

# the Light



APRIL 2022  
NEWSLETTER



## TEEN SOYO CYBER RETREAT 2022

April 2, 2022  
12:00 - 2:00 pm EDT



## ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT

April 9, 2022  
10:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

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# DOMSE Clergy & Winter Retreats St. Elias Orthodox Church | Atlanta, GA



## SPECIAL RETREAT EDITION

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# DOMSE Winter Retreat 2022

BY ROBERT KLEIN | ST. JAMES MISSION | BUFORD, GA | PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH BACLIG

Under the leadership of His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS, the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast held the 2022 Clergy Retreat and the 2022 Winter Retreat during the last week of February at St. Elias Church in Atlanta, GA. Approximately 160 laypeople and 35 clergy from across the nine states of the Diocese participated in these two events, which had been postponed a month due to an uptick in Covid cases.

The 2022 Clergy Retreat on February 23rd and 24th featured two main speakers: Fr. Stephen DeYoung and Fr. Jacob Andoun. There were also two Clergy Chanting Workshops led by Elie

El Ojeil, head chanter at the Patriarchal Monastery of St. Elias in Lebanon.

Fr. Stephen, the pastor of Archangel Gabriel Church, Lafayette, LA, and author of such books as *The Religion of the Apostles and God is a Man of War*, spoke on the topic "Experiencing the God of the Scriptures in the Liturgical Life of the Church." Fr. Jacob, pastor of St. Stephen Church, Hiram, GA, expounded on Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven."

The clergy also engaged in round table sessions with the speakers and one another, meetings with Bishop NICHOLAS, contemplation periods, and recreation times, as well as celebrating Orthros and Vespers every day. The Clergy Retreat ended with a dinner for the clergy and their wives presided over by Sayedna NICHOLAS, and then everyone stayed to take part in the Winter Retreat which followed on February 25th and 26th.

The Winter Retreat began with Orthros, and then Fr. Paul Fuller, pastor of St. Nicholas Church in Springdale, AR, spoke at two sessions on the theme from James 1:22, "But be doers of the word and not hearers only." His topic was the Church's mission of good works in the world. In the first session, Fr. Paul examined the Scriptures and Church Fathers that back up the Epistle, and he urged everyone not to wait for inspiration, but to simply start doing something.

Then at the next session, Fr. Paul talked specifically about what charity and almsgiving mean to believers,



[continued on page 3]



*(Winter Retreat - continued from page 2)*

both on a local level and throughout the Orthodox world. He suggested that local Orthodox churches work in union with civic groups and other area churches in order to pool resources and avoid duplication of services, with effectiveness and sustainability being the keys. Fr. Paul also urged both individuals and parishes to support such worthy pan-Orthodox charities as the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC), the Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), and FOCUS North America (The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve).

Friday afternoon consisted of meetings of the Antiochian Women, AMEN (Antiochian Men), the Young Adult Fellowship, and the Teen SOYO Fellowship. This was followed by Vespers, a dinner served by the DOMSE Antiochian Women, and Bishop NICHOLAS's address to the diocese, with a Jeopardy game for all ending the day.

Saturday began with the Divine Liturgy, followed by breakfast and a talk by Fr. Herman Lasseter, pastor of St. Peter Church in Madison, MS. Fr.

Herman spoke on the duality of pride and humility, taken from Proverbs 11:2, "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom." His talk led to a Q&A session in which participants tried to parse the thin difference between the negativity of pride and the benignity of simple self-confidence.

After lunch there were many opportunities for fellowship and socializing, including a visit by the Teen SOYO to St. John the Wonderworker OCA Church for a parish tour and the veneration of their relics. The Winter Retreat concluded with Vespers and another dinner served by the DOMSE Antiochian Women, with the Young Adult Fellowship departing for a visit to Atlanta's Historic Fourth Ward Park. A number of attendees remained on

Sunday morning to join with the faithful of St. Elias Church in celebrating Matins and the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with Bishop NICHOLAS, followed by the parish lunch and fellowship hour.







## THE 2022 DOMSE WINTER RETREAT

# A Personal Reflection

By Robert Klein | St. James Mission | Buford, GA



I was excited and curious to attend my first DOMSE Retreat, which took place just two weeks after my chrismation into the Orthodox Church.

