



THE Veil

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF
ST. MARY ORTHODOX CHURCH

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A LIVING ICON OF CHRIST: REMEMBERING FR. ROMAN BRAGA

FR. DAVID SUBU

At the 93rd Episcopate Congress held on September 5th, 2025 in Chicago, IL, Mother Gabriella came to speak about Fr. Roman Braga, of blessed memory, with the instructions that she should talk about she knew him personally. She did so with trepidation for, as the old saying goes, "only a saint should speak about a saint." She entered her monastic life at Varatec under the spiritual guidance of Mother Benedicta Braga (Fr. Roman's sister). She emigrated with M. Benedicta to the States in 1978 where she would meet Fr. Roman.

In the monastery in Ellwood City, Mother Gabriella learned from Fr. Roman about where he grew up, near the Condrita monastery. He spoke of hearing the bells as a child and learning the services later from the monks. His mother was very pious, who prayed everyday from the Ceaslov (book of hours) and from the psalter. He learned from her lessons on scripture about God that he was everywhere. She taught him how not to be afraid by teaching him a prayer from the psalms "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" This prayer served and saved him many times later in life.

At a young age, Fr. Roman went to seminary at a time with people like St. Sofian, Patriarch Teoctist, and others who would become well known in Orthodoxy in Romania. At Cernica monastery, where he studied, he would pray, resting his head on the tomb of St. Calinic, and receiving great comfort. Eventually he received an education as a teacher and in theology.

When communism came, he formed a magazine of theological students, ATHOS. They wrote and distributed a manifesto that they would not go to the communist parades on Holy Saturday that year but would go to church. During this time, he was first imprisoned simply for being friends with a priest who was a member of a Legionary movement. For this, young Roman suffered in Pitesti, the unique "re-education" experiment that existed for two years which was something that could not be understood. It was an attempt to recreate men in the communist atheist image, through torture, but was not successful. Those prisoners were sent to the forced labor camp on the Danube-Black Sea Canal. Many died in captivity.

Later Fr. Roman was put into solitary confinement for one year. He spoke of being in a 3' x 5' cell with a single light bulb. He often would say that in such circumstances you either go crazy or you go inside yourself and you find God dwelling within you. He did not speak often of the suffering but rather of how it impacted him, to the point of being able to say he was thankful for communist prison because through it he discovered God in direct personal experience. He would say it was hard to understand or imagine, because a healthy person should not be able to understand such brutality. He was afraid at times that he would lose his mind. He was scarred in body, but he would not speak of it except to say, "I got that in prison." (*cont'd on p.6*)



Saint Mary
ORTHODOX CHURCH

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God Grant You Many Years!

Don't see your name? Join us on Realm and fill out your profile. If you include your birthday and nameday, you'll see them here.

BIRTHDAYS

Alexandra B.
Ben C.
Lauren C.
Stephanie C.
Jesse D.
Eva F.
Natalie F.
Matt H.
Olivia H.
Inna K.
Phil K.
Sally M.

Julia M.
Luca M.
Katherine M.
Vittoria S.
Steve S.
Elias V.
George Z.

NAMESDAYS

Sept 3 — St. Phoebe
Sept 7 — St. Elizabeth the Mother of
St. John the Baptist
Sept 7 — St. Kassiani the Hymnographer
Sept 8 — The Nativity of the Theotokos
Sept 9 — St. Anna
Sept. 17 — St. Sophia of Rome & St. Charity

ANNIVERSARIES

Adrian & Mihaela B.
Andrew & Paige B.
Dn. Nicholas & Cathy D.
Nicholas & Melanie K.

Joe & Alyssa M.
Steve S. & Fotina N.
Nick & Alina S.
Matt & Melanie T.
Robert & Paula Y.



REGISTER FOR FALL 2025 CATECHISM CLASSES

Sept 13–Nov 15 @ 3pm–4:30pm, every week on Saturdays

This Fall, we are offering a course to help catechumen articulate the history, purpose, value, and meaning of the Eastern Orthodox Church's dogma and doctrine as outlined in the Nicene Creed. Upon finishing this course, catechumen will be well-prepared for reception into the Orthodox Church.



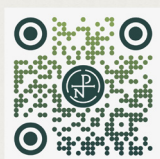
**SCAN TO
REGISTER**

or find the Event
on Realm



www.praythenewstoday.com

Don't just read the news. Pray it.



