. To understand that, we need to look no further than to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Every time we celebrate the Divine

Liturgy, it is offered "on behalf of all, and for all." As Orthodox Christians we stand against

racism and bigotry. All human beings share one common identity as children of God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatian 3:28)

### Members of our Parish Council are:

Joseph Barbera - Council Member at Large  
Dori Kuziak - Council Secretary  
Caroline Neiss - Vice President  
Marlene Melesko - Council Member at Large  
Kyle Hollis - President  
Roderick Seurattan - Treasurer

## **Pastoral Care - General Information**

Emergency Sick Calls can be made at any time. Please call Fr Steven at (860) 866-5802, when a family member is admitted to the hospital.

Anointing in Sickness: The Sacrament of Unction is available in Church, the hospital, or your home, for anyone who is sick and suffering, however severe.

Marriages and Baptisms require early planning, scheduling and selections of sponsors (crown bearers or godparents). See Father before booking dates and reception halls!

Funerals are celebrated for practicing Orthodox Christians. Please see Father for details. The Church opposes cremation; we cannot celebrate funerals for cremations.

## **Announcements**

*Please be sure to check your email or Channel 3 before leaving for services tonight or tomorrow. I will make the decision to hold services live or via streaming only possible only an hour before the scheduled start, as dictated by weather conditions.*

## **Lenten Reading**

*Pilgrimage to Pascha: A Daily Devotional for Great Lent*

by Archpriest Steven John Belonick with Michele Constable and Michael Soroka / Second edition edited by Deborah Malacky Belonick

This unpretentious little book of meditations based on Scripture, ancient hymns,

and writings from Church Fathers will nourish the souls of reflective seekers during the forty-day period of Great Lent. Authors of each meditation have delved deeply into the sins and shortcomings of their own hearts, enabling readers to share in a collective human experience - from darkness to light, from despair to hope, and from isolation to commonality in the body of Christ - as they move steadily toward our Lord's Resurrection.

About the Author: Archpriest Steven John Belonick was Valedictorian of the Class of 1977 at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Yonkers, NY. Throughout his 40-year pastorate as a priest in the Orthodox Church in America he served three parishes and also served as Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Chaplain at the seminary. His favorite Bible passage, John 21:15-17 - in which the Lord instructs his disciple Peter to "feed My sheep" - often strengthened him in his ministry, and it also inspired his guiding principle: "Above all, a pastor must communicate God's love to His sheep." Father Steven reposed in the Lord August 7, 2019. Memory Eternal!

Proceeds from the purchase of this book go to support scholarships for seminarians from the Diocese of New England.

<https://store.ancientfaith.com/pilgrimage-to-pascha-a-daily-devotional-for-great-lent/>

Mission Sunday, March 14, 2021

To the Reverend Clergy, Venerable Monastics, and the Devout Faithful of the Holy Orthodox Churches in the United States:

Greetings in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Despite the anxieties, disruption, loss and grief imposed by the pandemic of these past, long months, we know that in our Savior and Healer we have no need to fear. Indeed, proclaiming this Good News is as important, if not more important, now than ever. The Hierarchs of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the United States are committed to this mission, and one means we do so beyond our borders is our support of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) on which we specially focus on Mission Sunday, March 14 of this year.

Our world faces great tempests, the pandemic being but one. Yet we are called to courageously face these storms in the great hope of our deliverance through and in our Lord, just as when He walks on the water to his fearful disciples cowering in their boat during a fierce storm (Matthew 14). He calls to them, "Take courage, it is I, fear not." While Peter kept his focus on Christ, he was able to walk on water, but when he focused on the storm he started to sink. We must keep an unwavering focus on Christ and His Church, the means of our rescue and protection from the storms that rage around us. Others will see our faith and turn to Christ. Like the disciples who watched Peter walk on the water, they will proclaim Jesus Christ is the Son of God,

and they too will be saved.

This is the holy work that OCMC accomplishes on your behalf and with your support. By praying for OCMC, financially supporting its ministries, serving as a missionary, or volunteering for a short-term mission team, you are helping reach the more than one billion people worldwide who have never heard the Gospel and hunger and thirst for salvation in Jesus Christ. You are also impacting our local communities by being shining beacons of Christ's Good News. Visit [ocmc.org](http://ocmc.org) to learn more about the ministry of our Mission Center and support the work that they accomplish throughout the world.