My first impression was of St. Elias Church. I'm a member of St. James Mission, a simple storefront church forty-five minutes north of St. Elias, so I was awed by the beauty of a more established hundred-year-old Orthodox church. I was equally impressed by the hospitality of the parishioners of St. Elias who served as our hosts throughout the Retreat. I was immediately greeted by a young member of the parish before I even stepped into the church. And the St. Elias faithful also prepared the meals and snacks for close to 200 attendees. They deserve a serious shout-out for their hospitality and their culinary skills!

DOMSE officials Sh. Shell Keim and Elias AbuGhazaleh registered attendees, answered questions, gave directions, helped the schedule to run smoothly, and put out any of the fires that always erupt during such large events.

I met enthusiastic and friendly people from across the southeast, some of whom had traveled long distances to attend the Winter Retreat, with the parishioners of St. Nicholas Church in Springdale, AR traveling the farthest – more than 700 miles! I met and chatted with Michael Baclig, from St. Nicholas, who was working to build up the AMEN group as its President. I spent quality time with my pastor and his wife, Fr. Steven and Kh. Christine Ritter. I broke bread with priests, deacons, and their wives, with parishioners, parents, and their children, all of whom impressed me with their knowledge of the faith and their down-to-earth piety. I met a catechumen who, when I expressed admiration for his prayer rope, gave it to me, rendering me speechless by such a simple and sweet act of kindness.

I was entranced and swept up by the ethereal chanting and singing at the services, and I was moved by the solemnity and dignity of the Divine Liturgy. The DOMSE Winter Retreat is a memorable event in my life, and I thank God that I am now illumined and a new member of the Orthodox Church!

Mr. Klein's photo was taken by Jessica Hernandez Mitchell.

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

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Light

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ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF DOMSE

YOUNG ADULT  
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# Parish Spotlight

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

## CLERGY

Rev Fr. Alex Mackoul, Pastor  
V. Rev Fr. Cornel Todeasa (retired)  
V. Rev Fr. David Shewczyk (retired)  
V. Rev Fr. Timothy Lowe (retired)  
V. Rev Fr. Ken Stavrevsky (retired)  
Rev Deacon Ken McMillan

**FEAST DAY:** Saint Nicholas, December 6

**EMAIL:** [SaintNicholasmb@outlook.com](mailto:SaintNicholasmb@outlook.com)



## St. Nicholas Orthodox Church | Myrtle Beach, SC

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church is located in Myrtle Beach, SC in a location that is central to the homeless ministry that the parishioners carry out with great zeal. Our parishioners come from all walks of life. Many have retired and moved to the south and many have also immigrated from Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, and Romania. It is a blessing for such a diverse community to celebrate the Liturgy together with one mouth and one heart.

In addition to weekend and festal services, Matins is held weekly on Wednesdays, followed by Bible Study. We have also started a new video series, "Greet the Feast" to further enter into the celebrations we hold dear. We are blessed to have many retired priests who will help lead our own Lenten Retreat this year.

Every year the community puts on a cookie sale with homemade cookies from all over the world. We take this

time to offer Church tours and share our icons and our music with the community. At St Nicholas Orthodox Church we strive to be a community that seeks the beauty of our Church, working with one another's shortcomings, sharing in each other's struggles, forgiving and supporting our neighbor on our path towards the kingdom.

**Click here for our  
livestream**



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## FEATURED ORGANIZATION

# Antiochian Men

**ANTIOCHIAN MEN PRESIDENT:** Michael Baclig | St. Nicholas Orthodox Church | Springdale, AR



The Antiochian Men's group (AMEN) was founded by His Grace, Bishop NICHOLAS at the 2019 Winter Retreat in Atlanta, GA, and three years later a constitution for AMEN was ratified at the 2022 Winter Retreat on February 25, 2022.

The primary goal of AMEN is to help each other become more like God. The areas that AMEN focuses on are (1) Serving the Church, (2) Mentorship, (3) Supporting the Parish Priest, and (4) Fellowship with a Spiritual Focus. Our Church and our men face many challenges. Many of our men do not have father figures, and many fail because they do not have someone to talk to or a mentor to show them the way. This is the job of men in the church, the job of spiritual fathers, and the job of older men who can invest in younger men.

An average of six out of ten teens who go to college do not come back to the Church, and AMEN is committed to reducing this number. We must fill the void that is currently missing in the church for men. Young adults enter our church all the time and they always look for role models. AMEN strives to provide those role models. The proliferation of technology has created challenges for men, especially young men, and this challenge is unprecedented in the history of the Church. AMEN works to understand these challenges and then focuses on how to help.

