

the Light



JANUARY 2023
NEWSLETTER



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

February 17-20, 2023

**DOMSE 2023 PARISH LIFE
CONFERENCE (PLC)**

June 14 - 17, 2023 (Tentative)
St. George Cathedral, Miami, FL

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Parish Spotlight

ST. BASIL ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

CLERGY

The Very Rev. Peter Nugent

FEAST DAY: January 1, the Feast Day of
St. Basil

WEBSITE: stbasilneworleans.org

St. Basil Parish is in the New Orleans suburb of Metairie, Louisiana, roughly halfway between the French Quarter and the New Orleans airport. It is the only Orthodox church in the area, other than Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral.

The Parish started in 1977 as "The Three Hierarchs Mission" of the Antiochian Archdiocese. Reflecting the diversity of its founders, it offered services in English, Greek, Russian and Arabic. By the early 1980's it had adopted the name of St. Basil. It was housed in several New Orleans locations before land was purchased at its present site. Construction began with the Parish Hall in 1982. The hall was used for worship until the temple was built in 1991. The temple was dedicated in 1992 by His Grace, Bishop Basil. The Parish was pastored by Fr. Stephen Hardie from 1979 to 1994.

(continued on page 2)

St. Basil Antiochian Orthodox Church New Orleans, LA



(St. Basil - continued from page 1)

Fr. Peter Nugent has been pastor since 1999. Fr. Peter was elevated to Archpriest in 2009. The Parish is home to relics of St. Basil, St. Stephen, St. Blaise, St. Raphael (Hawaweeny) and St. John of Shanghai.

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina struck the New Orleans area and severely damaged the church properties. Miraculously, the water level inside the temple never reached the bottom of the saints' icons which line the walls. For over six months, worship services were held at a parishioner's home some forty miles away. After building repairs were completed, a smaller congregation returned to its home in the spring of 2006. Since then, the Parish has experienced steady growth. During the two years of COVID, attendance was down, but parishioners did not reduce their financial support. St. Basil is home to people of Arab, Ethiopian, and Slavic backgrounds along with American cradle Orthodox and converts. In recent years, beautiful large icons of the Resurrection and the Ascension have been added to the temple. In addition, a historic bell was acquired. It is rung at the beginning of



Teen SOYO

OFFICER INTRODUCTION: DOMSE SOYO TREASURER

Stella Hallberg | All Saints Orthodox Church, Raleigh, NC

Hello DOMSE! My name is Stella Hallberg, and I have the privilege of being DOMSE SOYO's treasurer this year. Here's a little bit about me: I live in Cary, North Carolina, and I go to All Saints in Raleigh. I have grown up in the Church; some of my earliest memories are Nativity plays and icon coloring books. I have two younger siblings, an amazing mom and dad, and two Labradoodles. I am a sophomore in high school. Some of my favorite activities include acting in school plays, playing piano, and listening to music. I also love a good TV show. From a young age I looked up to the teens in SOYO at my church, and I am so thankful to be a part of making SOYO happen now. I'm so excited to serve as treasurer this year and I can't wait to see how SOYO develops!



the Liturgy and at the consecration of the Eucharistic bread and wine.

In 2021, Hurricane Ida devastated parts of the New Orleans area. The Parish sustained over \$100,000 in storm damages. While only the Parish Hall was impacted, the roof and two restrooms had to be replaced. The Archdiocese and our Diocese were very generous with financial assistance and, combined with insurance

proceeds, the repairs were made over a period of one year.

We are now, once again, fully operational. We have a church school, groups for the men and women of the Parish and for young adults, and teens. Our choir is bursting at the seams and receives many compliments. We have survived two hurricanes and COVID. We trust that the Lord will continue to bless our ministry in the future.



Mission Spotlight

St. Nicholas Mission Jackson, TN

CLERGY

Rev. Fr. Matthew Snowden

FEAST DAY

St. Nicholas - December 6

WEBSITE: orthodoxjackson.com

EMAIL: frmatthewsnowden@gmail.com

St. Nicholas in Jackson, TN is a growing and vibrant mission, but in October of 2011, we were just a handful of people. Many of us weren't even Orthodox! After meeting with Fr. Peter Gilquist and receiving the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan PHILIP, the work of starting the mission began.

Fr. James Mackoul came with his unending zeal and enthusiasm. He served Liturgies twice a month and made sure everyone learned everything—to chant, to read, to serve. People who had never sung a note now found themselves in the choir!

In 2013, a benefactor purchased and renovated a building into a beautiful space for worship. The community prayed together with reader's services and had monthly liturgies served by a visiting priest from St. John Orthodox Church in Memphis, TN. The Reverend Fr. John Troy

(continued on page 4)



(St. Nicholas - continued from page 3)

Mashburn, Fr. Don Berge, and the whole parish helped us at every turn with encouragement and support.

From 2012-2014, many Orthodox families and individuals joined the mission. Later that year, His Grace Bishop ANTOUN granted us mission status, and we were officially given St. Nicholas as our patron saint. Then in 2015, Fr. Matthew Snowden became our full-time priest. With joy, we celebrated a full cycle of services for the first time, including our first Paschal service. St. Nicholas started an active OCF group at nearby Union University and many students were brought into the Church.

