

the Light



JULY 2022
NEWSLETTER



CAMP ST. THEKLA 2022

Session 1
June 26 - July 2, 2022
Session 2
July 3 - July 9, 2022



AMEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

July 21, 2022
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm EDT

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SPECIAL EDITION

DOMSE PLC 2022

St. John Orthodox Church | Memphis, TN



Parish Life Conference 2022

BY SH. SHELL KEIM | ALL SAINTS ORTHODOX CHURCH | RALEIGH, NC
PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH BACLIG



Finally, together again! After years of planning and praying, the faithful of DOMSE gathered in Memphis, TN, to participate in the 2022 Parish Life Conference (PLC). Led by the wonderful group of planners at St. John's Church in Memphis, we were able to fellowship together with food, meetings, games and most importantly, the Eucharist. Led by Bishop NICHOLAS, the organizations of the diocese were able to meet in person to manage the business of each organization and spend time hearing from guest speakers on spiritual topics designed to encourage and uplift.

The 2022 PLC began with our Clergy and their lovely wives gathering for dinner and fellowship with each other and Bishop NICHOLAS. Each morning of the conference began with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and homilies delivered by our DOMSE clergy. The theme of the 2022 PLC was taken from Matthew 18:3: "Unless you are converted and become like children you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."

Thank you to all of those from St. John's Church for providing

an excellent Kid's Club program for our youngest DOMSE members ages 3-12 years old. Teen SOYO members gathered for an off-site humanitarian project as well as fellowship. Our Antiochian Women conducted their business meeting and enjoyed a discussion about "Martha and Mary" from Matushka Beth Freeman in addition to enjoying food and fellowship with an off-site book club meeting hosted by the lovely ladies of St. John's Church. The AMEN members hosted Fr. Stephen Freeman as their guest speaker and spent time in a book and Bible study with Fr. Stephen DeYoung. The Young Adults were able to fellowship and share a drink at "Doctrine and Draft" hosted by the Young Adults of St. John's Church at a local establishment in Memphis.

Everyone was welcomed on Thursday night to enjoy a sumptuous Memphis BBQ buffet along with fun and entertainment after dinner which included local musical acts bringing us the best that Memphis has to offer in

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(PLC - continued from page 2)

addition to skits performed by our teens. We all were overjoyed to be serenaded by our own Sarah and Joel Finley. Wrapping up the PLC on Friday evening, twelve Bible Bowl teams from around the diocese competed to see who would take first place in a battle of biblical trivia featuring questions from the book of Matthew. First place was captured by the teens of St. Stephen's Church in Hiram, GA! This team will head to the Antiochian Village in July to represent all DOMSE at the Archdiocese Bible Bowl. Thank you to all of those who worked so hard to make sure we had a wonderful time in Memphis. The planning team at St. John's Church, Fr. Philip Rogers, the host pastor, all DOMSE organization heads and our own Bishop NICHOLAS planned an amazing time of fellowship and renewal for the faithful from

our diocese. We are blessed to be surrounded by so many amazing people in the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast. Keep each other in your prayers and we will see you all at the 2023 PLC in Miami!



More photos can be found on Facebook. [CLICK HERE!](#)





PLC UPDATE

Antiochian Men

By Michael Baclig | St. Nicholas Orthodox Church | Springdale, AR



The Antiochian Men were well represented at the 2022 Parish Life Conference (PLC) in Memphis, TN. AMEN kicked things off on Thursday, June 16th, with a brunch and business meeting that was attended by sixty-five men from all over the diocese. Everyone was updated on the status of various AMEN projects and initiatives at the diocese level. His Grace, Bishop NICHOLAS addressed the men at the start of the meeting before turning things over to the AMEN President Michael Baclig. The meeting ended with a rousing talk from the AMEN Spiritual Advisor Fr. Hans Jacobse who shared words of encouragement with everyone present. Immediately following the conclusion of the meeting, Fr. Stephen Freeman, Pastor Emeritus at St. Anne Orthodox Church in Oak Ridge, TN, gave a fantastic talk entitled "Hungry, Thirsty, Stranger, Naked, Sick and in Prison: The Secret Life of Shame." Everyone who attended the meeting stayed for this talk and it was well received by all.