We deliver the top news stories without partisan bias and offer up each one to God, all in less than 15 minutes a day.

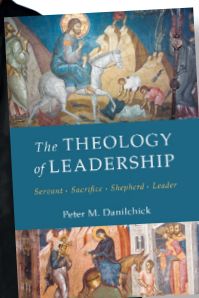
It's prayer, not politics—promised.



New release from St. Vladimir's Seminary Press from our own Proto-

The Theology of Leadership

Servant • Sacrifice • Shepherd • Leader



In a world awash with leadership theories, workshops, and self-help formulas, why do so many leaders still falter under pressure? The Theology of Leadership offers a decisive answer: true leadership begins not with personality traits or management techniques, but with spiritual transformation. Drawing deeply from the riches of Orthodox Christian theology, Rev. Dn. Peter M. Danilchick presents a bold and refreshing vision of leadership grounded in obedience, integrity, service, sacrifice, and shepherding.

Purchase at tinyurl.com/theology-of-leadership



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31 9am-11:30am Matins & Liturgy	1 CHURCH NEW YEAR	2	3	4	5	6 ST. DAVID OF EGYPT
Episcopate Congress September 4-6						
7 9am-11:30am Matins & Divine Liturgy 12pm-2pm Annual Church Picnic & Ministry Fair	8 NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS 7am-8am Divine Liturgy 7pm-8pm Council of Ministries	9	10 7pm-7:40pm Vespers 7:45pm-9pm- Financial Peace University	11	12 LEAVE-TAKING OF NATIVITY OF THE THEOOKOS 3pm-4pm Philokalia Book Study	13 FOREFEAST OF THE EXALTATION 3pm-4:30pm Adult Catechism I: The Faith 5pm-6pm Great Vespers with Group Confession
14 EXALTATION OF THE CROSS 9am-11:30am Matins & Divine Liturgy 11:30am-12:30pm Church School Open House	15 7pm-9pm Parish Council	16 12pm-2pm Clergy Council @ St. Andrew OCA 2pm-3:30pm OCA Clergy Synaxis	17 SS. SOPHIA, FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE 7am-8am Divine Liturgy 7pm-7:40pm Vespers 7:45pm-9pm- Financial Peace University	18	19 3pm-4pm Philokalia Book Study 6:30pm-8pm Women's Bible Study	20 3pm-4:30pm Adult Catechism I: The Faith 5pm-6pm Great Vespers
21 9am-11:30am Matins & Divine Liturgy 9:50am Churching: Williamson 11:30am-1:00pm Fellowship Hour/ Church School 6pm-8pm Men's Fellowship	22	23 CONCEPTION OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST	24 NEW MARTYRS OF ALASKA, PETER AND JUVENAL 7am-8am Divine Liturgy 7pm-7:40pm Vespers 7:45pm-9pm- Financial Peace University	25	26 REPOSE OF ST. JOHN THE THEOLOGIAN 3pm-4pm Philokalia Book Study	27 Baptism: Williamson @ St. John DC 3pm-4:30pm Adult Catechism I: The Faith 5pm-6pm Great Vespers
28 9am-11:30am Matins & Divine Liturgy 11:30am-1:00pm Fellowship Hour/ Church School 12:30pm-1:00pm Retirement and Giving Talk	29	30 7pm-8pm Festal Vespers	1 PROTECTION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD 7am-8am Divine Liturgy 7pm-7:40pm Vespers 7:45pm-9pm- Financial Peace University	2	3 3pm-4pm Philokalia Book Study	4 Baptism: Tingstrom 3pm-4:30pm Adult Catechism I: The Faith (online only) 5pm-6pm Vespers @ Connect Conference, DC
Connect Conference DC October 3-5						

Visit stmaryorthodox.org/calendar for the most updated event listings.

Answering the Call: Support Our Seminarians

**LACIE FABER | COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGER**

Across the United States, Orthodox parishes are facing a growing shortage of priests. Many communities are in need of pastors to guide their faithful, offer the sacraments, and sustain the holy Tradition of the Church in our midst. At the same time, God continues to raise up men from our midst who hear His call to ordained ministry. Several of our own current and former parishioners, including Matthew S. and Andrew B., are answering that call by pursuing studies at Orthodox seminaries—including St. Tikhon's Seminary in Pennsylvania, the oldest Orthodox seminary in America.

