

Priests of the St. Louis Area

Part 2 of 2

VERY REVEREND PAUL SAWCHAK **Saint Michael's Orthodox Church, St. Louis, MO**

The life of Father Paul Sawchak was intimately connected to the Orthodox Church in America from the time of his birth until his falling asleep in the Lord. He was born in Sewickley, PA on August 8, 1942 to Helen and Stephen Sawchak. Helen was born in Heidelberg, PA in 1916 and her home parish was the [Intercession of the Virgin Mary Church](#) in Carnegie, PA. Stephen was born on the South Side of Pittsburgh in 1916 and his home parish was the [Holy Assumption of Saint Mary Church](#) in Pittsburgh, PA. Helen and Stephen built a home in Baden, PA and Father Paul's home parish was [Holy Ghost Church](#) in Ambridge, PA.

Father Paul and his parents were very active in the FROC (Federated Russian Orthodox Club, now FOCA) and his aunt, Julia Felk was a long-time President. Julia fell asleep in the Lord in 2001.

Father Paul enlisted in the Army right out of High School and served as a medic. He was married to Helen Jancosko of Bethlehem, PA on August 29, 1964 and then enrolled at Saint Tikhon's Seminary where his two children were born – Timothy in 1965 and Stephen in 1967. Tragically, Helen fell asleep in the Lord on July, 11, 1968 of a brain tumor only three months after Father Paul was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by Bishop Kiprian. Immediately upon the death of Helen, Father Paul's parents moved in with him to help raise the two young boys. Prior to graduating from Saint Tikhons in 1969, Father Paul was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on April 6, 1969 by Bishop Kiprian and then



was assigned to [Saint John the Baptist Church](#) in Black Lick, PA, in 1970. Father Paul's choir director in Black Lick was Richard Osacky who would later become Archbishop Job who would ordain his son, Timothy, to the Holy Priesthood on August 13, 1994 at Saint Michael the Archangel Church in St. Louis, MO.

In 1972, Father Paul was assigned to [Saints Peter and Paul Church](#) in Crossingville,

PA, and then to [Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral](#) in Los Angeles, CA, in 1978. Father Paul was assigned to Saint Michael the Archangel Church in St. Louis, MO in the summer of 1978, where he became very active as a Chaplain in the St. Louis Metropolitan area in many different roles. His love was working with the St. Louis County police, but he was also a chaplain for the St. Louis Airport, FBI, and ATF. Father Paul was also the long-time Dean of the St. Louis Deanery.

Fater Paul was instrumental in the creation of [Saint Thomas the Apostle Church](#) in Springfield, MO, along with many other clergy from the St. Louis Deanery including Father John Platko, Father Gregory Dye and and Father Joseph Hirsch.

Suddenly on Valentine's Day 1997, Father Paul reposed at the age of 54 and is buried at Saint Tikhons Monastery in South Canaan, PA along with his wife, Matushka Helen, and his parents Helen and Stephen.

Father Paul's children still reside within the Kansas City Deanery. Stephen and his wife, Shelly reside in Battlefield, MO along with their children Sam and Aaron. Sam is a freshman at Missouri State University and Aaron is a Junior in High School. Stephen is the Athletic Trainer for the football team at Missouri State University in Springfield, MO and he and his family.

Father Timothy and his wife, Jennifer live in Gardner, KS along with their children Benjamin and Nathaniel. Benjamin is a freshman at the University of Kansas and Nathaniel is a junior in High School. Father Timothy has been the rector at [Holy Trinity Church](#) in Overland Park, KS, since 2005 and is also the Dean of the Kansas City Deanery.

VERY REVEREND F. THOMAS SUCCAROTTE **Nativity of the Virgin Mary in Madison, IL**

The Nativity of the Virgin Mary has been blessed with several priests over its 117- year history. These men have served the parish and provided guidance and growth for our members towards the Kingdom of God. Archpriest Thomas Succarotte was one of those men who stands out with the longest service to our parish from 1979-2010.

Father Thomas was born in Wilmington, Delaware on September 16, 1944 and grew up attending Saint Michael's Parish in Wilmington. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree in



Corporate Finance from Pennsylvania Military College (now Widener University) and in 1965 married his wife Tanya Button. Father Thomas then began working for the DuPont Company in Wilmington and worked there for 12 years.

In 1976, Father decided to attend Saint Vladimir's Seminary and received his Master of Divinity degree on May 1, 1978. He was subsequently ordained to the diaconate and priesthood. On August 1, 1979, Father Thomas, Matushka Tanya and their son Mark began their service to our parish.



During his appointment to the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, Father Thomas became an integral part of the parish family and the community. He worked closely with the Ladies Sodality, FROC and other parish groups to promote our work and help the parish grow. Throughout his time as parish priest, the membership grew and evolved adding many new members. It was always a joy for Father to serve a wedding, or a baptism and he would share the grief of the parish family when a death occurred.

In 1989, Father Thomas worked tirelessly with other local clergy and lay people to make the 9th All American Council in St. Louis a huge success. In 1995, Father Thomas was awarded the rank of Archpriest and accepted the honor with humility and a continued dedication towards the up building of God's Holy Church. In 2000, our parish celebrated the milestone of 100 years and again, Father Thomas made sure that our anniversary was a time to honor the past and dedicate ourselves to the future of the parish and its work for the Glory of God.

In addition to his pastoral duties, Father Thomas served as the Dean of the St. Louis Deanery for many years. He served as the police chaplain for Madison, Granite City and Pontoon Beach Illinois Police Departments as well as the Madison County Sheriff's Department, Illinois State Police, FBI and ATF. He was Chaplain for the Missouri and Illinois Railroad Police Association and was instrumental in establishing the Chaplain Program for the ATF.

