

His Grace Bishop Nicholas, Diocese of Miami and the Southeast



Bishop Nicholas was born in Damascus, Syria, in January 1963 to an Antiochian Orthodox family. For the first 18 years of his life, he attended the Antiochian Orthodox Patriarchal Cathedral of the Dormition of the Virgin Mary in Damascus.

In February 1981, Bishop Nicholas emigrated to the United States, where he began a course of study at Northeastern University, Boston, MA. He earned several degrees, including

- **Bachelor of Science in Electrical and Computer Engineering,**
- **Master of Science in Computer Engineering,**
- **A Specialization Certificate in Object-Oriented Design, Architecture, and Coding.**

He has also attended many professional engineering conferences, as well as courses and conferences on psychology and human behavior.

Bishop Nicholas worked for nearly 20 years as a Computer Engineer at several companies in the Electronics Design Automation industry, such as Synopsys Co. He was also promoted to the highest technical ranks as a Lead Software Architect, Principal Software Engineer, and Software Engineering Manager. He represented his companies to many conferences in Sweden, France, England, Germany, Italy, and USA, and also served as a lecturer in Electronics Circuitry, Circuit Theory, and Digital Computers at the Wentworth Institute of Technology, Boston, MA.

Bishop Nicholas also holds a **Master of Divinity degree**, awarded with Highest Distinction, from studies undertaken between September 2002 to May 2005 at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Bishop Nicholas **speaks, reads, and writes Arabic and English fluently**. He used French (his second language in Syria) along with Hebrew, Ancient Greek, New Testament Greek, and Modern Greek to conduct research on theological subjects.

When Christ called him to serve His Church and the Patriarchate of Antioch through the Archdiocese of North America, Bishop Nicholas, after studying the matter to make sure it was God's will, did not hesitate to leave his high paying career and the worldly wealth. He answered the High call to tend the flock of Christ with devotion and determination.

Bishop Nicholas was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by His Eminence Metropolitan Philip on April 23, 2004, and to the Holy Priesthood by His Grace Bishop Antoun on January 9, 2005. Upon graduating from Holy Cross Seminary, he was assigned by His Eminence Metropolitan Philip to St. Philip Antiochian Orthodox Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he served for six and a half years from August 2005 to December 2011. He was elevated to the dignity of Archimandrite by His Eminence Metropolitan Philip on February 14, 2010, and was consecrated to the bishopric, by His Beatitude Patriarch IGNATIUS IV, as the Bishop of Brooklyn on December 11, 2011 at the Church of the Dormition of the Theotokos in the Patriarchal Monastery of Our Lady of Balamand, Balamand, Lebanon. Bishop Nicholas has visited Mount Athos yearly for 19 years from the year 2000 to 2019 (until the pandemic started) for spiritual rejuvenation, safeguarding his vows, and contemplation.

For 6 years, Bishop Nicholas served at the Headquarters of the Archdiocese, Englewood, NJ as the Assistant to Metropolitans Philip and Joseph as well as the Bishop of Brooklyn and the Diocese of New York & Washington DC, from January 2012 to October 2017.

During the last 5+ years, since Bishop Nicholas was appointed to serve the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast (DOMSE for short) in October 2017 to present time, he led 36 churches/missions in 9 states and grew them to 41 churches/missions, and he has been visiting these parishes twice every year to hold spiritual retreats and to meet with parishioners and clergy to attend to their spiritual and individual needs

Since Orthodox spirituality, faith, Orthodox ethos, and way of life are very important and essential to Bishop Nicholas, he has set, for both dioceses, the top vision of aiming to become more God-like on a daily basis so that the faithful have a goal to strive for in their daily spiritual growth, as he often stated that **“Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18)**. Bishop Nicholas has often proclaimed that all other activities and retreats in the dioceses need to serve this top goal of becoming God-like. The way to work on this goal is to respond to the free gift given by God to all humans, the image of God (Genesis 1:26), by acquiring His likeness gradually through obtaining the Virtues and leaving behind the worldly desires and bad habits. All of that, he adds, should be done under the guidance of The Holy Spirit and an appropriate and experienced Spiritual Father. It is worthy to note that Bishop Nicholas is the Spiritual Father to several hundreds of spiritual children as he guides them on the narrow path to salvation on a regular basis.

Having set such a spiritual vision, Bishop Nicholas used his God given gifts of his strong Engineering background and his Episcopal experience to create a persistent **administrative infrastructure** in DOMSE to carry out the vision manifested on the diocese website DOMSE.org, which shows all the DOMSE ministries in one menu: the Antiochian Men, the Antiochian Women, Religious Education, Young Adults, Teen SOYO, and Camp St. Thekla.

