

# the Light



MARCH 2022  
NEWSLETTER



## YOUNG ADULTS LENTEN VIRTUAL RETREAT 2022

Hosted by St. Ignatius, Franklin, TN  
March 16, 2022 | 12:00 - 6:00 pm EDT



## AMEN VIRTUAL LENTEN RETREAT

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

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## Parish Spotlight

### ST. ELIAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

#### CLERGY

Rev. Fr. Gabriel Tannous, Pastor  
Rev. Fr. Habib Ghantous  
V. Rev. Fr. George Makhlof (retired)  
Dn. Simeon Spencer  
Dn. Daniel Velez

**FEAST DAY:** Saint Elias, July 20 –  
Celebrated with a parish luncheon with  
skewers of chicken, Middle Eastern rice,  
and a lovely Mediterranean salad.

**EMAIL:** [Frgtannous@gmail.com](mailto:Frgtannous@gmail.com)

**WEBSITE:** [stelias.church](http://stelias.church)



## St. Elias Orthodox Church | Atlanta, GA

St. Elias Orthodox Church is located in Atlanta, Georgia. Our parish is very active in DOMSE and has hosted the Clergy and Winter Retreats for the past few years. The parishioners at St. Elias host a Middle Eastern Festival bi-annually and have hosted it 45 times in the past!

Our Antiochian Women are incredibly active in serving the community through bake sales, Middle Eastern food sales, baking prosphora, and making flower decorations for feast days. In addition, they hold two charitable events every year – first, they host a dinner for medically fragile children and give them gifts during the Christmas season, and second, they host a meal for young,

disadvantaged women and treat them to food and crafts.

2021 marked the one-hundredth year of St. Elias Church in Atlanta. The centennial celebration for the parish will take place in August 2022 due to the pandemic, and we look forward to celebrating this milestone with everyone in the community!

You can reach Fr. Gabriel at [Frgtannous@gmail.com](mailto:Frgtannous@gmail.com). If you are interested in viewing any of our services, you can click on this link:

Stream | St. Elias Antiochian  
Orthodox Church  
[[stelias.church](http://stelias.church)]



# Antiochian Women Prayer

*In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. O Christ our God, we are all pledged to serve Thee with our whole being. Help us to continue to work for Thee through our Church without seeking praise, without seeking personal gain, without judging others, without a feeling that we have worked hard enough and now must allow ourselves rest. Give us strength to do what is right and help us to go on striving and to remember that activities are not the main thing in life. The most important thing is to have our hearts directed and attuned to Thee. Amen.*



## FEATURED ORGANIZATION

# Antiochian Women

**ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF DOMSE PRESIDENT:** Sh. Shell Keim  
All Saints Orthodox Church, Raleigh, NC

The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America was founded in 1973 through the vision of His Eminence Metropolitan Philip (Saliba) of Thrice-Blessed Memory. Today, it is an organization of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese and is led by His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph. Our purpose is to develop among the women a spirit of Christian leadership, awareness, and commitment; to foster a genuine expression of love and service through works of charity; and to instill a sense of fellowship and a deeper understanding of our Holy Orthodox Faith. We are a "Sisterhood Serving Christ Through Serving Others."

As the Antiochian Women of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast, we work together to support each parish chapter. The women who serve their communities and each other make up a network of many hands doing the work of Christ's Church.

Our DOMSE Antiochian Women's Board works hard to make sure that all parish groups are nurtured and connected. If you do not have an active chapter of the Antiochian Women at your parish, please contact Sh. Shell Keim at [shellkeim@gmail.com](mailto:shellkeim@gmail.com) and we can get you set up! By fellowshipping with each other and serving alongside each other, we spread the gospel of Christ and His Church to those we encounter.

Our DOMSE women support amazing causes throughout our diocese, archdiocese, and the world. It is our goal to serve as Martha served Christ but, like Mary, not to neglect the one thing needful which is our worship. If you would like to follow our Antiochian Women you will find us on Instagram, Facebook, and our DOMSE website.