We pray that you have a blessed Lenten journey with your gaze constantly fixed on Christ Jesus to rise above life's storms. And may your life in the Resurrected Christ be freely offered to strengthen your sisters and brothers during these challenging times.

With Blessings in Christ,

Bishop Demetrios signature  
Bishop Demetrios of Mokissos  
Episcopal Liaison to OCMC

## Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Archpriest Dennis,  
Archpriest Michael,  
Deacon Timothy, Evelyn,  
Katheryn, Anne, Aaron,  
Veronica, Richard,  
Nancy, Susanne, Carol,  
Alexander, Gail, Vincent,  
Nina, Ellen, Maureen,  
Elizabeth, Christopher,  
Joshua, Jennifer, Petra,  
Olivia, Jessica, Sean,  
Sarah, Justin, Nona,  
Arnold, Michael, Kirk,

Carol-Anne, Anthony, Natasha, Gene, John,  
John, Michael, Kelley, Krisha, Alix, Natalie,  
Edward, Nathan, Caila, Julianna, Paul, John,  
Jacob, Lynn, Anna, Richard, Robert, Dorothy

Memory Eternal! Archpriest Eugene,  
Archpriest Joseph, Dana.

Many Years! to Alex Martins and Nadia  
PenkoffLedbeck on the occasion of their  
birthdays, and to Glenn and Stasia  
PenkoffLedbeck on the occasion of their  
anniversary.

- addictions, abuse, abandonment and despair; those who are homeless, those who are institutionalized, those who have no one to pray for them;
- All Orthodox seminarians & families; all Orthodox monks and nuns, and all those considering monastic life; all Orthodox missionaries and their families.
- All those who have perished due to hatred, intolerance and pestilence; all those departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

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Sunday of Zacchaeus. Ven. Auxentius of Bithynia (ca. 470). Repose of St. Cyril, Equal-to-the-Apostles and Teacher of the Slavs (869). Ven. Isaac, Recluse, of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—ca. 1190). The Twelve Greeks who built the Dormition Cathedral in the Lavra of the Kiev Caves (11th c.). Translation of the Relics of Martyrs Michael and his councilor, Theodore, of Chernígov (1578). Ven. Maron, Hermit, of Syria (4th c.). St. Abraham, Bishop of Charres, Mesopotamia (5th c.).

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- Pray for: All those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes due to illness; for all those who serve in the armed forces; widows, orphans, prisoners, victims of violence, and refugees;
  - All those suffering chronic illness, financial hardship, loneliness,

## Parish Calendar

## Parish Calendar

February 14 to February 22, 2021

**Sunday, February 14**

9:30AM Divine Liturgy

## Monday, February 15

Alex Martins  
PenkoffLidbeck  
Onesimus the Apostle of the 70

## Tuesday, February 16

Pamphilus the Martyr & his Companions  
8:30AM Daily Matins  
6:30PM Parish Council Meeting

## Wednesday, February 17

Theodore the Tyro, Great Martyr  
6:30PM Evening Prayers followed by Lesson  
on Triodion

## Thursday, February 18

Nadia PenkoffLidbeck  
Leo the Great, Pope of Rome  
8:30AM Daily Matins

## Friday, February 19

The Holy Apostles of the Seventy Philemon,  
Apphia, Archippus, and Onesimus

## Saturday, February 20

Leo, Bishop of Catania  
5:30PM Great Vespers

## Sunday, February 21

Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee:  
Triodion Begins Today  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

## Monday, February 22

The Finding of the Precious Relics of the  
Holy Martyrs in the Quarter of Eugenius

## Saints and Feasts

### February 14

#### Cyril, Equal-to-the-Apostles & Teacher of the Slavs

Saint Cyril was born in Thessaloniki in the early 9<sup>th</sup> century to pious parents. His family was one of only a few Byzantines in Thessaloniki at that time since it was largely populated by Slavs. Growing up in this situation, Cyril learned the Slavonic language, which later in life would serve him and the Church at large. He continued his education in Constantinople with his brother Methodios (see May 11<sup>th</sup>), each taking to their particular interests: Methodios in politics, and Cyril in philosophy and teaching.