The second session for the Antiochian Men took place later that same day. It was a combined event that started with an AMEN Book Club event that was followed by a men's Bible Study. Both events were attended by over forty men from the diocese including clergy and laity. Fr. Stephen De Young, pastor of Archangel Gabriel Orthodox Church in Lafayette, LA, hosted both events. Fr. Stephen gave an overview of his

book, God is a Man of War: The Problem of Violence in the Old Testament. The Antiochian Men are now reading this book together as an organization. This will be the theme of the AMEN Virtual Retreat scheduled for November 19, 2022.

The men's Bible Study was live streamed on the Antiochian Men's YouTube Channel and already has over 280 views! All the participants were engaged in the discussion and had the opportunity to ask Fr. Stephen many questions about the topic. Fr. Stephen has now hosted thirty-four men's Bible Studies for the men in DOMSE. These occur on the third Thursday of each month via Zoom, but this was the first time one was held in person. All the AMEN events at the PLC were meaningful, edifying and enjoyed by all the participants. We thank St. John's parish of Memphis for hosting the PLC this year. We look forward to more in-person events in the future for the men of DOMSE.



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DOMSEWOMEN
ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF DOMSE

YOUNG ADULT
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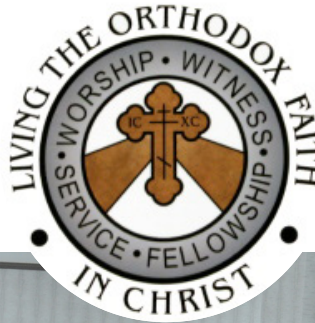
PLC UPDATE

Teen SOYO

By James Elliott

St. John Orthodox Church | Memphis, TN

Thanks be to God, our Teen SOYO family gathered in Memphis to see each other in person at the PLC. Our events kicked off with a teen fellowship hour which included several icebreakers and games that our teens participated in. The next day, during our annual business meeting, we elected a new Teen SOYO board: Olivia Bacca (St. Ignatius, Franklin, TN) as President; Susannah Bandy (St. Elias, Atlanta, GA) as Vice President; Brendan Wilson (St. Stephens, Hiram, GA) as Secretary; Stella Hahlberg (All Saints, Raleigh, NC) as Treasurer; and Brendan Bibeau (St. Paul, Tupelo, MS) as Social Media Director. After the business meeting, we participated in an edifying retreat led by Fr. Joseph Aboud, the Dean of St. George's Cathedral in Miami on the theme of the PLC: "Unless you are converted and become like children you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3) That afternoon, the teens visited the PLC host parish, St. John's, where they made sandwiches and hygiene kits which will be donated to two local food pantries. The weekend ended with an exciting hotel scavenger hunt on Friday morning and the 2022 DOMSE Bible Bowl later that evening, won by the teens of St. Stephen's Church in Hiram, GA. At times when there were no events scheduled, the teens spent time together in fellowship, speaking with the clergy, touring the hotel, and splashing in the pool. On Friday night, after Compline, Fr. Philip Rodgers told the teens that a vacationing family came to him earlier during the PLC and asked him about Orthodoxy. After conversing with them, the family told him that they became curious about Orthodoxy from watching the teens playing "baptism" in the hotel pool. "The teens are truly the light of our diocese," said Fr. Philip.



PLC UPDATE

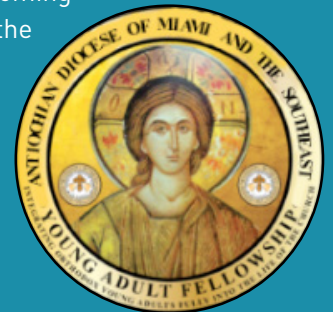
YAF

By Rebekah Meese

St. Anna Orthodox Church

Columbia, TN

We were blessed to finally meet in person at the PLC in Memphis. At our gathering, we were fortunate to hear Dr. Nawar Mansour speak on "Orthodoxy in the workplace." There were some great discussions on how to deal with common issues we all come across in the workplace. We also had an opportunity to ask questions about specific situations in our personal work experiences and get suggestions on how we can respond to those situations. We had plenty of time to introduce ourselves to each other and we made new connections with our fellow Orthodox young adults. It was a wonderful experience to get to speak and relate to others that are in the same stage of life. We bonded over conversations right up until it was time to leave! We were able to meet up for lunch, drinks, and games before heading back to our hometowns. We'd like to thank St. John's in Memphis for hosting this PLC. We are looking forward to coming together at the Fall Retreat where we hope to see many new faces in our group!