Seminary life is both a great bless-

ing and a heavy responsibility. Students devote themselves to prayer, study, and service, preparing to pastor the faithful. Yet the financial burdens are real: tuition, housing, family support, and living expenses often weigh heavily on these families. Many seminarians are raising children while living on very modest means, trusting God's providence as they prepare for a life of service to the Church.

As their home parish, we have both the privilege and responsibility to support them. Every priest, before he stands at the altar, first stood among the faithful in the pews. Our donations directly ease the path for those who will one day return to serve communities like ours—perhaps even here at St. Mary's.

We invite you to prayerfully consider a financial gift to help sustain these families during their seminary years. Contributions will go toward tuition assistance, housing, and basic living costs, ensuring that our seminarians can focus fully on their formation. Donations can easily be submitted by Realm or check, noting "Seminarian Support" in the drop-down/memo line.

By giving generously, you are not only supporting individuals and families—you are investing in the future of the Orthodox Church in America. May the Lord bless your offering, and may He grant strength and wisdom to those preparing to serve Him as priests. ✠



Doxacon 2025 T-Shirts Available...in Green or Purple or Both!

CINDY S. | DOXAICON PRIME, CO-CHAIR

Doxacon is proud to present the 2025 Doxaicon T-Shirt, designed by Amy D. Amy writes that "The T-shirt design incorporates themes from Twin Peaks, Magic: The Gathering, Avatar: The Last Airbender, and classical Greek imagery, among others. The central design is an attempt to visually represent catharsis."

T-Shirts are \$20 on the Doxaicon registration site. You are free to purchase multiple shirts in multiple colors - no Doxaicon registration required. Proceeds from the T-Shirts support our ministry. Visit <https://doxaicon2025.bpt.me> to purchase one today! ✕



St. Mary's Partnership with FCCSC

ELLEN R. | PARISHIONER

The Falls Church Community Service Council is an organization that provides assistance to many members of the community in need. It was started in 1969 and has continued adding services for the past 50 years and includes help from many local churches and community members.

St Mary's is one of the groups that

supports their mission by contributing to their Food Pantry, which is located at Knox Presbyterian Church, on Rt 50. We have also been making lunches monthly for another one of their programs at a local shelter and have donated towels and other items that have been requested.

This organization serves people who live in zip codes 22042, 22043,

22044 and 22046. If you live in one of those zip codes, you can contact this group and they may be able to help with things like utilities, rent, food, etc.

It is a great organization that helps the community in significant ways. If you would like to volunteer or would value their help, please look at their website at www.fcsweare.org. ✕

Growing Stewardship, Growing St. Mary's

LACIE FABER | COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

At St. Mary's, stewardship is our calling to use wisely what God has placed in our care—our families, our parish, and our future. This fall, we have an incredible opportunity to strengthen that calling together and open new doors for what our parish can accomplish.

We're kicking off with Financial Peace University (FPU), a nine-week course by best-selling teacher and investor Dave Ramsey. Running from Wednesdays from September 10-November 5 in the Fellowship Hall, FPU is practical, engaging, and proven—it has helped millions of families learn how to budget, pay off debt, and save with confidence. Whether you already feel steady in your finances or want to make improvements,

you will leave with fresh tools and inspiration. And as we grow in financial peace at home, we open the way to greater generosity in the Church. Register on Realm today!

Next, on Sunday, September 28, everyone is invited to join us during fellowship hour for our Strategic and Tax-Efficient Charitable Giving Fireside Chat with expert Lori J. In a relaxed and conversational setting, we'll explore how structuring charitable giving strategically throughout our lives—for example, through donor-advised funds, IRAs, wills, and estate planning—can bless both our parish and our loved ones for whom we are preparing a legacy. This is a chance to think big about what kind of future we want to build together.

These two efforts are not just about

money—they're about vision. With stronger stewardship, we can do more than keep the lights on. We can raise the funds needed to support seminarians from our parish, invest in the future growth of our parish, and expand ministries that touch every age and stage of our community.

Let's seize this opportunity together—strengthening our households, strengthening our parish, and preparing St. Mary's for an even brighter future. ✕



For him that suffering was mystical and holy—to speak too much of it would be to diminish it. In reaching their limit of suffering and calling out to God, that is when they would experience God, and they could then suffer it a little more easily. Prayer became his every breath, even when he slept.

