

the Light



DECEMBER 2021
NEWSLETTER



**LEADERSHIP &
LOCAL CHAPTER
PRESIDENTS MEETING**

December 14, 2021 | 8:00 - 9:00 pm EST

DOMSE CLERGY & WINTER RETREATS

St. Elias, Atlanta, GA | **In person**
Clergy Retreat: January 26 - 27, 2022
Winter Retreat: January 28 - 29, 2022

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Parish Spotlight

ST. IGNATIUS ORTHODOX CHURCH

CLERGY

Rev. Fr. Philip Begley (Senior Pastor)
V. Rev. Fr. Robert Sanford (Associate Pastor)
V. Rev. Fr. Stephen Rogers (Pastor Emeritus)
Dn. Michael Hyatt
Dn. Keith Hansen
Dn. Edward Martin
Dn. Richard Jones
Dn. Marek Simon

FEAST DAY: St. Ignatius – celebrated on December 20th with a pastoral visit from His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS when he is able to come.

EMAIL: st.ignatiusaoc@gmail.com

WEBSITE: stignatiusfranklin.org



St. Ignatius Orthodox Church Franklin, TN

St. Ignatius Orthodox Church is located in Franklin, Tennessee. We are seeing rapid growth in our community, with a large influx of young families with children, which led us to establish "Family Night." This event takes place on Wednesday evenings beginning with Daily Vespers at 5:30 pm, followed by a community meal and breakout sessions with an inquirers class led by Fr. Philip, a book study led by Dn. Michael Hyatt, and Teen SOYO discussion led by Dn. Marek Simon and our SOYO advisor, Mr. Brandon Bacca. So far, we've had an overwhelmingly positive response to "Family Night" with over one hundred people participating each Wednesday. Thanks be to God!

St. Ignatius also offers a Sunday School program that utilizes the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for younger children, and a Bereavement Ministry for those who have recently lost a family member or friend and are working through the grieving process. Active church organizations include the Antiochian Women, AMEN, Teen SOYO, and YAF. All these organizations encourage fellowship and service to the church and surrounding community. St. Ignatius also has an active

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(St. Ignatius - continued from page 1)

prison ministry led by Mr. Mark Santana and Mr. David Phipps. This group partners with TPOM (Tennessee Prison Outreach Ministry in Nashville) to mentor prisoners and help them grow spiritually, mentally, and socially so that they can successfully reunite with God, their families, and the community.

Saint Ignatius was established by clergy and laity who were converts to the Orthodox faith including our founding pastor the V. Rev. Fr. Gordon Walker of thrice blessed memory. For those interested, we live stream our services. The link is stignatiusfranklin.org/live-stream-services/

You can contact our church at st.ignatiusaoc@gmail.com



Photo by Elizabeth Bactig

FEATURED ORGANIZATION



YAF (Young Adult Fellowship)

DOMSE YAF HEAD: Sueanna Alter
All Saints Church | Raleigh, NC



DOMSE YAF

YAF is an organization that provides spiritual and social avenues for adults ages 19 to 32 to grow in their faith and to build relationships with one another. At every DOMSE Retreat and at the Parish Life Conference, the YAF leadership works with the local young adults to come up with topics for discussions, as well as fun outings that can be done together. At the local level, YAF chapters allow young adults to mingle and do outreach outside of the Antiochian Men and Antiochian Women organizations. If you'd like to support your local YAF or get one started for the first time, consider donating your time to help organize a regular "Doctrine on Draft" discussion meeting or volunteer opportunities or other activities for young adults. At the Fall Retreat, YAF hosted a discussion – "Finding Healing in Community" – that focused on how young adults can work towards healing by finding their own role in supporting their communities. Then, later that night, everyone went to a bowling alley together for fun and fellowship, and even Sayidna Nicholas showed up to bowl a few frames! Young adults are an important part of our local parishes, and everyone is encouraged to help their young adults connect to one another on the local level and within the larger DOMSE community!





Words from Sayedna Nicholas

The month of December is always a fast month as we prepare for the Nativity of Our Lord. Many of us need to take care of tax issues before the end of the year, purchase Christmas gifts, celebrate with family members and friends, shop for Christmas trees, and many other tasks, some of which are necessary and/or frivolous. It is needless to say that we must not forget the spirit of the season and the reason the Church has appointed it for us. We all know that it is the actual birth of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ. However, we might need a reminder occasionally, lest we be taken by the busyness of the season and by the end-of-the-year issues.

The December Spiritual Corner continues in presenting three additional virtues that complement the previous six offered in the last two months. They are:



Meekness is often confused with humility. However, it is a distinct virtue that is characterized by the lack of retaliation against a person while having the power to do so. If you recall, Jesus, having the power of God, never retaliated as He was mocked, flogged, or crucified. Rather, He said to His Father, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. And they divided His garments and cast lots." Meekness, though it is not a weakness, means never to return evil for evil.