Today, St. Nicholas is blessed with a multi-ethnic community made up of cradle and convert Orthodox which includes many children. We have church school classes for ages 2 to 18. The adults are almost outnumbered by the kids at St. Nicholas, but we are truly blessed by their "movement and holy noise." Besides a healthy Teen SOYO group, children and teens participate in all parts of the life of the Church, as altar servers, choir members, passing the collection plate, and ringing the bell. Several of our youth attend Camp St. Thekla every summer. They serve at many events throughout the year, the biggest being the St. Nicholas Festival held each December for outreach and fundraising.

The Antiochian Women and AMEN are active and growing at St. Nicholas. This year, the AW hosted tea gatherings with spiritual discussions. They went on a retreat to St. Paul Skete in Grand Junction, TN to pray with Mother Nektaria and assist her with gardening work and upkeep. They also took part in the virtual AW retreat and enjoyed Sayedna NICHOLAS' teachings. The AMEN hosted a work party for the church and grounds, participated together in the Lionheart study, and enjoyed regular fellowship with coffee and breakfast. The mission also runs the St. Brigid's food pantry which is open to all.

Inquirers and visitors come almost every week and we continue to grow as people from our area learn about and experience the Orthodox Church.

We are being knit together as a family. We look forward to the work God will continue to do in Jackson, TN.





St. Basil's Bread (Vasolopita)

BY KH. DESTINIE WINN
ALL SAINTS CHURCH, RALEIGH, NC

If you're looking for a meaningful way to ring in the new year, consider this wonderful little "t" tradition of baking a Vasilopita (St. Basil Bread/cake). Did you know January 1st is the feast day for St. Basil the Great? St. Basil is among the most well-known and beloved saints in the Orthodox Church. He is also one of the Three Holy Hierarchs of the Church, along with St John Chrysostom and St Gregory the Theologian. Every year on his feast day many faithful will bake a Vasilopita. Vasilopita is an orange flavored bread or cake containing a hidden coin! The Vasilopita is cut and shared among the members of the household. Whoever gets the piece with the coin hidden inside is considered to have St. Basil's blessing for the whole year! It is made of a variety of doughs, depending on regional and family tradition. If you're unfamiliar with this tradition, let me share a story of how this tradition came to be.

During a time of famine, the emperor demanded an excessive tax from the people of Caesarea, so each family had to give up all

their valuables, money, and jewelry. Upon finding out this injustice, St. Basil fearlessly defended his people, calling the emperor to repentance. The emperor was moved by St. Basil's speech, canceled the tax, and returned all the valuables to the Saint. Saint Basil was faced with a daunting task; out of a large number of items, he had to return each one to its rightful owner. He prayed asking for God's help, and then prepared a huge cake and baked the treasures right inside of it. After calling his flock to prayer, he blessed and cut the cake, offering a piece to each person. Miraculously, each owner received his own valuables in his piece of the cake. Vasilopitas have been baked on St. Basil's feast day every year since his repose, to commemorate this miracle!

What I love about these beautiful traditions is they not only are fun and memorable, but they also help us connect with the saint and remember the story as we participate with our families in a meaningful way. It's not just "traditions

for traditions sake!" They are ancient practices that are still relevant today, even in a modern world. If you've never made a Vasilopita, I'd encourage you to make one this week, and share it with others. Just don't forget to put a coin inside (just wrap it in foil first)!

You can read more about this tradition and other traditions throughout the Liturgical year on my blog "[Ascetic Life of Motherhood](#)", or follow along on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).



ST BASIL'S DAY



New year traditions & more!

Feast day guide for families!

Vasilopita Cake Recipe

Ingredients

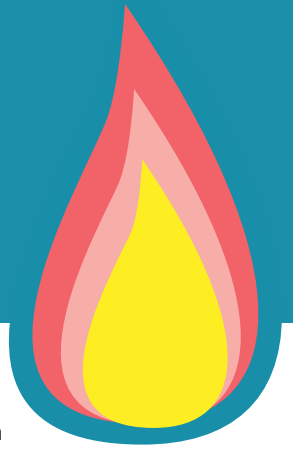
4 cups (480 g) flour
2 tablespoons baking powder
1 3/4 cup (350 g) sugar
1 cup (227 g) butter, softened
1 1/2 cup orange juice
1 tablespoon orange zest
1 teaspoon vanilla
3 eggs
Powdered sugar for topping
Coin (wrapped in foil)

Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
- Line the base of a 9-10-inch springform pan with wax paper and grease the sides. (You can use an even wider pan for a thinner cake, but it will take less time to bake)
- In a bowl mix the flour and baking powder and set aside.
- In a bowl, cream the sugar and butter.
- Add the orange juice, vanilla, and orange zest- mix with a mixer about 2 minutes.
- Whip the eggs in a small bowl and add to the butter mixture and mix for another 2 minutes.
- Add the flour mixture to the wet ingredients and mix for 2 minutes at low speed-do not over mix. If you are adding the coin in the batter, add it now.
- Pour batter (it will be thick) in the pan, smoothing the top with a spatula.
- Bake for about 45-60 minutes. Check with a thin sharp knife in the center. It should come out clean. If not, bake for additional time.
- Remove from the oven and let cool completely.
- Release the pan and turn the cake upside-down on another plate. If putting the coin in now, wrap in foil and push it through the cake. Turn cake back on top and sprinkle with powdered sugar. You can make a design using paper cut outs or using almonds or raisins or you can ice the cake with a simple icing made with powdered sugar and water.