AMEN has multiple virtual retreats each year including one during Great Lent and one in the Fall. AMEN also has a monthly Men's Bible Study hosted by Fr. Stephen De Young that meets on the third Thursday of each month. There have been 31 Bible Study sessions to date! Each Bible Study is recorded and available on the AMEN YouTube Channel. AMEN also has a weekly newsletter that is sent out each weekend, and anyone who wants to receive it can sign up on the AMEN Website at the bottom of the homepage.

## AMEN BOARD MEMBERS

Michael Baclig – President  
 Randy Were – Vice President  
 Elias AbuGazaleh – Treasurer  
 Fr. Hans Jacobse – Spiritual Advisor  
 Burt Noyes – Secretary  
 Bryce Kirk – Social Media Director  
 Bishop NICHOLAS – Bishop of DOMSE

## AMEN INTERNET MINISTRIES



[ANTIOCHIANMEN.ORG](https://antiochianmen.org)



AMEN BAND OF BROTHERS  
 AMEN READING CORNER



[AMENDOMSE](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQm5oY0Y0Y0Y0Y0Y0Y0Y0Y0)

PODCAST – "COMING OUT OF CHAOS"



Bishop Nicholas Signing the AMEN Constitution at the 2022 DOMSE Winter Retreat







# Winter Camp 2022

BY Sueanna Alter | All Saints Church | Raleigh, NC



For those of us ages 12-17 in DOMSE, President's Day weekend means one thing: Camp St. Thekla Winter Camp! This year was our third time having Winter Camp in person in the mountains of South Carolina. We welcomed 41 campers and 13 staff members. Everyone enjoyed their favorite camp activities, including gaga ball, hiking, camp church services, and "Ask Sayedna" with His Grace Bishop Nicholas. Fr. David Winn of All Saints in Raleigh served as our speaker and helped us all to think about pride and parables in brand new ways. A huge thank you to all of the staff and clergy that made this weekend so special, and to our campers for braving the cold to spend their weekend with our camp family. Can't wait to see you all this summer!



## Upcoming Events

### APRIL

#### TEEN SOYO CYBER RETREAT

April 2, 2022

12:00 pm to 2:00 pm EDT

[ZOOM LINK DETAILS HERE!](#)

#### ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT

April 9, 2022

10:00 am - 12:00 pm EDT

### JUNE

#### 2022 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE

St. John Orthodox Church

Memphis, TN

June 15 - June 18, 2022

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)

#### CAMP ST. THEKLA 2022 (SESSION 1)

June 26 - July 2, 2022

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)

### JULY

#### CAMP ST. THEKLA 2022 (SESSION 2)

July 3 - July 9, 2022

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)



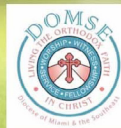
## 2022 SOYO Cyber Spring Retreat



Speaker:  
Fr. Gabriel  
Tannous



Bishop  
Nicholas  
Presiding



**Theme: "Keeping a routine prayer rule"**

**Date: April 2, 2022**

**Time: 12:00pm EST/11:00am CST (lasting for about 2 hours)**

**IF YOU HAVE ARTICLES OR SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LIGHT NEWSLETTER, PLEASE EMAIL THEM TO**

[DOMSENEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DOMSENEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM)

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





# Words from Sayedna Nicholas

In his Homily on The Lord's Prayer, St. John Chrysostom states, *"And nothing makes us so like God, as being ready to forgive the wicked and wrongdoers; even as indeed He had taught before, when He spoke of His 'making the sun to shine on the evil and the good.'"*

On the 6th of March, the Orthodox world celebrated Forgiveness Sunday and parishes around the globe held Forgiveness Vespers to give all the opportunity to ask forgiveness of each other. However, forgiveness is not restricted to Forgiveness Sunday. It is an all-year event to clear our minds and hearts from the damage done to us by others. Holding a grudge and not forgiving someone, is likened to drinking poison and wishing the other person dies. It does not work! Forgiving everyone helps us more than it helps the other person since it gives us relief from the anxiety and anguish we feel. It is therapeutic to forgive. Forgiveness starts with a cognitive decision and the heart will follow and will forgive at a later date. The cognitive decision needs to be followed by an action plan to implement the decision despite how we feel about the person who wronged us. In addition, if we don't forgive, God will not forgive us according to St Matthew, **"But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."** (Matthew 6:15)