The two brothers were approached in 850 by Saint Photios the Great (see February 6<sup>th</sup>) to lead a diplomatic mission to the Khazars, the people who inhabited the western shore of the Caspian Sea. Cyril and Methodios accepted this mission and departed to the North. After the success of this trip, the brothers lived for a time in a monastery on Mount Olympus where Methodios became a monk. At this time the brothers utilized their childhood Slavonic education to develop a written alphabet for the Slavonic language, which to this time had never existed. This alphabet became known as the *Glagolitic Alphabet*. On their own instigation, the brothers began translating the Gospels and liturgical service books into Slavonic.

Providentially, Cyril and Methodios were again called upon for a mission, this time to travel to Moravia to spread the Christian faith to King Rostislav (see May 11<sup>th</sup>) and his people. The brothers departed in 862, bringing with them their Slavonic alphabet and service books. After five years of service, the brothers made their way to Rome in 867 to have members of their company ordained to the priesthood to aid in the missionary journey. The group of missionaries celebrated the Divine Liturgy in Rome in the Slavonic language for the very first time with members of their party being ordained as they intended. While in Rome, Cyril fell deathly ill. He was tonsured a monk and died. His brother Methodios continued their missionary work, utilizing the *Glagolthic Alphabet*. Cyril and his brother Methodios are commemorated together on May 11<sup>th</sup>.

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## **February 15**

### **Onesimus the Apostle of the 70**

This Apostle, who was from Colossae, was a bond-servant of that Philemon to whom the Apostle Paul addressed his epistle. Onesimus escaped from Philemon and fled to Rome, where he became a disciple of Saint Paul. Saint Paul brought him to the Faith of Christ, and then sent him back to his master, who in turn gave him his freedom and sent him back to Rome again, where he ministered to Saint Paul. Later, he was seized because he was a Christian and was sent to Puteoli, where he was beaten to death with clubs. Saint Onesimus is also commemorated on November 22 with

the holy Apostles Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus.

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## **February 17**

### **Theodore the Tyro, Great Martyr**

Saint Theodore who was from Amasia of Pontus, contested during the reign of Maximian (286-305). He was called Tyro, from the Latin *Tiro*, because he was a newly enlisted recruit. When it was reported that he was a Christian, he boldly confessed Christ; the ruler, hoping that he would repent, gave him time to consider the matter more completely and then give answer. Theodore gave answer by setting fire to the temple of Cybele, the "mother of the gods," and for this he suffered a martyr's death by fire. See also the First Saturday of the Fast.

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## **February 18**

### **Leo the Great, Pope of Rome**

According to some, this Saint was born in Rome, but according to others in Tyrrenia (Tuscany), and was consecrated to the archiepiscopal throne of Rome in 440. In 448, when Saint Flavian, Archbishop of Constantinople, summoned Eutyches, an archimandrite in Constantinople, to give account for his teaching that there was only one nature in Christ after the Incarnation, Eutyches appealed to Saint Leo in Rome. After Saint Leo had carefully examined Eutyches's teachings, he wrote an epistle to Saint Flavian, setting forth the Orthodox

teaching of the person of Christ, and His two natures, and also counseling Flavian that, should Eutyches sincerely repent of his error, he should be received back with all good will. At the Council held in Ephesus in 449, which was presided over by Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria (and which Saint Leo, in a letter to the holy Empress Pulcheria in 451, was the first to call "The Robber Council"), Dioscorus, having military might behind him, did not allow Saint Leo's epistle to Flavian to be read, although repeatedly asked to do so; even before the Robber Council was held, Dioscorus had uncanonically received the unrepentant Eutyches back into communion. Because Saint Leo had many cares in Rome owing to the wars of Attila the Hun and other barbarians, in 451 he sent four delegates to the Fourth Ecumenical Council, where 630 Fathers gathered in Chalcedon during the reign of Marcian, to condemn the teachings of Eutyches and those who supported him. Saint Leo's epistle to Flavian was read at the Fourth Council, and was confirmed by the Holy Fathers as the Orthodox teaching on the incarnate person of our Lord; it is also called the "Tome of Leo." The Saint wrote many works in Latin; he reposed in 461. See also Saint Anatolius, July 3.