Throughout his years of service, Father Thomas struggled with health issues that challenged his ability to serve. These struggles, however, never deterred him. He would push beyond his limits to assure his parish had services, and would spend his days visiting the ill and the shut-ins. As time passed and this became harder for him, he would spend his days making phone calls just to simply say hello and let his parishioners know that he was praying for them. His commitment to his flock never wavered.

Father Thomas and Matushka Tanya retired on December 31, 2010 after 31 years. His work has left a permanent mark on the Nativity of the Virgin Mary and his dedication to his Lord and his flock will forever be remembered. Father Thomas passed away on August 8, 2015 after a long and difficult battle. May his memory be eternal!

VERY REVEREND ANDREW MOULTON
Saints Cyril & Methody Orthodox Church, Granite City, IL

Father Andrew Moulton likes to tell people now that he was born into a military family and never lived anywhere very long until he came to Granite City, that he envied the old-timers in Granite City that had lived there their whole life. Born in "East L.A.," as he likes to say, he also lived in Cleveland, Northern Spain, Pensacola and Alexandria, to name a few. Then, in college at Michigan State, he met the girl he would marry, Joan Yarbrough, also a military kid.



Raised what they would call "Protestant Base Chapel," their life took a dramatic turn to the East when Joan got a ride during a snowstorm from a priest who offered a ride to the college kids that needed to get to Detroit International, where their flights were being re-routed. She discovered that Father Photius was a kind man, who also happened to teach some religion classes at Michigan State, which, she decided, she and her boyfriend should take. They ended up converting to Orthodoxy with Father Photius in the Moscow Patriarchate and, later that same decade, Reader Andrew became Subdeacon Andrew, then Deacon Andrew and Father

Andrew. In 1984, when Father Photius died, Father Andrew was the priest on hand to close his eyes. Also in the 1970s and 1980s, Popadia Joan gave birth to four children – three boys and a girl.

In the mid-1980s, Father Andrew transferred to the Bulgarian Diocese of the OCA under Archbishop Kirill. The family spent three years at Saint Nicholas Church in Flint, Michigan. Then, in 1987, Father Andrew was transferred to be rector of Saints Cyril & Methody Church in Granite City, Illinois, where he has been assigned ever since. He also works as a network administrator at the Washington University School of



Medicine in St. Louis.

When he's not putting together bulletins and sermons or helping doctors move MRI images around to various computers, father is an ardent St. Louis Cardinals fan and enjoys attending the St. Louis Symphony with Popadia Joan. They now have six grandchildren, split between Chicago and Kansas. He is always looking for a new, good Orthodox book, so let him know if you've read any interesting lives of the saints or writings by the saints.

Father Andrew was responsible for changing the registration system at All American Councils from paper records to electronic, computerizing the process in 1989 at the 9th All American Council in St. Louis. At this coming All-American Council in St. Louis, Father Andrew will again be responsible for Registration, managing a high tech computerized system with bar codes and databases of information that got it's start way back in 1989, thanks to Father Andrew's knowledge, skill and perseverance.

VERY REVEREND JOHN PLATKO
Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Olathe, KS

Born on January 19, 1948 in Joliet, Illinois, Father John spent his youth in Illinois where he showed an early aptitude for music. Among the instruments he played were piano, French horn, trumpet, and banjo. He attended Iona College, New Rochelle, NY, and received a degree in music theory and application from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL. He received the Master in Divinity degree from Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Crestwood, NY.



In 1977, he and his wife, Aphrodite, relocated to the Kansas City area, where he continued his scholarly pursuit of music theory at Kansas University and served as deacon at Saint Theodore of Tarsus Church. Shortly thereafter, he was ordained to the Holy Priesthood and began his 26-year pastorate at Holy Trinity Church, then located in Kansas City, Kansas. In addition to his pastoral

duties, he served as dean of the Saint Louis Deanery.

Father John was well known for sharing generously his many gifts with countless friends. As a composer, he shared his talent with choirs across the nation. As a scholar, he taught courses in liturgical music at Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA. A gifted vocalist with perfect pitch, he was a member of Saint Vladimir's Octet and once performed in Lincoln Center. Throughout his priesthood, his true and solid voice led his parish in prayer for thousands of services. As a master carpenter and architect, he renovated the parish's original buildings and was the primary visionary for the design of the parish's recently constructed church. His interests ranged from fixing cars to teaching piano to enjoying sports of all types. He also taught music at Notre Dame de Sion lower school. Additional interests included reading works of American history and the writings of the Church Fathers. He also lectured on Church history at Nazarene College, Kansas City, MO.

Committed to service, Father John served on the board of trustees at Bethany Hospital for a number of years. Truly a pastor, he knew his flock well, as evidenced in his memorable and personal homilies. Dedicated to the youth of the Church, he was the primary leader and teacher at the area's annual pan-Orthodox summer camps for 23 years.

The legacy that Father John left is measureless and only beginning to be fully realized. A devoted husband and father, his generous love allowed him to become a father to his entire parish family. Unerringly, he saw the best in everyone. His family, friends, and parishioners were blessed to share in his stable leadership and vision. Under his guidance, Holy Trinity parish became a flourishing community. He was not only gifted, but giving, the embodiment of joy. Whether entertaining the children, who loved him unstintingly, or helping in the kitchen during festivals, he was ever-present in the lives of his friends and family. With dignity and humility he guided his parishioners to the light of truth and wisdom.

