

the Light



FEBRUARY 2022
NEWSLETTER



**CAMP ST. THEKLA
WINTER CAMP 2022
(WAMP)**

February 18-21, 2022

DOMSE CLERGY & WINTER RETREATS

St. Elias, Atlanta, GA | [REGISTER HERE!](#)

Clergy Retreat: February 23 - 24, 2022

Winter Retreat: February 25 - 26, 2022

CONNECT WITH US!



DOMSE.ORG



DMCDOMSE



@DOMSE



YOUTUBE

Parish Spotlight

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

CLERGY

V. Rev. Fr. Joseph Bittle, Pastor

FEAST DAY: Pentecost

EMAIL: trinityorthodox@sbcglobal.net

WEBSITE: orthodoxarkansas.com

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church is located in Little Rock, Arkansas. Founded as a mission in 1997, Holy Trinity has seen slow but steady growth by serving Orthodox of various backgrounds living in Central Arkansas. The parish maintains an extensive schedule of liturgical services including the Lord's Day cycle of Great Vespers, Orthros, and Divine Liturgy, the services of the Twelve Great Feasts, a full Lenten & Holy Week Cycle, as well as Wednesday evening Vespers throughout the year, which is followed by a Community Meal.

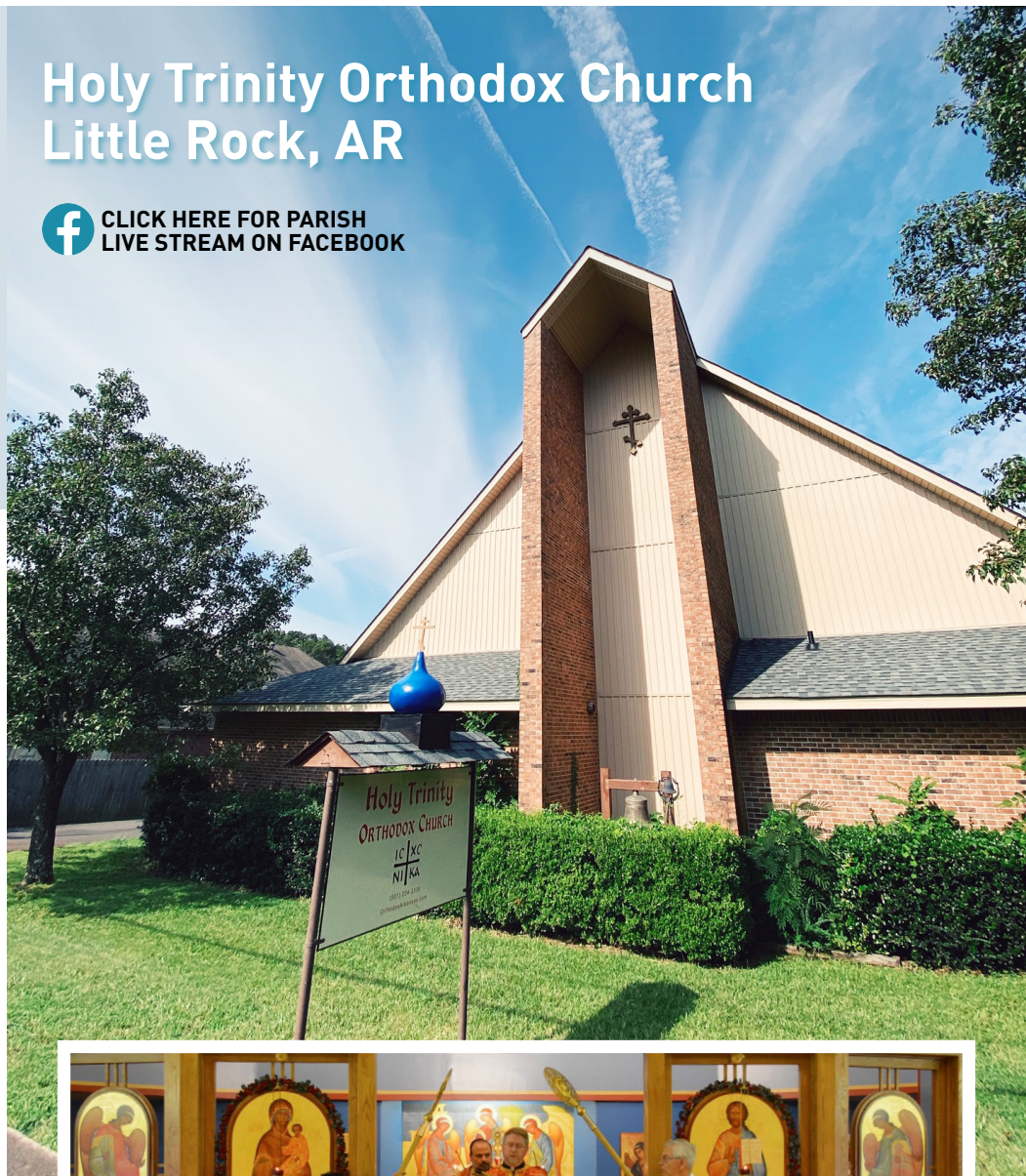
The Antiochian Women have been active in sponsoring regular book groups throughout the year as well as a yearly St. Nicholas Festival as an outreach to the wider community. The parish's Men's Group has also met regularly and is working on a post-COVID reboot as AMEN.