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## Hymns of the Day



### **Tone 3 Troparion (Resurrection)**

Let the heavens rejoice!  
Let the earth be glad!  
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.  
He has trampled down death by death.  
He has become the first born of the dead.  
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,  
and has granted to the world//  
great mercy.

### **Tone 1 Troparion (Ven. Auxentius)**

O dweller of the wilderness and angel in the body,  
you were a wonderworker, O our God-bearing Father Auxentius.  
You received heavenly gifts through fasting, vigil, and prayer,  
healing the sick and the souls of those drawn to you by faith.  
Glory to Him Who gave you strength!  
Glory to Him Who granted you a ^crown!//  
Glory to Him Who grants healing to all!

### **Tone 3 Kontakion (Resurrection)**

On this day You rose from the tomb, O Merciful One,  
leading us from the gates of death.  
On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices;  
with the Prophets and Patriarchs//  
they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Your power.

### **Tone 2 Kontakion (Ven. Auxentius)**

You delighted in abstinence,  
restraining the desires of the flesh.  
Divinely wise and holy Father Auxentius,  
you were revealed to be shining with faith,//  
blossoming like a plant in the midst

of Paradise.

### **Tone 3 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)**

Sing praises to our God, sing praises! / Sing praises to our King, sing praises!  
(Ps. 46:6)

V. Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy! (Ps. 46:1)

### **Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (Ps. 148:1)  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

### **Gospel and Epistle Readings**

### **Wisdom of the Fathers**

Little Zacchaeus had climbed up into a tree, to see the Lord Jesus with his own eyes. He had sought Him, desired Him. And we must seek Him in order to find Him, and desire that He draw near to us, and climb up high in spirit to meet His glance. Then He will visit our house as He visited the house of Zacchaeus, and bring salvation with Him.

### **Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic**

*Prolog, 4 February*

In this reading we note Zacchaeus' sense of eager expectation, the intensity of his desire to see our Lord, and we apply this to ourselves. If, as we prepare for Lent, there is real eagerness in our hearts, if we have

an intense desire for a clearer vision of Christ, then our hopes will be fulfilled during the fast; indeed, we shall, like Zacchaeus, receive far more than we expect.

### **Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia**

*The Meaning of the Great Fast from the Lenten Triodion*

### **Beyond the Sermon**



Metropolitan Anthony of  
Sourozh  
SUNDAY OF ZACCHEUS  
12 January 1978

In the name of the  
Father, the Son and the  
Holy Ghost.

Last week we have

entered into the several weeks on our way to the day of the Resurrection, when we are told to examine ourselves; then a time will come to think of nothing but the ways of God preparing us for salvation; and when we reach Holy Week, then we should have no thought, nothing but the Lord Whose passion we will be contemplating before we enter together with Him into the glory and the joy of His Resurrection.

Last week we read the Gospel of the Blind man of Jericho; it challenges us directly; we all contend that we see; we all contend that we are not blind, and yet, is not the way

in which we see another form of blindness? Are we not blinded by the visible to the invisible, are we not blinded by prejudice against truth, are we not blinded by passion against reality? And so, each of us has got to ask himself whether what he sees is the reality of things, and if not, turn to God asking Him to give him an insight. And one of the things, that blinds us most hopelessly is vanity that makes us accept for true all the lies we may hear or observe which boost our self-respect, which make us reject everything which is criticism or condemnation of us.

Today's Gospel is about vanity and about the way in which it can be overcome, indeed about the condition and the cost of it. Zacchaeus was a rich man, P° man known in his town, a man whom everyone would recognise; he was a man of unrighteous ways, and yet something stirred within him when he heard of Christ and he wanted to see Him. It probably was to a certain extent a desire to see the New Prophet of Israel, but this would not have been enough to prompt him to do what he did; in the crowd, because he was too small of stature, he climbed into a tree; sure, he was surrounded with laughter, with mockery and yet, he so wanted to see Christ, it mattered so much to him to see Him that he was prepared to be mocked, laughed at rather than let Him pass by. And in all this crowd through which Christ was passing Christ saw only one man: Zacchaeus, and He called him down and He went to stay with him.