Wisdom is the immediate insight into issues and the ability to give advice about the will of God in a person's life based on confronted matters and questions asked. It is the ability to correlate God's will and wisdom with the reality of a given person in order to relieve anxiety and give clear direction within the context of the Church, as St. Paul confirms, "...that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church..." (Ephesians 3:10)

Gratitude is to be thankful for all gifts given by God and by fellow men, "for every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from thee, the Father of Lights" (James 1:17). In addition, the Psalmist instructs us to have gratitude for our God, "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!" (Psalm 107:1) For through gratitude, graces bestowed upon us by God become a continual process.

The AMEN annual virtual Fall Retreat on November 20th was well attended as the morning discussion took place, led by Alex Radulescu, and the afternoon session that was led by Fr. Stephen De Young as he explained the essence of his new book.

Please be on the lookout for the registration notice for the **in-person Clergy annual Retreat**, which will be held on *January 26th and 27th*, followed by the **in-person Winter annual Retreat**, which will be held on *January 28th and 29th*. Both retreats are to be held at St. Elias Church, Atlanta, GA. In addition, **Winter Camp, AKA WAMP**, is being planned to take place on *February 18th through the 20th*. Registration will start soon. God bless you all!



Photo by Elizabeth Baclig

Thank you St. Ignatius Orthodox Church for hosting our 2021 Fall Retreat!

PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH BACLIG



the
Light

AMEN
ANTIOCHIANMEN.ORG

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN
DOMSEWOMEN
ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF DOMSE

YOUNG ADULT
DOMSE YAF

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CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
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Editor's Corner

As Orthodox Christians, we find ourselves even more out of step with American life and culture during the Nativity Fast than we normally do. For while most others prepare for Christmas through food and feasting, Holiday parties, and shopping, we prepare ourselves for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and His humble birth in a cave through fasting. And as we fast from meat and dairy (and fish, wine, and oil for the appropriate days during the week) for the forty days leading up to the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord, we take our place in a small way alongside the Jewish people of old who suffered through slavery, wandering in the wilderness, exile, and political oppression, all while continuing to hope for the coming of God's promised King – the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One. Indeed, in the spiritual life it is only by experiencing our own limits – our own hunger and thirst, as well as the discomfort and impatience that come from not eating or drinking whatever we want in the moment – that we can begin to recognize our real dependence on God and to cry out to Him from the depths of our hearts. But what is more, it also by encountering our own limits and not immediately rushing out to fill in the void ourselves that we have any space in our lives for God or for anyone else. Thus, it is only by the spiritual discipline of

fasting that we can come to fulfill our Lord Jesus Christ's commands to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. And when we cannot control ourselves, it is very difficult for us to avoid taking advantage of others or to be as generous with them as we are called to be. But fasting lends greater energy to our prayers to God, and also opens us up to greater acts of charitable service, almsgiving, and love.

Ultimately, the Church invites all of us to participate in the same fast during the Nativity season, but what it looks like for each one of us to keep the fast might be slightly different given our own particular circumstances. However, the more that we enter into this period of preparation, the more that our Lord Jesus Christ will be born in us anew, granting us His light and life, and restoring us to our own inmost nature and intimate communion with God. As we sing for the Forefeast of the Nativity, "Make ready, O Bethlehem, for Eden hath been opened for all. Prepare, O Ephratha, for the tree of life hath blossomed forth in the cave from the Virgin; for her womb did appear as a spiritual paradise in which is

planted the divine Plant, whereof eating we shall live and not die as Adam. Christ shall be born, raising the image that fell of old." When we frantically rush towards Christmas without fasting, we find that it is over before we know it – the tree drying out and shedding its needles, while the wrapping paper lays discarded on the floor. However, when we approach the birth of our Savior from within the Church, the Nativity of Christ is the beginning of twelve days of feasting and celebrating together which reach their height at the Feast of the Theophany, where our Lord Jesus Christ is shown to be not only the Messiah, but the Son of God Himself, who comes into the world to enliven all of us who put our trust in Him. Glory to God!





SAVE THE DATE!

2022 DOMSE CLERGY & WINTER RETREATS

ST. ELIAS ORTHODOX CHURCH ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Clergy Retreat:
January 26 & 27

Winter Retreat:
January 28 & 29

Upcoming Events

DECEMBER

AMEN LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL CHAPTER PRESIDENTS MEETING

December 14, 2021
8:00 pm - 9:00 pm EST

AKATHIST TO ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

December 26, 2021
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm EST

JANUARY

DOMSE CLERGY & WINTER RETREATS

St. Elias, Atlanta, GA
Clergy Retreat: January 26-27, 2022
Winter Retreat: January 28-29, 2022

FEBRUARY

CAMP ST. THEKLA WINTER CAMP

February 18-21, 2022

MARCH

AMEN LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL CHAPTER PRESIDENTS MEETING

March 1, 2022
8:00 pm - 9:00 pm EST

AMEN VIRTUAL LENTEN RETREAT

March 26, 2022
10:00 am - 1:30 pm EST

APRIL

TEEN SOYO CYBER RETREAT

April 2, 2022
Details to come!

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT

April 9, 2022
Details to come!

JUNE

2022 DOMSE PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE

St. John Antiochian Orthodox Church
Memphis, TN
June 15 - 18, 2022

IF YOU HAVE ARTICLES OR SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LIGHT NEWSLETTER, PLEASE EMAIL THEM TO DOMSENEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM

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