(continued on page 2)

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church Little Rock, AR



CLICK HERE FOR PARISH
LIVE STREAM ON FACEBOOK



(Holy Trinity - continued from page 1)

During the pandemic, our Church School initially met regularly (weather permitting) as an "outdoor church school" and more recently efforts have been oriented toward supporting "at home" religious education through provision of teacher and student materials for families to use until the Winter 2022 reboot of "in person" church school.

In the last year and a half, the parish started celebrating one or two weekday Divine Liturgies each week, which have been an added support to everyone involved, and the love that our members have for one another as a parish family has never been stronger.



FEATURED ORGANIZATION

Sacred Music

DOMSE MUSIC CHAIR:

Kh. Nora Bleam

St. Andrew Orthodox Church, Pensacola, FL

Christ is in our midst! Greetings from the music department. My name is Kh. Nora Bleam and I am happy to serve as the chair of DOMSE music.

My entire life, nothing compares to singing. I have sung and studied and taught music in many places; some quiet, some famous, but the best, most wonderful singing is in church. There we can hear and sing that which is only truth. I dare say singing heightens our perception of spiritual realities. The sound, or even the memory of music, affects you. Your mood and energy level may shift. You may remember lyrics and circumstances that you thought you forgot. Music is powerful and an integral part of being human. Singing is ever-present throughout history, including the Church.

Scripture consistently exhorts us to sing, to make music to the Lord. Nowhere is it in any way suggested that only select people should sing. In American culture it is considered polite to say, "I don't sing." This response is wrong. It is akin to saying, "I can't run." Children learn to stand, then toddle, walk, run, and even dance. Are people born running marathons or dancing difficult ballets? Of course not! But all people enjoy moving and can improve their skills. The challenge is to have the courage to get up and start walking, or dancing in your kitchen! Singing is the same. You were born vocalizing! If you are not a confident singer, then practice. Sing more! Florida State fans know what to sing during a football game. Do you know how to sing your Parish Song/Troparion/Apolytikion? Could you sing "Christ is risen" to someone that has never heard it before? What about the other feasts? If you are comfortable enough, could you donate your time and effort to join your parish choir? Most of them benefit from having more voices. (Many hands make light work!) A good choir director will help you learn skills to sing better and better. Talk to your priest about serving in this capacity.

The Lord does not ask for only professional, or "specially gifted" people to sing to him. When a person sings, they reflect the glory and image of God, in whom we live and move and have our being, and in whom we have our song.

For more information, please check out the many resources on the Archdiocesan webpage,
<https://www.antiochian.org/dashboard?name=Sacred%20Music>,
or reach out to me at norableam@gmail.com.

DOMSE College Scholarship

In 2021, the Diocese of Miami & the Southeast established an annual DOMSE Scholarship program for the purpose of recognizing High School graduates as they pursue their higher education.