Vanity is that condition of our soul, that miserable condition of our soul, in which we are afraid of human judgment, in which we derive our sense of worth from

the judgment of those who surround us. And indeed it is vanity, because the things for which we are praised are vain, empty, unworthy of the greatness of man; and also, we do not turn for praise to those people capable of a sound and at times severe judgment; we turn to the people who are ready to offer us the praises which we want. This makes these praises doubly vain, its substance is naught, and the people from whom we receive it are also empty, in our own eyes, until they speak of us good. St John Climacus says that vanity is the attitude of one who is afraid of men and is arrogant before the face of God, who thinks God's judgment matters little, provided that he has the approval of those who surround him.

Is that not a true description of the way in which we stand in life, of the way in which we are prepared to forget the judgment of God provided we feel supported by the judgment of men? And what is the way then? Zacchaeus shows us one way: care nothing about the judgment of men because the judgment of God, the presence of God, or perhaps the judgment of the one who will not praise us but is a person of integrity and of truth matters more. Zacchaeus did not know Whom Christ was and that He was the Son of God become the Son of man, but he knew that Christ was a man of integrity and he wanted to see Him, to meet Him face to face.

But then there are also two other ways of shaking off the fear of man, this dependence upon human's judgment at the cost of our own wholeness. St John Climacus says to us that the way to get rid of vanity is humility; St Isaac of Syria strangely says the way is also pride,

and both are true, only that the one will give us life and the other will give us death. If we choose the way of pride we will assert ourselves arrogantly, not only in the face of men, but also in the face of God; our own judgment shall be the only thing that count, and then we will find death at the end of the road. The way of humility is that of bowing before the judgment of God. If we are incapable of soaring Godwards, lie before Him like the parched earth is before the face of the sky, abandoned, helpless, thirsty, hungry, longing, desperate not to be able to achieve what we wish to achieve, this is the beginning of humility.

But even that may be too much for us, even that may be too difficult for us because we are not used to let go, to abandon ourselves, offer ourselves to an act of God. Then we can begin to overcome vanity by gratitude. Whenever we discover that there is in us a moment of vanity, let us ask ourselves: why? Very often, it is because we have, inadvertently quite often, said the right thing, or inadvertently done the right thing; we can then turn to God and thank Him that He gave us the opportunity, that He gave us eyes to see the need, ears to hear the cry, a mind to understand, a heart to respond, good will to bring us into motion and the mean to do the right thing. Is not that reason enough for us to be grateful, do we not know, all of us, from experience that it is not the need that will call out of us always, inevitably the right response? How often there is a need and our heart is parched, and cold, and indifferent? How often someone cries for help and we understand nothing, how often our heart has been stirred and our mind began to understand, but we are not used to compel

ourselves, and our will wavers, and wavers too long, until it is too late. And we could go on describing our condition in many more details. Let us learn first of all to be grateful that God gives us the possibility to do right instead of preening ourselves and be proud of the fact that for once we have done what should be natural to us always, and then gradually we may outgrow even that level and still remaining grateful, still remaining amazed at God's goodness. We may then learn to be humble in a way in which no one knows, not declaring that we are unworthy, but in adoration of God's greatness, in veneration of other people, in the readiness to forget ourselves completely for the sake of God, for the sake of any person who meets us and challenges us to be compassionate, to be loving, to be understanding. And the blindness might fall off our eyes, vanity will leave us free at least for a moment and we will be able to face ourselves and to face God and others as the Publican did when he entered the Temple, and did not dare to come unto into it because it was the place of holiness where God abides, the place where he thought only the worthy ones can come. And we will be accepted by God because of this recognition of His holiness and the reverence, with which we will treat Him and our neighbour. Amen.

