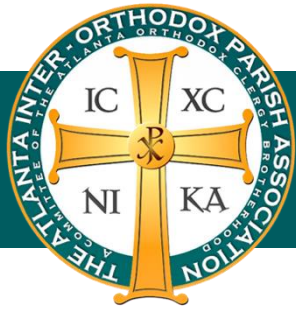
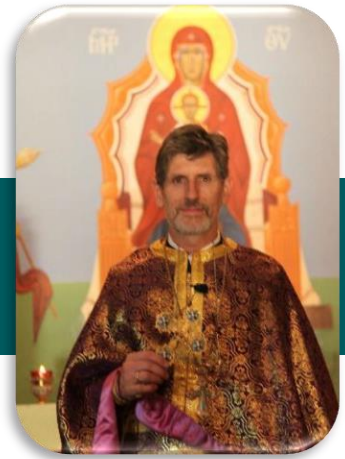


# Clergy Spotlight



## FATHER ANTHONY SALZMAN

*St. Philothea Greek Orthodox Church  
Watkinsville, Georgia*



### *Biography*

Fr. Anthony Salzman graduated from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology Summa Cum Laude in 1989. He spent the next 6 years studying the Art of Byzantine Iconography under Master Iconographer Kosta Photiadeis in Thessaloniki, Greece. Also, during that period, he followed the Byzantine Art History Program at the Aristotelian University for three years. He has painted many large mural icons including a chapel in Toluca Mexico, a Platytera in Mexico City, St. Andrews Orthodox Church in Pensacola, Florida, St. Sophia GOC in New London, CT, renovation and restoration in Assumption Greek Orthodox Church in Pawtucket, RI, and Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Cranston, RI, a large mural for Prophet Elias Orthodox Church in Atlanta, GA, and many more.

He was ordained to the priesthood by Metropolitan ALEXIOS at the Atlanta Cathedral in 1999 and has served St. Philothea GOC since then. St. Philothea is a small parish (50 families) but has a dynamic presence at UGA where Fr. Anthony is a member of the CMA (Campus Ministry Association). Our small parish, through the work of the Holy Spirit, has produced 5 Presvyteras, 3 priests, 4 Theologians, and currently 2 seminarians.

Fr. Anthony has been Regional Spiritual Coordinator of the SE for OCF (Orthodox Christian Fellowship) since 2001 and established the Work Daze retreat for College students which has been on going for the last 15 years. He is married to Christine and has two sons, Stephanos and Maximos and has two grandchildren, Amalia and Silas.

He and Presvytera Christine along with Constantine Kokenes began The Liturgical Arts Academy (TLAA) at the Diakonia Retreat Center, where instructors teach 3 levels of Byzantine Chant and Byzantine Iconography. They are now a part of OCAA, Orthodox Christian Academy of Atlanta. They are in their 5<sup>th</sup> year.

Presvytera Christina and Fr. Anthony also have a company called Image and Likeness Iconography and they produce Byzantine Christmas and Easter cards for parishes around the country along with items for Iconography and the home church. We have been in business for 27 years.



*Church Family, Feast of St. Philothea, 2020*

## *Church Questions*

### **What was your journey like in becoming a priest?**

Well, it was a long one having graduated from seminary in 1989 and being ordained in 1999. But God had a lot to build into me to prepare Presvytera Christine and me for the priesthood. It included 6 years of study in Greece and two children. The moment of decision was reached when in 1999 we decided to either apply for ordination or buy a house in Aiken, SC and pursue Iconography full time. After praying and fasting for a week for God's guidance, having no definitive answer we decided to buy a house and stay in Aiken and pursue Iconography. We were approved for a loan, and then things began to happen that pointed us to ordination. Namely, God showed us our weaknesses. This may not seem a good reason for ordination, but it was a clear indication that God would be with us on the journey and show us the truth along the way. It was also a wake-up call to take responsibility for our own decisions and actions and be both "wise as serpents and innocent as doves." Having already been approved for a loan, once we found out we would be coming to Athens, GA, we were able to buy a house in 3 days and we have been here ever since.

### **What are your biggest joys in being a priest?**

My greatest joy in being a priest is preaching the "Good News". I go on campus every Thursday from 11:00-3:00 pm and sit under a banner of the Resurrection of Christ and I paint icons and I talk to whoever will talk with me. Let's face it "Orthodoxy" is a high cultural hurdle here in the West. We are a strange curiosity to most people. I try and reduce the barriers by being approachable and willing to discuss whatever is on your mind. That it eventually leads to 'Theology' is not my fault. College campus is where we are making decisions that will shape the rest of our lives, and I want to help people cross that threshold of doubt, unbelief or antagonism to religion into the mystery, wonder and beauty of the Orthodox faith. That is a great responsibility and at the same time a great privilege.

## *Personal Questions*

### **Who is/was the most influential person in your life?**

There have been many, Fr. Anthony Coniaris of blessed memory, Fr. Nick Triantafilou, past president of HC/HC and my spiritual father for a period, Fr. John Stefaro my current spiritual father, Kost Photiadeis, my Iconography teacher. They have all helped me with discernment, forgiveness, spiritual growth, understanding but the most influential person in my life is my wife of 33 years, Presvytera Christine Salzman. Without her, there would be no "Fr. Anthony", no St. Philothea, no Image and Likeness, no TLAA, no OCF Regional Spiritual Coordinator and of course no children and grandchildren. She is my heartbeat, my brains, my second set of eyes, my help mate. I look to her for vision, insight, skill, and the ability to get things done. She has made my life beautiful, spiritual, practical, and blessed, and I am very fond of her.

### **What is the biggest challenge for the church in today's world?**

There are a lot of them, but most of them can be resolved by managing expectations. You see it is our expectations that make us happy or sad, elated or disappointed, triumphant or defeated. If we expect the 'Church' to be something it is not, we will be disappointed or disillusioned and walk away sad. But if we take up our cross and follow Christ in this life, then we will have the best possible life. Sure, there are massive problems in the world that are heartbreaking and overwhelming and we feel an urgency to "do" something about them, but the question is 'what'? As long as there are human beings, there will be problems; we create them. The goal is not eliminating problems, the goal is becoming like Christ. We were created to be in His Image and Likeness (shameless plug), not to eliminate problems, but rather re-orient our will to be in line with His will. As Christ Himself said when facing crucifixion, "If this cup can pass from me, 'yet, not my will but Thy will be done' ". If we can let go of our agenda and say with sincerity "Not my will but Thy will be done", then it is a game changer; everything suddenly falls in line. That is when we can endure hardships with patience, learn to control our passions, acquire wisdom, insight and understanding, and be of some use in the world. We may end up suffering Christ's fate, i.e. crucifixion, but that is not the end of the world. Because as we often hear, "if what you are living for isn't worth dying for, then it is not worth living for. Christ and His church are worth living for.