

the Light



APRIL 2023
NEWSLETTER



**ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S
LENTEN RETREAT 2023**

April 1, 2023

10:00 am - 12:00 pm EST - Zoom



**AMEN VIRTUAL
BIBLE STUDY**

April 20, 2023

7:00 - 8:00 pm EST - Zoom

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Parish Spotlight

ST. BARNABAS ORTHODOX CHURCH

CLERGY

Rev. Fr. Gregory Rogers, Pastor

EMAIL: StBarnabasLex@gmail.com

WEBSITE: stbarnabaslex.org



St. Barnabas Orthodox Church | Lexington, South Carolina

St. Barnabas Church in Lexington, SC, is a small parish with a big heart. The faithful aspire to be a 'Beacon' of the love of Christ, sharing in worship, growing in faith, and serving our brethren in love.

One of the most vital ministries in the parish is the "Myrrh-bearing Women of the South," which meets twice each month for fellowship and service. The group takes its name from the faithful servants of our Lord who courageously and lovingly went to the tomb of Christ to attend to his body, just because it was the right thing to do. Over the past several years, because of our close relationship with St. Catherine Church in Aiken, SC (we share a priest and are about 45 minutes apart), the women of the two parishes have worked closely together on ministry projects.

One of the longest standing aspects of this ministry is focused on crocheting.

Each year, the faithful and creative women make "dozens and dozens" of colorful children's blankets, baby hats, and other items that are donated to children's hospitals through the "Hearts and Hands" ministry. Some of these blankets even make it to nursing homes or other venues.

Over the past several years, the Myrrh-bearing Women have also supported the Kairos Prison Ministry at Kirkland Correctional Institution, a state prison for men in Columbia, SC. Kairos is an interdenominational Christian prison ministry. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, our ladies would cook meals every other month that would be served to residents at the

prison as part of a spiritual program presented by volunteers at the prison, including one of our own members. Since the pandemic, the activities at the prison have been limited. Nonetheless, at Easter in 2022, St. Barnabas members and volunteers assembled packages of cookies with spiritual messages in each package for residents and staff at the prison;

530 packages were delivered. In November 2022, another round of cookies was gathered and packaged providing refreshments for thirty-six residents who attended the Kairos seminar in the prison.

Folks from St. Barnabas Church and St. Catherine Church



(continued on page 2)

(St. Barnabas - continued from page 1)

participated in the National Baby Shower sponsored by Orthodox Christians for Life. Items were collected for expectant mothers and newborn children and donated to the Columbia, SC, chapter of Birthright, a national organization which offers free and confidential services to anyone facing an unplanned pregnancy. At this writing, another round of collections is underway.

During the Christmas season, the churches participated in Operation Christmas Child, sponsored by Samaritan's Purse, which sends boxes of Christmas presents to children around the world. In 2022, between St. Barnabas and St. Catherine we contributed 39 boxes, and collected \$450 to cover the cost of shipping them to their destination. We were thrilled to hear that our boxes went to children

in Madagascar and the Dominican Republic.

St. Barnabas Church has a small food pantry with which we are able to help families that are in need throughout the year. At Christmastime, the folks at St. Barnabas and St. Catherine worked together to collect 450 pounds of food that was donated to food pantries in Lexington and Aiken.

The church has been able to help needy families, including the homeless, with substantive aid for food and housing. St. Barnabas also contributes actively to missions, supporting mission priests through the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, and financially and prayerfully supporting mission work done in other parts of the world, including Kenya and Indonesia.

Since Bishop Nicholas's visit to St. Barnabas in September 2022, we have organized an AMEN chapter at the church. AMEN is focusing on a combination of activities, including workdays around the church and grounds, reading, and discussing books together, and other service projects.

By God's grace, St. Barnabas Church will continue to be a 'Beacon' of Christ's love for many years to come.