DOMSEWOMEN



ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF DOMSE

## 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**



# Mission Spotlight

## Saint Elias Orthodox Church Land O' Lakes, FL

### CLERGY

The Rev. Fr. Youhanna Semaan,  
Pastor

St. Elias the Tishbite Mission, located in Land-O-Lakes, Florida, was founded as a mission church in 2015 by faithful Middle Eastern Orthodox immigrants. The services of the church are in Arabic and English, and most of the parishioners speak Arabic. The mission sponsors many successful activities like a Pre-Lenten picnic, a Christmas meal, and a festival for the feast of St. Elias in July. These activities are well attended, and the community of St. Elias has grown in unity and love and has become a more vibrant Orthodox community, as they have come together to enjoy music, food, and dance. St. Elias Mission has been blessed with several visits from Sayedna Nicholas, and these visits have served as a cheerful and encouraging event for the community. The parishioners love the opportunity to gather around His Grace and to receive the love, wisdom, and support that he shows to all the children, teenagers, and adults.





ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

# WORK DAZE

Southeast Regional Retreat



March 25-27, 2022

Diakonia Retreat Center, Salem, SC

"Discovering Your Spiritual Freedom"  
with Fr. Michael Tishel

Retreat Cost: \$50

Registration and more info at [ocf.net/events](http://ocf.net/events)

## Upcoming Events

### MARCH

#### YOUNG ADULTS LENTEN VIRTUAL RETREAT 2022

March 16, 2022

12:00 pm - 6:00 pm EDT

#### OCF WORK DAZE SOUTHEAST REGIONAL RETREAT

March 25-27, 2022

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)

#### 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

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!](#)

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



The Church starts the Lenten preparation by giving the faithful a gentle nudge starting with Zacchaeus Sunday, which precedes a period in the Church calendar called the Triodion, which is a progression of themes leading to Forgiveness Sunday and beyond.

When we discuss Zacchaeus on a Sunday, the Church nudges us to say that Great and Holy Lent is around the corner. The Church Fathers, in their infinite wisdom as they assigned the Gospel readings to the Triodion, are alerting us to focus our minds, hearts, and even stomachs on Christ, as we will see.

## The progression of themes is especially important, and is as follows:

The Sunday of Zacchaeus tells us how Zacchaeus, who was short of stature, had a burning desire to see Christ. And, as his example shows us, we should also have such a burning desire for Christ. **Luke (18:10-14)** tells us that Zacchaeus went to great lengths to see Jesus and repent of his sins of excessive tax collections and defrauding people. In doing so, the Church alerts us that Great and Holy Lent is around the corner.

Depending on when Pascha falls each year, the progression of themes may be interrupted for possibly more than a week to introduce a major feast day like the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple, 40 days after His Nativity.

The progression of themes continues as the Triodion begins. The first Sunday of the Triodion is always the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee. This Sunday introduces us to the humility of the Publican as he realizes his sinfulness and requests God's mercy versus the arrogance of the Pharisee and the lack of realizing his dependence on God's mercy.

The progression of themes here is that if we don't have a burning desire for Christ like Zacchaeus, we can't have humility like the Publican and beseech the Lord for His mercy. Rather, we would be arrogant like the Pharisee only to discover the fallacy we live.

The following Sunday's Gospel reading presents the parable of the Prodigal Son, which reminds us of his repentance, after realizing his sinfulness and wasting his father's wealth. The reader is encouraged to read **Luke (15:11-32)** for more details about this subject.

The progression of themes continues: if we don't have a burning desire for Christ (like Zacchaeus), we can't have humility (like the Publican). If we don't have humility, we can never be repentant (like the Prodigal Son).

The next Sunday's Gospel reading is about the Last Judgment (**Matthew 25:31-46**) and how Christ, at His second coming, will have the sheep at His right-hand (i.e. those who did good deeds by feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, visiting the imprisoned, etc.) and the goats at His left-hand (i.e. those who didn't do good deeds). Jesus sent those who did good deeds to Heaven (as He told them, "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.") and those who didn't to Hell (as He told them, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels."). Imagine what would happen to those who did evil deeds!

Notice that both groups on the right- and left-hand sides were ignorant of what they did! The ones on the right-hand side had "holy ignorance" as the Church Fathers say, since they did good deeds without expecting anything in return. The ones who were on the left-hand side were ignorant of the fact that they did not help others.

The Church Fathers have assigned another theme to The Sunday of the Last Judgment. It is Meatfare Sunday as well, which means it is the last day we eat meat until Holy Pascha (fish is allowed on the feast of the Annunciation and Palm Sunday). Thus, the Church is focusing, gradually, even our stomachs on Christ.

