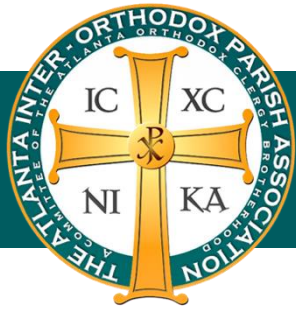
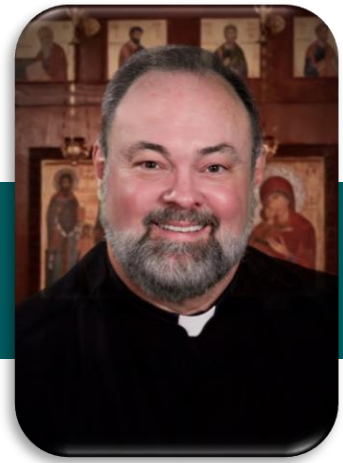


# Clergy Spotlight



**FATHER BARNABAS POWELL**  
*Sts. Raphael, Nicholas, & Irene Greek Orthodox Church*  
*Cumming, Georgia*



## Biography

Fr. Barnabas (Charles) Powell is a native of Atlanta, Georgia. Having been raised in a small Pentecostal church as a boy, Fr. Barnabas grew to love the church, enjoy the music, and eventually came to be the youth pastor of his home church.

Fr. Barnabas attended Toccoa Falls College, an evangelical Protestant school in Northeast Georgia, and received his theology degree in 1988. He went on to establish a new church in the Atlanta area. While pastoring, Fr. Barnabas also was heavily involved with evangelical Christian media, radio, television, and print.

A reading program in Church History and Theology would eventually lead him to enter the Orthodox Church, along with several of the families that had been with him during his pastorate in November of 2001.

In 2007, Fr. Barnabas was given the blessing of Metropolitan ALEXIOS of Atlanta to enter Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, MA.

On November 8th, 2009, Fr. Barnabas was ordained to the diaconate in his hometown of Atlanta, GA at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral by His Eminence Metropolitan ALEXIOS, and on Sunday, March 8, 2010, he received ordination to the holy priesthood at the same cathedral. He is now the proistamenos (senior pastor) of Sts. Raphael, Nicholas, and Irene Greek Orthodox Church in Cumming, GA.

Fr. Barnabas founded Faith Encouraged Ministries in 2014 and was the host of Faith Encouraged LIVE talk show on Ancient Faith Radio until January of 2019. Faith Encouraged Ministries continues to produce the Monday through Friday Devotional called Faith Encouraged Daily. Fr. Barnabas published his first book "A Faith Encouraged" through Ancient Faith Publishing and also produced the 16-part video series called "A Journey to Fullness" to help parishes introduce the Orthodox Faith to the average person. To date, over 200 parishes across the United States and Canada use the video series to serve their communities.

Fr. Barnabas travels extensively across the country speaking at spiritual retreats and sharing special presentations including "Becoming Orthodox on Purpose: Practicing the Faith Every Day" and "Taming the Passions: The Orthodox Wisdom to a Truly Free Life." He was recently one of the invited speakers at the 2nd International Conference on Digital Media and Orthodox Pastoral Care sponsored by the Orthodox Academy of Crete and the Holy Monastery of Vatopedi.

Fr. Barnabas is particularly motivated by the beauty and timelessness of our Orthodox Christian faith and strives to see this timeless faith put down deep roots here in America. The Orthodox Christian faith is uniquely suited to quench the spiritual thirst of Americans from all backgrounds with the depth and beauty of the Timeless Faith of the Apostles.

# *Church Questions*

## **What was your journey like in becoming a priest and/or bishop?**

What surprised me the most about entering the priesthood is that when I and several other Protestant pastors entered the Church in 2001, we had all come to believe that the clergy part of our lives was over. To the man, we really had said goodbye to that part of our lives and we all just wanted to be good Orthodox Christians. A wise priest friend advised us to set ambition and ego aside and allow the Faith to form us and heal us, and, if the Church had need of your gifts, She would tell you.

It was a particularly wise direction for each of us, and it brought me a deep sense of devotion and peace.

But, working with Orthodox Christian Network, I would travel around the country making speeches and growing our media outreach ministry, and inevitably, someone would comment to me after a presentation "Have you considered becoming a priest?" This happened so much that I finally went to my Metropolitan ALEXIOS to ask his advice and direction. He was the one who sent me to Holy Cross in Boston to move me toward ordination. This was both wise and it taught me humility about my own call to serve the Church.

## **In your opinion, what makes a great homily?**

As an evangelical pastor, I was raised with the "normal" Christianity of my youth [which] was entertaining worship services and very well-crafted public speaking sermons. In fact, my undergraduate degree was in theology from an evangelical Protestant school. And at that school, like most evangelical schools, homiletics was a minimum of a 2-year part of the 4-year undergraduate education.

So, preaching was the most important part of the Sunday worship service. Evangelical worship focuses on strong and relatable music and a very good sermon.

Entering Orthodoxy, I was relieved to learn that the sermon/homily was not the center of our worship. But it was one of the tools the Church uses in Her liturgy to prepare us for taking the Eucharist because the Eucharist is the center of Orthodox worship.

But our society is fundamentally formed by strong public speaking skills, our religious formation, and by our desire to have strong communication skills to move people to action.

And the discovery of the amazing and strong history of Orthodox homiletics introduced me to the "best of both worlds" of a good homily. The basic cultural need in our country is for people to hear a homily that directly relates the cosmic and eternal wisdom of deep Orthodox theology to everyday life. The homily serves as the bridge that translates the amazing Scripture we have heard in the liturgy to our everyday lives. The homily HAS to direct the hearer to see WHY this Orthodox wisdom has a direct and formative meaning to your life IF you are actually a practicing Orthodox Christian. The Faith is meant to be lived, and not merely a cultural decoration to your life.

## *Personal Questions*

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

This is such a good question. For me, it is no mistake that I am in the Church that calls their priests "father." My dad was pretty much out of the lives of my brother and me when we were very young. So, my formative years were strongly affected by a very wonderful single mother. My mom has been the strongest influence on my life in that she gave me the great gift of being committed to nobility and dependability in my life. She always said, "You can do what you want AFTER you do what you must." And, in spite of some very hard times in her life, she refused to allow the hard times to make her bitter or despondent. She always smiled, and she was always the person I knew I could depend on no matter what. It really is true that "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."

### **What is the future of Orthodoxy in the United States?**

I am looking at the last quarter of my life and over a decade in the ordained clergy of the Church. I have dedicated my work as a priest here in the American South to speaking about this timeless Orthodox Faith in such a way that the average American could know that Orthodoxy was a real option for their religious life. Orthodoxy, historically, becomes the dominant faith in every place it went as a missionary movement. Whole nations have been formed as a nation primarily by Orthodox theology and wisdom. That is the normal path of Orthodoxy growing among a people group, and I long for that to happen for my own people in this country.

Looking at how Orthodoxy has grown in this country and the growth of Orthodox publishing, Orthodox media, and Orthodox purposeful outreach to our neighbors has grown our parish in this area to where we are over 75% convert. Orthodoxy is meant to be the spiritual treasure of every person in the world. Because Orthodoxy is the spiritual medicine that heals a person and gives us the tools to "become by grace what Christ is by nature." Orthodoxy must belong to everyone, or it devolves into something that is less than Orthodoxy.



*A growing parish committed to the Eucharistic life of the Church.*