

the Light



FEBRUARY 2023
NEWSLETTER



**CAMP ST. THEKLA
WINTER CAMP 2023
(WAMP)**

February 17-20, 2023



**YOUNG ADULTS LENTEN
VIRTUAL RETREAT 2023**

March 4, 2023 | Zoom
Details to come.

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Parish Spotlight

ST. NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

CLERGY

Rev. Fr. Paul Fuller, Pastor

FEAST DAY: December 6, St. Nicholas
the Wonderworker

EMAIL: saintnicholasar@gmail.com

WEBSITE: stnicholasar.org



St. Nicholas Orthodox Church | Springdale, AR

St. Nicholas's parish in Springdale, AR is located in Northwest Arkansas and serves the nearby cities of Fayetteville, Rogers, and Bentonville. This is one of the most rapidly growing metro areas in the country! Prior to 1994, Orthodox families from the area were traveling to Tulsa, Oklahoma to attend services at local Orthodox parishes. There was no Orthodox Church in Northwest Arkansas, but there were a few families in the area. Under the guidance of Fr. George Eber, pastor of St. Antony Orthodox Church in Tulsa, these families began gathering in homes to offer worship and fellowship. In an effort to reach out, newspaper advertisements were purchased searching for other Orthodox Christians in the area who might be interested in starting a mission in Northwest Arkansas.

With the blessing of Bishop BASIL, Fr. George Eber began coming to Springdale once a month to hold services in parishioners' homes. The momentum of growing a mission

spread through advertisement and word of mouth, and soon outgrew the space available in homes. These families began to meet on Sundays once a month in a Methodist Church in Fayetteville until they began to meet at the chapel of the St. Martin's Episcopal Student Center on the campus of the University of Arkansas. About that time, Fr. Timothy Cremeens, from Holy Trinity Orthodox Church in Little Rock, AR, began visiting to hold services. Also Fr. Michael Keiser, a priest in charge of helping start missions for the Antiochian Archdiocese, visited monthly. The mission began celebrating Divine Liturgy twice monthly and gathering for Reader's Service or Typika on the other weekends. The mission officially became recognized by the Antiochian Archdiocese when it grew to 35 members.

In October of 2001, Fr. John Atchison was assigned as the first full-time pastor of the parish, moving with his wife, Kh.

[continued on page 2]

(St. Nicholas - continued from page 1)

Marilyn, from Wyoming. In 2002, the mission rented a former medical office building in downtown Springdale and re-fit it for the needs as a worship space for nearly eight years. In 2006, a generous gift by a faithful, kind widow named Rosel Tempelmeyer, helped fund the purchase of a property and the construction of a new church building after falling asleep in the Lord and donating a large sum of money to the church.

The property that was purchased was a 3-acre lot with a house and a large truck garage on the property. Marlon Blackwell, prominent architect and a professor at the University of Arkansas was hired for the transformation of the large truck garage into a church. In 2009, St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

transformed a generic truck shop building into a place of worship and fellowship. The church was consecrated by Bishop Antoun on St. Nicholas Day, December 6, 2009. The exterior skin is a box rib metal panel, common in local industrial buildings, while the interior finishes are kept simple, though handled carefully. Portions of the existing building are still exposed, reminding visitors of the history of the site and the transformation the church has undergone. The church building has been the recipient of several architectural awards, both national and international, for its unique architecture and for how much was achieved with such a modest construction budget.

Several of our founding families are still with us, and we have seen profound growth over the past few years, even in

the midst of a global pandemic. In fact, the weekly attendance at St. Nicholas Church has almost doubled since the start of the pandemic! In 2021, Fr. John Atchison retired from active ministry after 20 years of service as pastor of St. Nicholas Church. Fr. Paul Fuller was assigned as the new pastor of St. Nicholas Church effective August 1, 2021. The parish has welcomed Fr. Paul, his wife Kh. Ramia, and his daughter Rebekah with open arms and are grateful for his wonderful leadership! The St. Nicholas Church community is blessed with a rich liturgical life, as well as numerous ministries and services to help educate, offer charity, and grow in our relationship with Christ and his Holy Church.