PLC UPDATE

Antiochian Women

By Sh. Shell Keim | All Saints Orthodox Church | Raleigh, NC



The Antiochian Women (AW) of DOMSE met together in Memphis, Tennessee during the DOMSE 2022 Parish Life Conference. Thank you to the members of St. John's Church in Memphis for hosting a wonderful event! We were blessed to have eighty-six ladies attend our business meeting.

The Antiochian Women enjoyed a lovely brunch with a spiritual talk by our guest speaker, Matushka Beth Freeman who spoke to us on the history and lives of Mary and Martha. She led us to see that the tension between the sisters that needed to be resolved was given up to Jesus through Him listening to Martha, understanding her heart, and giving her healing words. The sisters, especially Martha, were able to be at peace and find their place in the service of Christ.

The Antiochian Women's business meeting was led by Sh. Shell Keim, President of the AW. We are grateful for the spiritual leadership and uplifting words provided by our AW Spiritual Advisor, Fr. Kamal Al-Rahil. He presented the slate of new officers

for the AW Board. By acclamation, the candidates that were elected to serve a two-year term are: President Sh. Shell Keim, All Saints Church, Raleigh, NC; Vice President, Emily Bradley, St. Raphael of Brooklyn Church, Fuquay-Varina, NC; Secretary, Elizabeth Baclic, St. Nicholas Church, Springdale, AR; and Treasurer, Denise King, St. Nicholas Church, Springdale, AR.

It was a wonderful time of fellowship and planning for the upcoming year with our beloved sisters in Christ. May we continue to serve our church without seeking praise, without

seeking personal gain, without thinking we have worked hard enough and now must allow ourselves rest. Let us go on striving and to remember that activities are not the main thing but to keep our hearts attuned to Christ. Let us serve Christ by serving others.





Many Years!

The Diocese Ministry Council of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast awarded Elias AbuGhazaleh the DOMSE DMC Service Award for 2022. Elias is recognized for his faithful and tireless service to the clergy and members of DOMSE. Thank you Elias and may God grant you many years!



PLC UPDATE

Christian Education

By Anna-Sarah Farha | St. George Church | Jacksonville, FL

As the DOMSE faithful checked in at the Parish Life Conference registration table, they were immediately greeted by a beautiful display showcasing all of the entries from the 2022 Creative Arts Festival. Awards were announced during a special ceremony on Friday and several students were present to accept their ribbons. For those students who could not attend, the priests from those respective parishes received the awards on behalf of the students with enthusiasm and friendly competition.

Later that day, Christian educators gathered for a workshop focusing on inclusive, welcoming Sunday church school programs. "Let the little children come on to Me, and do not forbid them; for such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14) was the workshop theme, with discussion around accessible curriculum, disability-friendly resources, and how to start the process of removing barriers that might prevent a student from attending class. The goal of DOMSE Christian Education is to support our educators in their efforts to ensure that every child has the opportunity to fully participate in Sunday church school!



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Upcoming Events

JULY

CAMP ST. THEKLA 2022 (SESSION 2)

July 3 - July 9, 2022

AMEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

July 21 - Zoom

7:00 pm - 8:00 pm EDT

AUGUST

AMEN LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL CHAPTER PRESIDENTS MEETING

Zoom

August 9

8:00 pm - 9:00 pm EDT

SEPTEMBER

DOMSE FALL RETREAT 2022

September 9 - 10, 2022 (Tentative)

Details to come!

NOVEMBER

ANNUAL AMEN VIRTUAL RETREAT

November 19, 2022

10:00 am - 1:30 pm EDT

Details to come!

2023 JANUARY

DOMSE CLERGY & WINTER RETREATS 2023

January 24 - 29, 2023 (Tentative)

Clergy Retreat: January 24 - 27

Winter Retreat: January 27 - 29

Details to come!