The flip side of forgiveness is repentance. If we hurt someone, we must repent in order for the forgiveness of that person to reach us. Otherwise, it will stop short of us without benefiting us spiritually and therapeutically. Repentance comes automatically if we practice humility like the Publican in Luke (15:11-32). According to St. Isaac the Syrian, "Repentance is related to

remembering Judgment Day and shedding tears. However, this is not done to inflict self-pain, but to help oneself reach the Kingdom." Of course, repentance entails that great efforts be made, since, "The Kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violence take it by force." (Matthew 11:12) The open war is against the passions, desires, and traps of the devil. St. Isaac exclaims, "We have been joined to our passions as tied by an iron ring. One does not labor to be freed from it but feels comfort in these bonds. How treacherous are the traps of the devil! How darkened our minds to care for all that is bad for us, and to favor what hurts is over the future goodness."

On a different note, registration for the Parish Life Conference (June 15 - June 18) has been opened. Click on the link [DOMSE 2022 Parish Life Conference \(PLC\)](#) to register and participate in an exciting time of learning and fellowship in Memphis, TN. If you follow the link, you will find more details about the PLC. Please participate and reap the rewards. See you there!

Furthermore, Summer camp at Camp St. Thekla is coming and nearly three hundred campers have registered so far. Click on the links [Camp St. Thekla 2022 \(Session 1\) \(domse.org\)](#) and [Camp St. Thekla 2022 \(Session 2\) \(domse.org\)](#) to register as a camper or staff. As usual, this will be an exciting time for campers and staff as the fun, making friends for life, and learning about your faith never stops. See you there!

One more reminder is to participate in the Lenten retreats that are scheduled for April, 2022. The Teen retreat is planned for April 2nd, and the Antiochian Women's retreat, God willing, will take place on April 9. All retreats are free and online. You don't have to travel or spend money. Please click on the link [www.domse.org](#) and scroll down to "Upcoming Events" for more details. God bless you all!







# Editor's Corner

One of the great blessings of the DOMSE Retreats and the PLC is that the clergy and faithful from throughout the Diocese gather together to compare notes about what is working in our parishes and to be encouraged and challenged. At the Winter Retreat, many of us heard about the rapid growth that is happening at Christ the Good Shepherd Mission in Concord, NC. This Mission started organizing in the Fall of 2020, but they already have more than 60 kids involved in their children's ministry, and they have baptized or chrismated more than 20 people and welcomed more than another 20 as catechumens. However, as impressive as these statistics are, another fact is most impressive – this Fall, 6 lay leaders at Christ the Good Shepherd will start the St. Stephen's Certificate program through the Antiochian House of Studies. Glory to God!

For any of our churches, we can only really grow if we have leaders in place who can welcome newcomers into the Church and mentor and guide them as they take steps to become mature Orthodox Christians. Just as a tree can only put on as much visible growth as it has the root structure to support, every parish needs leaders who are putting down deep roots in the faith so that they can stabilize and serve the entire community. May we all continue to grow in the faith, so that we can welcome in those who are hungry and thirsty for all of the riches that our Lord Jesus Christ offers us through the Church! And may we encounter Him more fully during the extra services of Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha so that we can generously present the Bridegroom to the world! Because ultimately, we cannot take anyone else any further in the spiritual life than we ourselves have gone.

*"Unless you are converted and become like children you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:3*



## 2022 Parish Life Conference Diocese of Miami and the Southeast Memphis, Tennessee June 15–18, 2022



Hosted by St. John Orthodox Church at the beautiful Hilton Memphis

Join us in Memphis, Tennessee – the home of the Blues and the birthplace of Rock 'n' Roll – as we share fellowship with members from all corners of our Diocese. **Highlights of the in-person PLC include:**

- Keynote Speaker: Fr. Stephen Freeman
- Oratorical Festival
- Bible Bowl
- ...and much more!

The city of Memphis also has much to offer, including:

- Historic Beale Street
- Graceland (the home of Elvis Presley)
- National Civil Rights Museum
- The world's largest Bass Pro Shop
- Big River Crossing over the majestic Mississippi River
- ...and much more!



## Barbecue, Blues, and Beatitudes



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



**Register today:** [antiochianevents.com/miami](https://antiochianevents.com/miami)  
**DIocese of MIAMI & THE SOUTHEAST**  
Host Parish: St. John Orthodox Church, Memphis, TN

## REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!



**FOR A SCHEDULE OF EVENTS, CLICK HERE!**