

the Light



AUGUST 2022
NEWSLETTER



**AMEN LEADERSHIP
& LOCAL CHAPTER
PRESIDENTS MEETING**

August 9, 2022 | 8:00 - 9:00 pm EDT - Zoom

DOMSE FALL RETREAT 2022

September 9 - 10, 2022
St. Ignatius Orthodox Church,
Franklin, TN - Details to come!

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YOUTUBE

Parish Spotlight

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

CLERGY

Rev. Fr. Nathaniel Trembley, Pastor

V. Rev. Fr. Michael Massouh, Emeritus
Pastor

Rev. Dn. Elias Haddy

FEAST DAY: St. Nicholas, December 6th

EMAIL: info@stnicholasaoc.org

WEBSITE: stnicholasaoc.org



St. Nicholas Orthodox Church | Pinellas Park, Florida

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church is a multi-ethnic parish that was founded in 1976. The church is located just north of St. Petersburg, Florida in Tampa Bay, which is on the west coast of Florida. There are close to twenty Orthodox churches within thirty miles of the church, but St. Nicholas is one of the few that holds all of the services predominantly in English. Given this, parishioners from throughout Tampa

Bay make St. Nicholas their church home, including cradle Orthodox from Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Greece, Egypt, Albania, Romania, Russia, Serbia, and their children, as well as many converts to the Orthodox Christian faith.

The church temple at St. Nicholas is built in the ancient basilica style, and it was modeled after the Basilica of

St. Symeon the Stylite near Aleppo Syria which was constructed in the 5th century. A core group of parishioners oversaw every stage of the construction of the building, and today more and more of the faithful are joyfully taking up the task of beautifying the church.

The Ladies' Society at St. Nicholas hosts annual fish luncheons on the

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(St. Nicholas - continued from page 1)

parish feast day and Palm Sunday, as well as many coffee hours throughout the year, and they also actively fund raise for the parish and its ministries and other local charitable causes. In addition, the ladies meet every other month for a book club and lunch, which is a great opportunity for fellowship and encouragement. The A-Men group at St. Nicholas meets for dinner, conversation, and a speaker every other month, and has recently taken on more responsibility for the maintenance of the church and its grounds, which has increased the sense of brotherhood at the church.

St. Nicholas has seen a lot of growth over the last few years. Many new families in their twenties and thirties have become a part of the community, and the Sunday School program has grown from just eight kids a few years ago to more than thirty today. The teens at St. Nicholas are in the process of re-establishing a SOYO chapter at the church, and everyone is excited to see what comes next.

St. Nicholas is a warm and hospitable community where everyone can experience the love of God. We invite you to join us in prayer and worship whenever you are in the area.





Words from Sayedna Nicholas

Orthodox Christianity has NOT been politically correct for the past two thousand years and will continue NOT to be politically correct in the future! What does this mean? It means that anything **contrary** to the Bible, including the Old and New Testament, the Traditions, and the Ecumenical Councils will not be accepted by the Orthodox Church and the Church will not hide Her views on those issues. As we all live life, we will encounter our secular society's contrary views. However, the Church and Her faithful will never succumb (give in) to the mighty but wrongful currents that are sweeping our culture lest what happened to Sodom takes place in our presence or, at the very least, at the Last Judgment. The works and miracles that have been done in our society had not been done in Sodom; our spiritual progress in the world, the growth of Orthodox Christianity, the unprecedented wealth, the Godly graces, the unparalleled advancements in all fields, including the medical field, the increase in the average life-expectancy for people, etc. For this reason, our Lord warns,

“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it

would have remained until this day. But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.” (Matthew 11:20, 24)

This is a serious matter! **Even though we might not feel the heat today due to all the worldly distracting pleasures, our Lord is unrelenting in His endeavor and will not waver.** Therefore, it behooves us to adopt His loving teachings, to change our ways by making an about face, and to follow Him on all fronts. Nonetheless, some might choose otherwise to match one's desired lifestyle and pleasures. Attempts to dilute the faith or water down Orthodoxy will not be successful! Some of us might think that we can outsmart the Church, Her conscience, and the faithful people by sneaking in personal agendas or by temporarily hiding personal interests that are contrary to God's will. Nevertheless, it will not be done for long in the darkness! Eventually, everything will be exposed to the Light! This leads to the fact that it is not appropriate, nor right to choose out of His teachings and Commandments what is convenient for our lifestyle and “ditch” what is not! All His teachings and Commandments go together as one package.

“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all. For He who said, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ also said, ‘Do not murder.’ Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So, speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.” (James 2:10-12)

Orthodox Christianity does **not** distinguish between a “small” sin and “big” sin, a “deadly” sin and a “survivable” sin, a “serious” sin and a “light” sin, or a murder and a “white” lie. A sin is a sin no matter what it is. **All sins are equally offensive to God!** However, recovering from

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different sins is not equally hard. With the guidance of a Spiritual Father, it is easier, for example, to recover from the sin of stealing a pencil than the sin of murder.