Eventually, he was given a “vacation” by the communists and was able to get away to

Iasi and finally see his sister. There he took monastic vows and was ordained a deacon. He also became beloved by the university students there who got to know him, visiting the monastery to secretly pray before exams. He was also involved in the Burning Bush movement, founded by Sandu Tudor (Monk Daniel.) This led to Fr. Roman’s arrest a second time, a second time at the labor camp. Here he experienced the best “course” in theology he ever had from a fellow prisoner who was a theology professor, but who exhibited the faith on a deep level in that difficult place.

After a second stint in prison, he was blacklisted. He was not allowed to join any monastic community. He could not get a teaching position. Finally, he was accepted to become a priest in Negrești (a village in Western Moldavia) and began to naturally gather a group

of disciples, such was his charisma. Soon a choir of 100 students gathered around him, and their parents too who wished to learn the faith that had been kept from them. In reaction, the author-

ities moved him by night to Sirbi, but this did not stop Fr. Roman preaching. Eventually, he was assigned to a mission in Brazil. Fr. Roman took this

as providence, and that he would not survive in Romania, simply by just doing his pastoral work. He was told to go and serve the people wherever he would find them.

For four years he served in Brazil but was harassed even there by the Securitate (Romanian Secret Police). He was taken under the care of the local Antiochian bishop Ignatius and the local mayor (also providentially named Braga), who help get him a visa to the United States in 1972. At first, he lived at the Vatra Romaneasca (our Episcopate chancery in Grass Lake, MI) for several years, and flourished there. He worked with Fr. John Tocanita of blessed memory and (then) Fr. Nathaniel at this time and especially enjoyed helping at the summer camps. He learned English quickly, much because of his work with the youth at the summer camps. He also

contributed greatly to the translation of church music into English in simplified settings suitable to American ears. He translated from memory the canon of Palm Sunday, which he learned as a child. A new era of his life began, and the most productive years of his life were here in the United States.

He encouraged the Romanian-American community to stay together, to remember their faith, and love their country of birth so that they could love the country of their adoption. He would say that you have to know where you came from to be a good Christian and good citizen in the new.

Despite the hardships he suffered, he remained joyful. He was a truly humble man and was an example of loving one’s enemies as Christ commanded. He remembered by name and prayed for those who personally had tortured him. He would say that it was not normal for humans to act that way, it was demonic. They needed prayer! When one of them became a Christian, he embraced him as a brother.

Fr. Roman was a great liturgist, an example for the clergy. Every liturgy was like the first one he ever served, with joy. Every word pronounced clearly, never rushed. He left such an example for us. He had a vision for the Orthodox Church in America that will become its own unique expression of the faith—just wait and see! ✠



HIS EMINENCE OFFERED THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION TO CLOSE OUT THE CONGRESS:

RESOLUTION

From the time of his arrival in the United States, we saw in Father Roman, in his unique way, a living icon of the Lord. He was a person whose life was not only dedicated to, but, literally, was the personification of man as God intended. He exuded true humility in his written teachings, his informal conversations, his sermons. His very demeanor touched our hearts and changed us. Father Roman was and now, after 10 years since his blessed repose, continues to be for us a true image of holiness and sainthood. We share these words with, and on behalf of, the 93rd Congress of our Holy Romanian Episcopate. In humility, faith and love we ask that our holy hierarchs, His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel and His Grace Bishop Andrei, to present our request to the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America to begin the formal process of initiating Canonization of the Very Reverend Archimandrite Roman Braga.

Motion accepted by Universal Acclamation in standing ovation.

Your Guide to the 2025 Dinner Dance

YARA C. | PARISHIONER

The St. Mary's Annual Dinner Dance is traditionally held around the anniversary of St. Mary's consecration and serves both as a celebration and a fundraiser for a specific parish need. It is a time for our community to come together for fellowship in a more intimate setting. Each year brings a unique theme, giving guests the chance to dress up and enjoy a festive evening. The night includes delicious food, drinks, and des-

sert, along with lively music, dancing, and raffles. Guests can also take part in a silent auction featuring items and services donated by parishioners, as well as the ever-popular live dessert auction, where tables bid on a selection of specialty desserts. This year's Dinner Dance will be extra special as we raise funds for our future fellowship hour improvements and accessibility enhancements! All proceeds from the evening will go toward this important cause. Be sure to

bring cash or your checkbook so you can join in the fun--we'll have a 50/50 raffle, an exciting silent auction, and a sweet dessert auction you won't want to miss! ✕



This Year's Church School Curriculum: Learning Holy Tradition at Every Age

CALEB F. | CHURCH SCHOOL DIRECTOR



This fall, our Church School will explore the riches of the Orthodox faith through three programs designed to nurture mind and soul.