Mission Spotlight

St. Ignatius of Antioch Orthodox Mission Boca Raton, FL

CLERGY

The Very Rev. Fr. Antoun Aaraj, Pastor
Charles Shahadey, Sub Deacon

FEAST DAY: December 20, St Ignatius of Antioch

EMAIL: stignatiusboca@gmail.com

In 2009, Metropolitan PHILIP Saliba, of Thrice Blessed Memory, had a vision in his heart to have an Antiochian Orthodox Church in Boca Raton, Florida.

St Ignatius of Antioch in Boca Raton, Florida is nestled between West Palm Beach and Miami Beach. For 14 years, Saint Ignatius of Antioch has been a mission church for people from south Palm Beach County to north Broward County, Florida.

Our small community of Orthodox Christians has survived many trials, and we continue to love Jesus, worship together, and keep our faith in Christ. Led by Fr. Antoun Aaraj, our worship is full of Arabic, English, and Greek chanting that lifts the parish during liturgy. Father Antoun presides over many weddings, funerals, baptisms, house blessings, Holy Confessions, anointing the sick, and Holy Chrismation. We have had many planned events such as attending Miami Heat basketball games, youth outings, Christmas, and Easter lunches and dinners at local restaurants, Sunday School, coffee/social hours, lectures on Orthodox topics, parish picnics and special Orthodox guest speakers.

We welcome all to St Ignatius Orthodox Mission! If you are Florida snowbirds or visitors to South Florida, please visit us should you be in the Boca Raton area! We pray for many more years and the spiritual health of our Saint Ignatius of Antioch mission church.





Teen SOYO

OFFICER

INTRODUCTION:

DOMSE SOCIAL

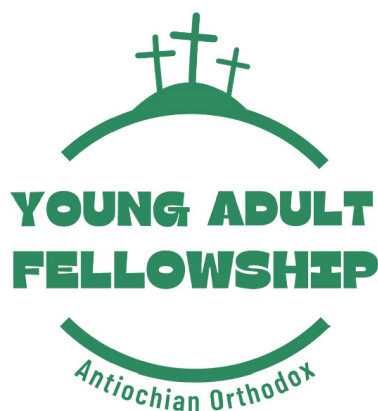
MEDIA DIRECTOR

Brendan Bibeau

St. Paul Orthodox Church

Tupelo, MS

My name is Brendan Bibeau, and this year I am the Social Media Director for the DOMSE Teen SOYO. I'm a freshman in high school, and I enjoy reading, writing, and listening to music. I was born and raised in Kentucky, but a few years ago I moved to Tupelo, Mississippi, where I started going to St. Paul's Orthodox Church. I am the middle of five siblings and have a dog. I do Jiu Jitsu and study creative writing in my spare time, although school fills a lot of my day. I go to the Antiochian Village in the summer and have made some of my best friends there. Having Orthodox peers is important and having people with that experience is very helpful, which is why I'm happy to be supporting and helping the SOYO in this area.



2023 Lenten Retreat

SPEAKER

| Father John Oliver

DATE

| March 4th

LOCATION

Saint Elizabeth
Orthodox Church
or Live Streamed

PRICE PER ATTENDANT

| \$25



SOYO LENTEN RETREAT



with
Fr. Jacob Andoun

Sat, March 11th
11am-1:30pm EST

Zoom Link Details to Follow

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.

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!

(continued on page 6)

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.

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!