Book Discussion with Guest Lecturer  
**Dr. Jeannie Constantinou**

Saturday, February 27<sup>th</sup> ~ 9:30 am - 11:00 am PST  
via ZOOM

To Register: Contact Alexis at [boyda02@gmail.com](mailto:boyda02@gmail.com)

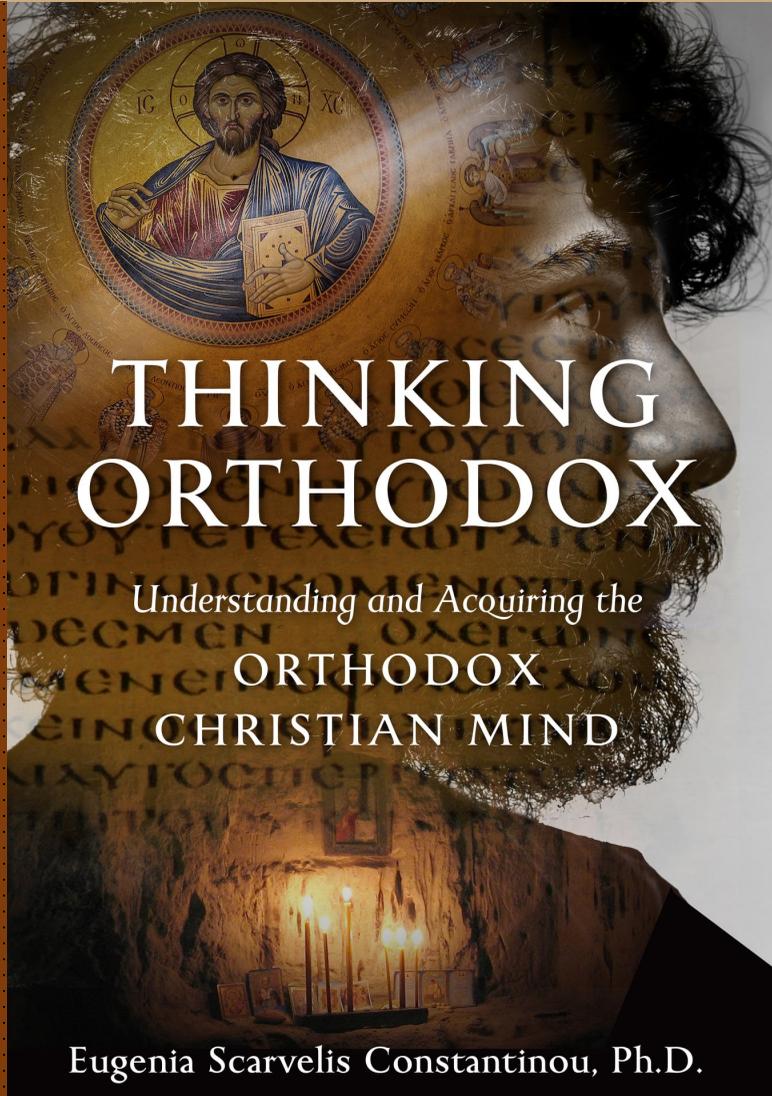


**Eugenia Scarvelis  
Constantinou, Ph.D.**

Dr. Eugenia Constantinou hosts the popular podcast *Search the Scriptures Live!* on Ancient Faith Radio. She has been a professor and visiting lecturer on the Bible, patristic interpretation of Scripture, and early Christianity at Orthodox and non-Orthodox universities and schools of theology. She holds master's degrees in theology from the University of San Diego, Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, and Harvard Divinity School; a juris doctorate from Pepperdine University School of Law; and a Ph.D. from Université Laval in Quebec City in the history of biblical interpretation. She is married to Fr. Costas, a Greek Orthodox priest in Southern California.

The book [Thinking Orthodox](#), to be discussed in Dr. Constantinou's lecture on Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>, is available online from Ancient Faith Publishing at:

[https://store.ancientfaith.com/  
thinking-orthodox/](https://store.ancientfaith.com/thinking-orthodox/)



# THINKING ORTHODOX

Understanding and Acquiring the  
ORTHODOX  
CHRISTIAN MIND

**Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou, Ph.D.**

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