Shifting gears to our DOMSE events, we have a successful June PLC under our belt! A fruitful and efficacious June and July at Camp St. Thekla, session one and two, are also a feather in our cap. The organizers, faithful, campers, and staff have already expressed their elated attitude! What is left this year?

We have **the annual Fall Retreat** starting on September 9 (the faithful and clergy are to arrive the evening of September 8). The retreat ends on Saturday, September 10, however, all are welcome to participate in the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Sunday, September 11. We are planning a spiritually edifying retreat as usual, hosted at St Ignatius Church, Franklin, TN. We will have engaging and exciting speakers to spark our interest in Godly topics to further increase our faith and get us closer to God on our path to becoming God-like. In addition, the men have their **annual Fall AMEN Retreat** in November. The customary stimulating speakers will give incentive and motivation for continued spiritual growth. I personally look forward to both retreats.

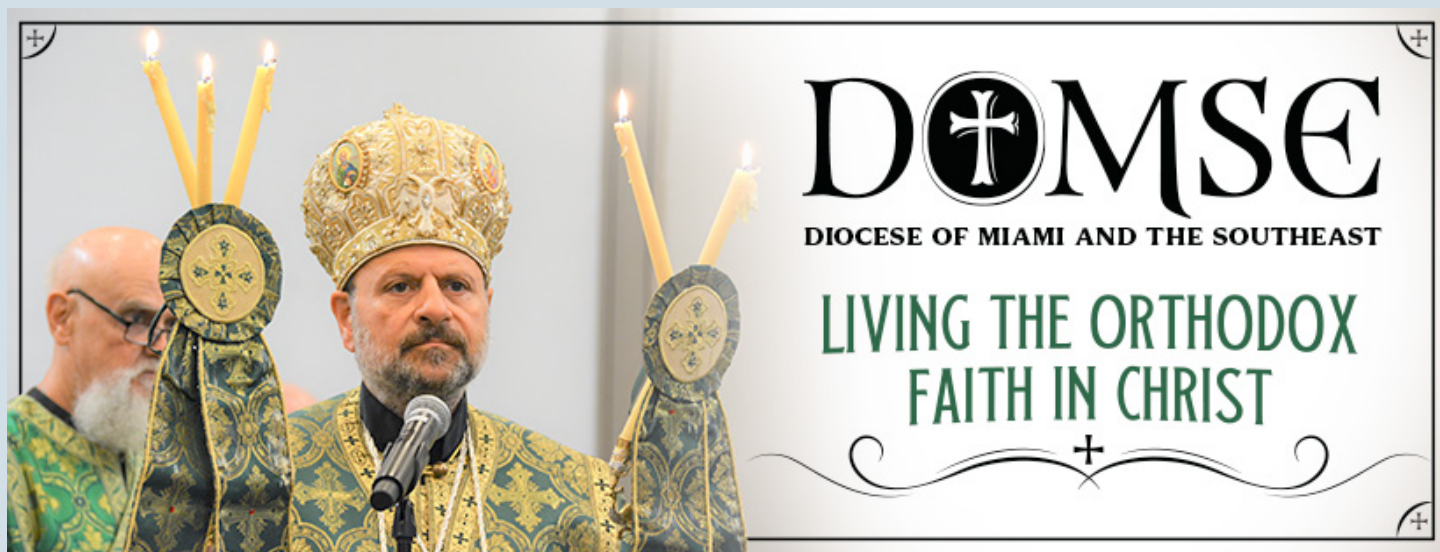
May God bless you and may the Holy Trinity protect you all.



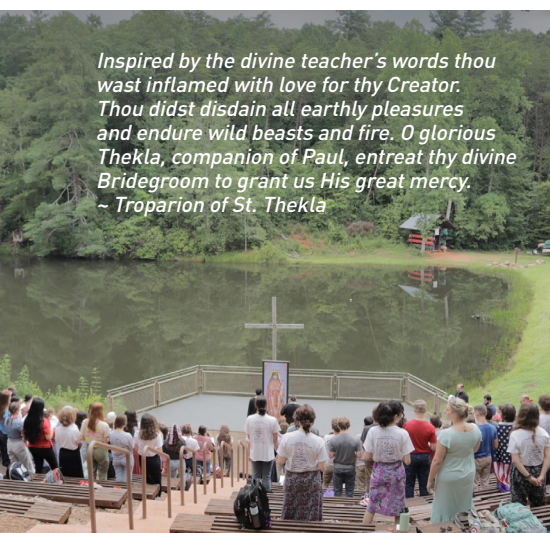
2022 Fall Retreat
September 9 – 10

Hosted by
St. Ignatius Orthodox Church
Franklin, TN

Sept. 8 The faithful and clergy arrive in the evening
Sept. 9-10... Retreat activities
Sept. 11 Hierarchical Divine Liturgy - ALL ARE WELCOME!