With the blessing of His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS, the DOMSE Scholarship committee is excited to announce the first two recipients of the DOMSE College Scholarship! Our Diocese was able to award \$2500 college scholarships to two of our DOMSE Teens.

The Judge's Choice Selection were:



WILLIAM NEAIME
St. Elias, Atlanta, GA

William is attending the University of Georgia, pursuing a degree in Finance.



LAUREN EVNACHO
All Saints, NC

Lauren is attending University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, pursuing a degree in Biomedical Engineering and Music.

It is good to know that the future of DOMSE is in good hands with such amazing and intelligent youth. We pray that these teens will spread the light of Christ to everyone that they encounter in their college experience!

Keep a lookout for the upcoming DOMSE 2022 Scholarship application at [DOMSE.ORG](https://domse.org).

**ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN SPRING
LENTEN RETREAT**

April 9, 2022
10am-12pm ET

Hub-and-Spoke Meeting

**led by his Grace
Bishop Nicholas
& Sh. Shell Keim**

Theme: Your current status is salvific

Details to follow



**3RD ANNUAL
Lenten AMEN**
THE ANTIOCHIAN MEN
DIOCESE OF MIAMI & THE SOUTHEAST
LENTEN VIRTUAL RETREAT

SATURDAY 3/26/22

ARISE, O GOD



Event #1 @ 10 am EST
**Books, Breakfast,
& Brotherhood Part IV**
Discussion led by
Burt Noyes



Event #2 @ 12 pm EST
Guest Speaker:
Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick



Barbecue, Blues, and Beatitudes



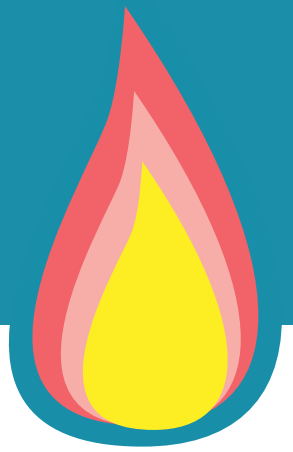
Join us in **Memphis, June 15-18**
for the **2022 Parish Life Conference**



DIOCESE OF MIAMI & THE SOUTHEAST
Host Parish: St. John Orthodox Church, Memphis, TN



Words from Sayedna Nicholas



In his forty-second ascetical homily, Saint Isaac the Syrian says, "Every adversity and affliction, if not accompanied by patience, produces double torment; for a man's patience casts off his distress, while faintness of heart is the mother of anguish. Patience is the mother of consolation and is a certain strength which is usually born of largeness of heart. It is hard for a man to find this strength in his tribulations without a gift from God, received through his ardent pursuit of prayer and the outpouring of his tears." Having underscored the importance of patience as a virtue, Saint Isaac also gives us a glimpse into what we need to go through in order to journey along the turbulent river of patience. The "ardent pursuit of prayer" is supreme in his mind to find the strength leading to patience. And weeping for our sins is the other cause of finding the same strength.

True prayer is the only method that connects us to God. It is God's language! It allows communication between us and God! When we love someone, we want to spend as much time with him/her as we can because it is a pleasant and joyful experience. Anyone who has been in love would attest to this! For this reason, as Orthodox Christians, who proclaim great

love for God, we need to spend time with Him every day through prayer. True prayer includes giving thanks to God for all that He has bestowed on us, as well as discerning exactly what we need (not what we want), and then asking for what we need insistently, and exerting our unwavering faith that God can grant our needs. In addition, it involves praising God for His greatness and all His characteristics that have influenced our lives and guided us in the correct direction. At the end of our prayer, stating "Thy will be done" is a crucial insurance policy to protect us from our own ignorance in asking for harmful supposed needs.

Weeping for our sins is also vital to show our hearts' compunction and sorrow for what we have done against God's will and Commandments. True repentance, according to Saint Isaac, is an essential element of acquiring strength in our tribulations, leading to patience and forbearance in our circumstances. To help us with these issues, I have often stated that all Orthodox Christians must have spiritual fathers to navigate the tumultuous ocean of emotions and thoughts ensuing from our lives in a broken world.