4TH ANNUAL
AMEN
THE ANTHROPOMORPHIC
DIOCESE OF MIAMI & THE SOUTHEAST
LENTEN VIRTUAL RETREAT

SATURDAY 3/18/23

Ask for the
ANCIENT PATHS

Event #1 @ 10 am EST
Books, Breakfast,
& Brotherhood Part VII
Discussion led by
Michael Baclig

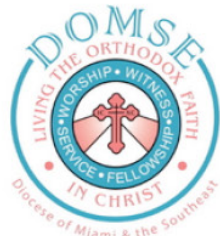
Event #2 @ 12 pm EST
Guest Speaker:
Fr. James Guirguis

Ask for the
ANCIENT
PATHS

DOMSE
Antiochian Women's
Lenten Retreat
Saturday April 1
9-11 am (EST)
Zoom Hub & Spoke Format
Save the Date!
MORE DETAILS TO COME

"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness."

Genesis 1:26



2023 Parish Life Conference
Diocese of Miami and the Southeast
Miami, Florida
June 14-17, 2023



Hosted by St. George Cathedral Coral Gables, Florida at the Embassy Suites

Join us in Miami, Florida - the home of warm weather and beautiful beaches.

Stay tuned for more details to come!



Faith, Orthodoxy, Love, Joy
All waves lead to Miami 2023



Theology Editor's Corner

In the Slavic tradition, Zacchaeus Sunday is the Sunday immediately before the weeks of preparation for Great Lent, and while it occurs a little earlier for us, it is still a sign that Lent is coming soon. This is fitting since Zacchaeus gives us an image of the spiritual life and what we must do to become like God.

In the Scriptures, Zacchaeus is a chief tax collector and a very rich man, but he wants to see Jesus so badly that he is willing to climb up into a Sycamore tree so that he can see over the crowds. Here, Zacchaeus shows us what it means to be whole-hearted and single-minded because his greatest desire is to see our Lord Jesus Christ, and he does not worry about appearances or what the crowds will think of a grown man climbing a tree. Zacchaeus is willing to appear foolish in the eyes of everyone else, if only he can catch a glimpse of the teacher and wonderworker that he has heard so much about.

St. Augustine says that the Sycamore tree – the tree of foolishness – is the tree of the Cross, and St. Cyril of Alexandria says that there is no other way that we can see Christ other than by climbing up into this tree. Indeed, our Lord Jesus Himself says, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mark 8:34). And given this, we must ask ourselves: Do we care about God enough to take up our cross and follow Christ? Do we desire to see Jesus enough that we will climb up into the tree of the cross?

Great Lent gives us so many opportunities to take up our cross and follow Christ. During this time, the Church calls us to increased efforts when it comes to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and if we sincerely take up each one of these godly practices, then our hearts will be transformed, and we will be able to see a little more of who God is and what He is doing all around us. Our Lord Jesus calls out to each one of us with words like these: "Behold, I pass through the city of this world; if anyone climbs up into the tree to see me, then 'I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me'" (Rev. 3:20). May our Lenten pilgrimage to the Cross of our Lord Jesus enable us to see the glory of His Resurrection!



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

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY

AMEN LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL CHAPTER PRESIDENTS MEETING

February 7, 2023
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm EST - Zoom

AMEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

February 16, 2023
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm EST - Zoom

CAMP ST. THEKLA WINTER CAMP 2023 (WAMP)

February 17-20, 2023

MARCH

YAF LENTEN RETREAT 2023

March 4, 2023
In Person & Zoom
Details to come!

TEEN SOYO CYBER RETREAT 2023

March 11, 2023
11:00 am - 1:30 pm EST - Zoom
Details to come!

AMEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

March 16, 2023
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm EST - Zoom

AMEN LENTEN RETREAT 2023

March 18, 2023
10:00 am - 1:00 pm EST - Zoom
Details to come!

APRIL

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT 2023

April 1, 2023
10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST - Zoom
Details to come!

AMEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

April 20, 2023
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm EST - Zoom

MAY

AMEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

May 18, 2023
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm EST - Zoom

JUNE

DOMSE 2023 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE (PLC)

June 14 - 17, 2023
St. George Cathedral, Miami, FL
Details to come!