Words from Sayedna Nicholas



May the Nativity of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, the new year, and the Feast of Epiphany bring you all a peaceful, joyous, and spiritual year. I am very optimistic for the prospects of this year in terms of our diocese spiritual growth, even though we had to reschedule the Clergy and Winter Retreats due to logistical issues. As you may know, the Nominating Convention to nominate three candidates for the office of Metropolitan is scheduled for January 13, 2023, and the visit of His Eminence Metropolitan ANTIONIOS to our diocese happens at the end of December to which clergy and laity are invited. Both events cost parishes unexpected expenditures as they were incurred when clergy travelled. For this reason, to be considerate, I elected not to stress our beloved parishes budgets and put them in the red when they would have to pay for the clergy to participate in the Clergy Retreat. I do understand fully the spiritual stress that such rescheduling may cause us all. However, we are all strong enough spiritually to withstand such hardship for one time. On the other hand, thanks be to God, we do have a plethora of DOMSE events throughout the year to sustain us spiritually even if we must reschedule the Clergy and Winter

Retreats. We will have the Winter Camp (in February), the organization's Lenten retreats (during Great Lent), the PLC (in June), and Summer Camp (in June and July). I pray that all will be looking forward, even to a greater degree now, to those spiritual events.

Our resolutions for the new year should be focused on furthering our spiritual life as we pursue achieving God's likeness. As we have discussed in person, in retreats, and on Zoom, becoming like God through acquiring the Virtues, is the goal of every Orthodox Christian's life and everything we do must feed into fulfilling this lofty goal. Therefore, I ask you all to sit down, write down a plan, run it by your spiritual father for modification and approval so that your year is full of spiritual milestones and improvements. Planning and implementing the plan in our lives, through God's help, is crucial in the process of pursuing holiness, which is being God-like. Some might doubt that we can attain such a high goal! To this end we must highlight the saints of the church and how they reached holiness: St. Mary of Egypt, St. Paisios the Athonite, St. Joseph of Damascus, St. Isaac the Syrian, etc. Most of us,

however, will not get there! Nevertheless, from the point view of God, the effort and the constant struggle are very important even if we do not become fully God-like. God gives partial credit, and we are infinitely in a better position as we improve spiritually. Let us make this effort diligently!

Despite the hardship that our God-protected archdiocese has been going through, we need to persevere and stay laser-focused on our personal spirituality and our diocesan spirituality. For this is the only way not to be swept into anxiety, unfocused spiritual life, and gossip. For this reason, I urge all to continue efforts to concentrate on the diocesan matters and personal spiritual concerns that we can affect rather than worrying about issues that we have no control over.

For further information regarding the 2023 events schedule, please point your browser to DOMSE.org and scroll down to the listed events.

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



Support Your Diocese

DONATE TO: Camp St. Thekla | DOMSE Scholarship | Antiochian Men
Antiochian Women | Young Adult Fellowship | Teen SOYO | or a General Donation

Thank You!



Theology Editor's Corner

The Scriptures are clear that our Lord Jesus Christ is “the image” or icon “of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15) and that He is the Son of God who “is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person” (Heb. 1:3). Indeed, our Lord Jesus Himself says to His disciples that if they have seen Him, then they have seen the Father who is in Heaven (John 14:9). Given this, it is truly a wonderful thing that God has appeared to us through the coming of His Son in Bethlehem of Judea.

But it is even more wonderful when we consider what it must have meant for the heavenly hosts – all the angels and archangels of Heaven. For the Scriptures say that God “dwells in unapproachable light” (1 Tim. 6:16), and when the Prophet Isaiah was caught up into Heaven and saw God seated on His throne, he also saw the six-winged seraphim praising Him while they covered their faces with two of their wings (Isa. 6:1-4). What this means, then, is that even the angels who stand in the presence of God in Heaven seem to see Him more clearly when they approach the dimly lit stable-cave and the manger that contained our Lord Jesus Christ – the Son, Word, and Wisdom of God – because for the first time in the history of the world they could look upon the face of God without needing to protect themselves by covering their own faces.

Glory to God who has made Himself known to us through our Lord Jesus Christ’s birth in the flesh and then through His baptism by John in the Jordan River! For by humbling Himself for our sake and becoming like us in every way except for sin, our Lord Jesus has revealed the eternal love of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit to all of creation (including the angels!) and He invites all of us into the divine fellowship of the Holy Trinity!



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

JANUARY

AMEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

January 19, 2023
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm EST - Zoom

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

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 - 1:00 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 (Tentative)
St. George Cathedral, Miami, FL
Details to come!