*(continued on page 6)*

The progression of themes continues: if we don't have a burning desire for Christ (like Zacchaeus), we can't have humility (like the Publican). If we don't have humility, we can never be repentant (like the Prodigal Son). If we can't repent, then our judgment (on the Last Judgment Day as presented by the Last Judgment Gospel reading) will be harsh!

The next Sunday, the last Sunday of the Triodion, is Forgiveness Sunday (**Matthew 6:14-21**). The Church is letting us know that if we don't forgive each other, God will not forgive us and our Great and Holy Lent effort, no matter how diligent, is in vain!

In addition, the Church Fathers have assigned two more themes to Forgiveness Sunday. It is Cheesefare Sunday as well, which means it is the last day we eat dairy products until Holy Pascha. Thus, the Church is further focusing our stomachs on Christ.

The third theme on the last Sunday of the Triodion, Forgiveness Sunday, is the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise and, by extension, we are expelled from Paradise as a consequence of the Original Sin (although we aren't guilty of the Original Sin). However, the Church doesn't keep us hanging for long! On Great and Holy Friday, as we pass under the Bier reentering the nave, we symbolically enter Paradise, having labored throughout Great Lent in fasting and intensified prayers during the extra services and our personal prayers.

**The progression of themes before Holy and Great Lent is this: if we don't have a burning desire for Christ (like Zacchaeus), we can't have humility (like the Publican). If we don't have humility, we can never be repentant (like the Prodigal Son). If we can't repent, then our judgment (on the Last Judgment Day**

**as presented by the Last Judgment Gospel reading) will be harsh. Furthermore, if we don't forgive each other, then our fasting and prayers during Great and Holy Lent will be in vain and God will not forgive our sins.**

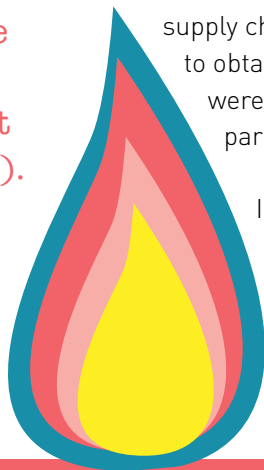
Furthermore, every Sunday of Great and Holy Lent has at least two themes. I invite you to discover them as you journey to Holy Pascha. This is our second preparation period as we march to the Empty Tomb on Holy Pascha.

Our third and final preparation period (the first one being the Triodion and the second being Great and Holy Lent) is Holy Week. Every day of Holy Week has at least one theme that is intended to prepare us further for Holy Pascha. I invite to discover those themes as well on our Lenten journey.

On a different note, we have concluded the Camp St. Thekla (CST) Winter Retreat (AKA by the teens as WAMP). Despite the touch of cold in the mountains of South Carolina, it was an excellent and successful camp as we returned to in-person WAMP on President's Day weekend. See you at CST summer camp! If you have not registered yet, please do so soon as the camp is almost full.

We also just concluded two successful Clergy and Winter Retreats at St. Elias Church in Atlanta, Georgia. We had to cap attendance at 150 people due to the supply chain shortages as the committee was unable to obtain food to feed more participants. Even so, we were able to stretch the purchased food to feed 161 parishioner and clergy participants.

I pray that you continue to have a spiritually edifying Triodion, Great and Holy Lent, Holy Week, and a glorious Holy Pascha! God bless you all!







## Editor's Corner

More than anything else, Great Lent is a school of desire. The Fast teaches us that nothing is more important than the love of God, and the entire Lenten season nurtures and grows our desire for Him.

During Lent, the Church encourages us to refrain from eating meat, and dairy, and fish, wine, and oil, but as the Triodion says, "True fasting is to put away all evil, to control the tongue, to forbear from anger, to abstain from lust, slander, falsehood, and perjury. If we renounce these things, then our fasting is true and acceptable to God."

When we fast, we are like St. Peter, who hears the question: "Do you love me more than these?" And the additional services that we celebrate each week during Lent intensify our prayer so that we are able to say, "Yes Lord, you know that I love you." (John 21:15)

Fasting puts a limit or check on our normal desires for food and drink, and when we fast, we naturally feel hunger and a certain degree of impatience. But if we turn to our Lord Jesus Christ as often as we feel these things, praying "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me," then we begin to experience spiritual lightness, peace, fullness, and joy.

May God be with us all as we enter into Great Lent and allow the season to reorder our desires!

3RD ANNUAL  
**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**

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!



WINTER CAMP 2022