Some unique organizations in the entire archdiocese were created by Bishop Nicholas in DOMSE, in addition to some widely used social media apps:

- The vibrant DOMSE Antiochian Men (AMEN) www.antiochianmen.org presided over by a [diocesan board](#) and leading young men in the quest for Orthodoxy. This organization was instituted in DOMSE first.
- The efficient [Diocesan Ministry Council](#) (DMC) helping run DOMSE with Bishop Nicholas during a weekly meeting for most of the year.
- Many leadership organizations found on the website DOMSE.org under the title Leadership.
- [DOMSE YouTube Channel](#) and [AMEN YouTube channel](#) created to post numerous videos to bolster the advancement of becoming God-like, as part of the DOMSE vision.
- The App Band effectively used to communicate with the [DOMSE parishioners](#) and [AMEN](#).

During the COVID-19 Pandemic and while the faithful were staying at home, Bishop Nicholas held a live streaming on the App Band every Sunday at 3:00pm EST in order to keep the diocese together and encourage parishioners to keep the faith, stay connected, and stay associated with DOMSE. All of those sessions were recorded and filed on the [DOMSE YouTube Channel](#).

To rejuvenate spirituality in clergy and laity alike in DOMSE, Bishop Nicholas has started new traditions in the yearly spiritual **Fall Retreat**, spiritual **Clergy Retreat**, and the spiritual **Winter Retreat**. The yearly PLC schedule has been changed drastically to reflect the new spiritual direction in DOMSE. Moreover, AMEN monthly Bible study has been taking place for the past three years, as well as AMEN, Antiochian Women, Young Adults, and Teen SOYO Lenten retreats for the past three years.

In order to prepare the new generations of DOMSE faithful to continue carrying the torch of Christian life and ministry, Bishop Nicholas started **Camp St. Thekla (CST)** Winter Camp (known fondly to teens as **WAMP**) and expanded summer camp to include many more campers. He appointed CST Administration and Finance committees to lead the camp efforts and advance it to the next level of organization and professionalism. The result of these committees has led to an increased attendance year over year in summer and winter camp, providing a more spiritual experience to the DOMSE youth at these events.

Bishop Nicholas established in 2021 the new **DOMSE Scholarship** for graduating Highschool seniors who were accepted to go on to college. DOMSE has granted thus far four seniors \$2500.00 each. Furthermore, Bishop Nicholas established in October 2021 the **DOMSE Newsletter, The Light**. It is a monthly newsletter that includes spiritual articles and keeps DOMSE parishioners informed of the current events, as it introduces the faithful to all churches/missions, organizations, and personnel.

Having had a spiritual vision for the DOMSE established and, in time, an administrative infrastructure, Bishop Nicholas set out to implement the spiritual vision by holding weekly spiritual retreats for the Antiochian Men, Antiochian Women, Teen SOYO, and Sunday School during his pastoral visits to his parishes. For the past five years, Bishop Nicholas has been visiting his 41 DOMSE parishes twice every year to hold spiritual retreats and to meet parishioners and clergy where they are in their lives. As a result, Bishop Nicholas knows his DOMSE parishioners by name and helps them out in their needs.

**Highlights of the 6 years of Bishop Nicholas' work
at the Archdiocese Headquarters,
during Metropolitans Philip and Joseph's tenures
January 2012-October 2017**

- Bishop of the Diocese of New York and Washington DC
- Managed the Archdiocesan office at Headquarters while the Metropolitan is away
- Representative of the Metropolitan at various Archdiocesan and external events
- Chairman of the Archdiocesan Ordination Review Board
- Made recommendations to the Metropolitan regarding clergy appointments and transfers
- Directly responsible for all seminarians, and their assignments and performance at their respective parishes
- Managed and resolved Archdiocesan problems/issues on behalf of the Metropolitan (i.e., problems between clergy and parish councils or parishioners)
- Served on the Archdiocesan Finance Committee of the Department of Finance
- Overseer of the Department of Clergy Insurance and Benefits
- Overseer of the Department of Missions and Evangelism
- Overseer of the Department of Internet Ministry
- Overseer of the Department of Publications
- Advisor to the Symposium Committee
- Responsible for reviewing and recommending approval of amended parish constitutions
- Participated in the Bishops' meetings and Archdiocesan Board of Trustees Meetings
- Performed various translations for the Metropolitan to/from the Arabic, English, and French languages
- Held spiritual retreats for adults, teenagers, and children on a weekly basis in the Diocese of New York and Washington DC.
- Spiritual Father of the Convent of St. Thekla, Glenville, PA