Having to face this world and as we ease ourselves into the new year, we attempt to put behind us certain unpleasant events that have been occurring for the past two years and we look forward to a more active and in-person spiritual life through DOMSE retreats that aid us in acquiring virtues. The Clergy and Winter Retreats have been rescheduled to the end of February. The Clergy retreat is planned to be held on the 23rd and 24th of February and the Winter Retreat is arranged to take place on the 25th and 26th. Everyone is welcome to stay for the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Sunday the 27th. We look forward to seeing all the clergy and laity at these two retreats. To register, please point your browser to: [DOMSE Clergy & Winter Retreats 2022](#). The Weekend prior to these retreats, during President Day Weekend, the 18th through the 21st of February, the Diocese will hold the Winter Camp, otherwise known by teen SOYO as WAMP. And don't forget about the Parish Life Conference (PLC) that is planned to be held by St. John Church, Memphis, TN June 15th through the 18th.

God bless you all!

DOMSE CLERGY & WINTER RETREATS 2022

Hosted at St. Elias Antiochian Orthodox Church in Atlanta, GA



Clergy Retreat
February 23 & 24

Winter Retreat (All DOMSE)
February 25 & 26



Editor's Corner

Over the last six months, I have been reading Fr. George Calciu's Interviews, Homilies, and Talks (St. Herman Press, 2015) together with a small group at church. Fr. George (+2006) was imprisoned by the Communists in Romania for more than twenty years but preserved by God's grace. And because he experienced God even in the darkest times and circumstances, his witness and reflections can help us to connect with God in the midst of whatever trials might come our way.

In one of his homilies, Fr. George provides an amazing account of what our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished for us on the Cross. He says,

"Jesus became Love incarnate, tangible Love, crucified Love. It was so hard for men to believe what they saw - for perfect Love stood before them in human form. They wanted to see Him on the Cross, pushed to the limit, which is suffering and death - to verify His authenticity as if through fire, to see if Love would preserve its identity to the end. And Jesus passed the examination to which mankind subjected Him.

"Remember, friends, His words from the Cross: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (Luke 23:34). What greater proof of love could anyone give than this?" (185)

Perhaps we, as humans, have always known what true, Godly, and God-like Love is, but we also struggle to believe that it can really exist in the world of our experience - with all of its suffering, darkness, cynicism, and despair. So instead, we mock, flog, crucify, and attempt to destroy every instance of Love.

But the mercy of God is manifest in the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and God Incarnate, took upon Himself every ounce of our violent disbelief, maintained His character as Love even unto death, and was raised from the dead as the conqueror of death, violence, and disbelief.

He promised that the world will hate His followers, as it also hated Him (John 15:18), because there are still so many who struggle to believe that there is a Love that is authentic, real, and true. But if we pass our own examination as our Lord Jesus passed His (the test of the Cross), then our death will also be the beginning of everlasting life.

At the end of his homily, Fr. George adds, "'Let us forgive all things because of the Resurrection.' Any other attitude means death" (186). Here, when we forgive everyone, including our enemies, we live the truth of the Resurrection even before we die, which means that we live in a world where death no longer has any dominion or power over us.

From the very beginning of the Church until today, the test of Love continues, but now it is directed against us, since we are the Body of Christ. May we preserve our identities as followers of Christ - the Lover of mankind - until the very end that the world might see Him and come to know Him through us!

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY

CAMP ST. THEKLA WINTER CAMP (WAMP)

February 18-21, 2022

DOMSE CLERGY & WINTER RETREATS

St. Elias, Atlanta, GA

Clergy Retreat: February 23-24, 2022

Winter Retreat: February 25-26, 2022

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)

[CLERGY RETREAT SCHEDULE](#)

[WINTER RETREAT SCHEDULE](#)

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 EDT

APRIL

TEEN SOYO CYBER RETREAT

April 2, 2022

Details to come!

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT

April 9, 2022

9:00 am - 11:00 am EDT

Details to come!

JUNE

2022 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE

St. John

Orthodox Church

Memphis, TN

June 15 - June 18, 2022



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

Fr. Nathaniel Trembley, Editor
Deborah Abdo, Manager
Chelsea Beazley, Graphic Designer
Sh. Shell Keim
Bishop Nicholas