DOMSE
DIOCESE OF MIAMI AND THE SOUTHEAST
LIVING THE ORTHODOX FAITH IN CHRIST



Inspired by the divine teacher's words thou wast inflamed with love for thy Creator. Thou didst disdain all earthly pleasures and endure wild beasts and fire. O glorious Thekla, companion of Paul, entreat thy divine Bridegroom to grant us His great mercy.
~ Troparion of St. Thekla



FEATURED EVENT

Camp St. Thekla

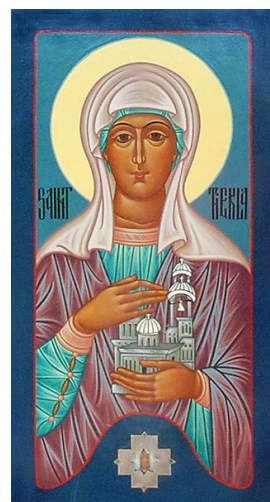
By Sueanna Alter | All Saints Church | Raleigh, NC

Another successful summer is in the books for Camp St. Thekla! This year just over three hundred campers traveled by plane, car, bus, and caravan to reach the mountains of South Carolina. They were greeted by the smiling faces of our thirty staff members and gracious volunteers, and then began what many campers call "the best week of the year."

A day in the life of a camper consists of three programs, each with different goals. The Morning Program provides Christian Education, team building for sister and brother cabins, time to get to know our Bishop NICHOLAS at "Ask Sayedna" sessions, and time to splash in the camp creek. After lunch, campers separate from their cabins for the Afternoon Program, a time for games like Angle Ball and Gaga Ball and fun outdoor activities like swimming, canoeing, and hiking. Finally, the day ends with the entire camp gathering for fun during the Evening Program, which ranges from themed dances to game shows. Each camp session also ends with a special video to commemorate the campers' experiences.

These activities give the children of our diocese time to learn, grow and get outside of their comfort zones. It also allows them to interact and form friendships with kids from across the diocese who share their faith. These relationships that start at camp help to guide and anchor our campers throughout the long school year and the rest of their lives. It's incredibly valuable to have peers that you can look to who have the same faith and perspective as you, and camp is one of the few places where the children of our diocese can find that.

The services of the church provide solid ground for those relationships and bookends for each day at camp. The campers roll out of bed in the morning and go straight to Orthros, and in the evening as the sun sets, they gather after dinner at Vespers. The first camp session this year also had the opportunity to celebrate the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul with a Liturgy, and both sessions were able to pray supplication services to St. Thekla and St. Raphael. These two saints shepherd our campers and staff, and by their intercessions we were able to have two wonderful camp sessions this year. May we have many more in the years to come!





Theology Editor's Corner

The Dormition of the Theotokos is one of the great feasts of the Church year, and its troparion offers us insight into what we mean when we say that the Mother of God is our "Champion Leader." On this feast we sing,

In thy birth-giving, O Theotokos, thou didst keep
and preserve virginity;

and in thy falling-asleep thou hast not forsaken
the world;

for thou wast translated into life, being the
Mother of Life.

Wherefore, by thine intercessions, deliver our
souls from death.

Here, three points stand out. First, though she dies, the Theotokos is translated into life where she now dwells in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. Second, she has not forsaken us or forgotten the world. And third, her prayers and intercessions are a powerful help to deliver our souls from death.

Our Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is our Champion Leader because she has the boldness to stand before her Son and our God and, as an intercessor, she leads all the Saints who pray along with her for all of us who still struggle here on earth.

Thus, the good news of the Dormition is that death cannot overcome the bonds of love that connect each one of us to the Theotokos, to the Saints, and indeed, to anyone who has passed away. For if someone dies as a Saint, we know that they offer up prayers to God as an expression of their undying love for us, while, for anyone else, we ourselves offer up prayers for them. So that whether the dead pray for the living, or the living pray for the dead, the bond of love between us is active, strong, and worked out through prayer. Therefore, it is always good for us to cry out: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, Savior save us!

Upcoming Events

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
St. Ignatius Orthodox Church
Franklin, TN
Details to come!

NOVEMBER

ANNUAL AMEN VIRTUAL RETREAT

November 19, 2022
10:00 am - 1:30 pm EDT
Details to come!

2023 JANUARY

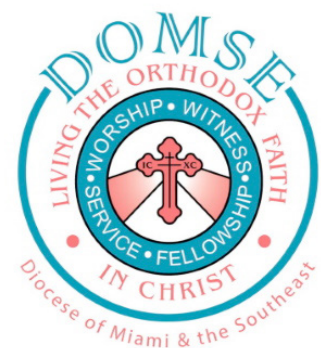
DOMSE CLERGY & WINTER RETREATS 2023

January 24 - 29, 2023 (Tentative)
Clergy Retreat: January 24 - 26
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
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