JUNE

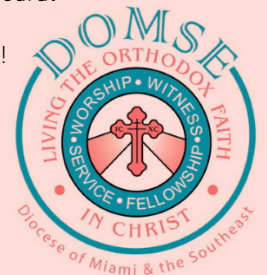
DOMSE 2023 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE (PLC)

June 14 - 17, 2023 (Tentative)

St. George Cathedral

Miami, FL

Details to come!



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

DOMSENEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM

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



Words from Sayedna Nicholas

Brothers and sisters in Christ, what would happen to our spirituality and fellowship as a Diocese if, for some reason, we must stop all retreats, activities, and the PLC permanently? It would be devastating, depressing, and unacceptable! Orthodox spirituality and fellowship in the world can't take place in vacuum! The DOMSE faithful need, in a necessary way, to meet face-to-face with each other, network, listen to informed and knowledgeable speakers, and worship together. Without these crucial events at the Diocese level, we would find ourselves in individual spiritual prisons! It would be cruel and unusual punishment, as the cliché goes! Thanks be to God that we now have all these activities today as we have busted out of the temporary pandemic prison to meet again in person. What a relief!

We had a wonderful, spiritual, and successful 2022 PLC with a record number of participants. (See more on the

PLC in other articles of this issue of The Light) Now, we are embarking upon a 2022 Camp St. Thekla summer season at the end of June and the beginning of July. After having the Clergy Retreat, the Winter Retreat, the Winter Camp St. Thekla (otherwise known as WAMP), and the four Lenten Retreats (the Antiochian Women, AMEN, Young Adult Fellowship (YAF) and Teen SOYO) we have returned to robust, spiritual activities in DOMSE. In addition, we look forward to the Fall Retreat in September at St. Ignatius Church in Franklin, TN, and the AMEN Fall Retreat in November. For all these reasons and others, we must thank God for His Grace that He has bestowed upon us all and we further ask Him vehemently to continue showering DOMSE with the ability to be united both spiritually and in fellowship and that we can remain steadfast in our in-person retreats. We also ask Him for continual spiritual progress to glorify His name. May God bless you all!





Theology Editor's Corner



Fr. Stephen Freeman's talks on the topic of shame were one of the highlights of this year's Parish Life Conference in Memphis, TN. Most of us probably think of shame as something that is wholly negative or even toxic, but Fr. Stephen reframed it in a way that offers those of us who struggle with shame the possibility of drawing closer to our Lord Jesus Christ through it.

Fr. Stephen highlighted that contrary to guilt, which is the negative feelings about what we have done, shame is negative feelings about who we are – our very identity or sense of self. It starts when we recognize that we have done wrong, but then grows and deepens as we wonder what is wrong with us that we would do such a thing in the first place. In this development, shame threatens to completely overwhelm us, so that, like Adam and Eve, when we are exposed before others – naked, vulnerable, and visible to all – we desperately want to run away, hide, and disappear altogether.

Given this, it seems that shame is something that alienates us from God and from everyone else.

However, Fr. Stephen also emphasized that shame can be something that opens us up to a new experience of God's presence and grace, since according to Elder Zacharias of Essex, "the way of shame is the way of the Lord." Our Lord Jesus Christ bore the full weight of shame in His death on the cross for us, so that whenever we bear our own shame, we take up our cross and follow Him (Mat. 16:24), which means that we are with Him and He is with us. Here, Fr. Stephen said that humility can be understood as the simple act of bearing our shame in the presence of Christ our God; and we know from the Scriptures that whoever humbles themselves will be exalted (Mat. 23:12).

It is impossible for us to escape the sting of shame or its accusations on our own through a sheer act of

the will – for none of us can simply choose to not feel shame. But if we turn to our Lord Jesus in the midst of shame, in complete vulnerability and nakedness, then we enjoy a new intimacy with Him, and He clothes us with His own glory. Here, we can only really escape from shame by being willing to bear a little shame in the presence of God and asking Him for His mercy and help whenever we face it. Through this kind of humility and faith our identities are renewed, and we understand the truth that we proclaim at every baptism: "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."

Anyone who is interested in learning more can explore a series of posts on the topic of shame on Fr. Stephen's blog (<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/glory2godforallthings/>) or his book on the topic that will be published next year. Glory to God for all things!