Our youngest children (ages 3–6) will experience an Orthodox adaptation of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS), a hands-on, prayerful approach rooted in Montessori principles. In a prepared atrium, they encounter Scripture, liturgical objects, and icons at their own pace, guided by the catechist. With simple materials and room for silence and wonder, they begin to know Christ as the Good Shepherd who calls them by name.

Grades 1–8 will use A Walk Through Acts by Arlyn Kantz, a curriculum introducing children to the sacred text of the Acts of the Apostles. With 26 lessons rooted in Holy Tradition, students meet the lives and journeys of the Apostles through Scripture, memory verses, and activities. Meeting in three groups (1–3, 4–5, 6–8), they learn to see themselves as part of the Church's timeless story.

High school students will study Defeating Sin by Fr. Joseph David Huneycutt, a guide to understanding and overcoming the passions. Rooted in the wisdom of the Church, it offers practical tools for confession and spiritual warfare, helping teens cultivate virtue and holiness.

Together, these programs help every student—whether just beginning or entering adulthood—grow in Christ and His Church. Registration began at the Annual Picnic and Ministry Fair on September 7 and continues on Realm. Register your children today! ✕

School Supply Delivery

ELLEN R. | PARISHIONER

On Friday, August 8th, St. Mary parishioners delivered much needed school supplies collected during our annual fundraiser in June to Mason Crest Elementary School. Principal Shin and her staff greeted us at the door with carts to load our donations. We had two overflowing carts that held more than 200 boxes of tissues and almost 300 cans of sanitizing wipes. Also, we sent more than 700 pencils and a box of sticky notes. They were very thankful for the much-needed supplies and hope to see us again this year. A big thank you to Fr. David, Libby H., Susan F., (editor note: and Ellen R.) for helping with this annual project ✕





Recycling Update

ELLEN R. | PARISHIONER

We are still collecting aluminum cans to be recycled. Right now, there is a bin in the fellowship hall for you to put the empty aluminum cans,

There is also a large round blue can outside the door to the kitchen area that you can place the cans.

To date, since April, we have earned more than \$70 for turning in the empty cans. These are just the cans used at church for Fellowship Hour and other events. If you use cans like this at home for sodas, sparkling water, beer and others, please save them and bring them on a Sunday.

Please save them in a bag or box and put them in one of the collection cans and we will take care of turning them in for cash. I know you what are thinking – only \$70? Yes, for basically doing nothing and taking them to the local recycling center. If we can get everyone to bring their cans, think how much more we could make for our Church and all of our activities. ✕



NEED A REALM
LOGIN?

Email:
laclie@stmaryorthodox.org

Our parish uses Realm to share updates, announcements, giving, and to organize ministries and volunteers. Stay connected by regularly checking Realm Connect (on the app or browser) and join one of these great community groups:

The Public Square: Share stories, praise reports, family updates, and all things good, noble, kind & true.

Gift Exchange Group: Our parish “buy-nothing” space to give or receive items and services.

Reel Women: Vote on and discuss our film of the month!

Community Outreach Serving Group: Volunteer to support local DC-area outreach efforts.

Fellowship of Moms: A space for moms to connect—from playgroups to prayer groups, and everything in between.

Let's get connected. ✕



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The Official Newsletter of the Protection of the Holy Mother of God Orthodox Church
Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, Orthodox Church in America (OCA)

Hierarchy: Archbishop NATHANIEL of Detroit | Parish Priest: V. Rev. Dr. Fr. David G. Subu
Deacons: Protodn. Peter Danilchick, Dn. Nicholas Dujmovic, Dn. Kenneth Liu | Choir Director & Head Chanter: Sdn. Nicholas Jones
Subdeacons: Eugene Huang, Nicholas Jones, Bogdan Maxim, Anthony Freude | Parish Council President: David Dill

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