LENTEN RETREAT UPDATE

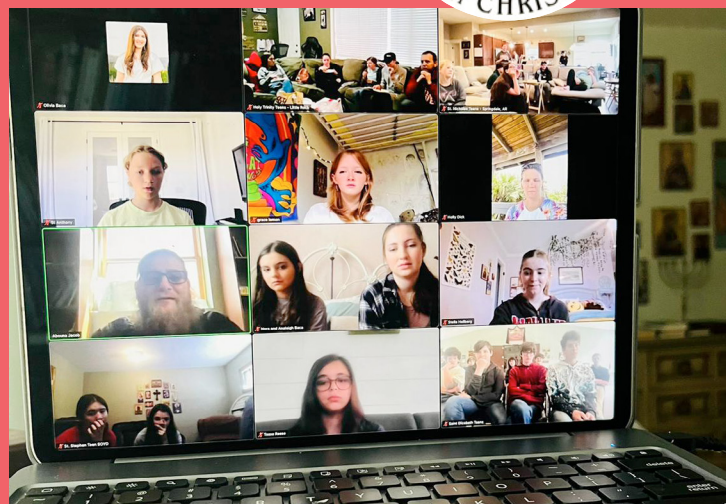
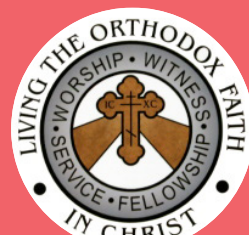
Teen SOYO

By Olivia Baca | St. Ignatius Orthodox Church, Franklin, TN

On Saturday, March 11th, DOMSE SOYO had its annual Cyber Retreat. We had teens from all over the Diocese join us online, including several churches and families who opened their doors to allow teens to gather in person for the retreat. Fr. Jacob Andoun from St. Stephen's church in Hiram, Georgia was our speaker for this year on the topic of Our Panagia: Hope, Protection, and Salvation. He spoke on the life of the Theotokos and her devotion to God, as well as the significance of her role as the mother of Christ and her importance in the church. As Orthodox Christians, we're often asked why we pray to

Mary. Fr. Jacob did an excellent job of explaining why we ask for her intercessions, along with several wonderful stories of how she has interceded for others in times of need. It was so wonderful and encouraging to see so many teens gathered together, even if only online, to listen and learn about our Panagia and her influence on our prayers.

Most Holy Theotokos save us!





TOUCHING BASE WITH ONE OF OUR

DOMSE Scholarship Recipients!

Sarah Setzler | St. Stephen Church, Hiram, GA

ATTENTION TO ALL OF THE DOMSE HIGH-SCHOOL GRADUATES!

As you prepare to enter college this fall, don't forget that the DOMSE Scholarship application period is June 1 to July 1, 2023! We hope you plan to [submit your application](#).

We touched base with one of our past DOMSE scholarship recipients, Sarah Setzler, and asked her a few questions and advice to our-soon-to-be highschool graduates!

Q: What is something you want to share about college with other soon-to-graduate high school students that you wish someone had shared with you about college?

I hope all soon-to-be college students can understand that you can be different from everyone around you. It is okay to be the only Christian in your class, the only Orthodox person at your school, the only one not joining a sorority/fraternity, the only one not partying three nights a week, and the only one not running to empty things for comfort. Being different, if it is an intentional decision based on truth, just means that you aren't blindly following the masses. This is a good thing and most people will respect you for it. The ones who don't are not the people you should spend time around anyway. So, do not walk around acting high and mighty, thinking about how much better you are than others, but find confidence in being the kind of different that Christ calls us to.

Q: Have you found an opportunity to connect with other Orthodox Christian students on campus? (OCF, local parish, church friends from home who are also attending your school) If yes, how are you supporting each other in the Faith?

I was a counselor at Camp St. Thekla (highly recommend), and it connected me with so many young adults who I related to the way none of my other non-Orthodox friends do. Not that my other friends aren't awesome, but my CST friends have a special place in my heart because we understand one another's faith more deeply.

Q: What are your top two college experiences so far?

One of the best parts of college has been taking advantage of the time and resources I have while I have them. You only have four years to get a 'free' gym membership, 'free' meals in the cafeteria, and being able to walk to class in less than four minutes. Have fun and go to the free Zumba class or get ridiculous amounts of ice cream from the cafeteria while you can. Learn to appreciate the privileges of going to a university. Live on campus, room with your best friends, and rent out the study rooms in the library to just hangout, because this is a phase of life that comes and goes all too quickly. I can't believe my first year is already nearly over because it feels like next week should be Thanksgiving. Appreciate being a college student and find good friends who will enjoy one another's company in fun, innocent, and sweet ways.

Q: What would you say to high school seniors in our diocese to encourage them to apply for the DOMSE scholarship?

As annoying as all the applications are, apply for everything you find because who knows, maybe you will be able to afford your dream school. I did not think I was going to be able to afford Samford, but with the DOMSE scholarship and others like it, I have been able to enjoy my freshman year at my favorite place on the planet.



FEATURED ORGANIZATION

Antiochian Men



ANTIOCHIAN MEN PRESIDENT: Michael Baclig | St. Nicholas Orthodox Church | Springdale, AR

The Antiochian Men (AMEN) is an organized group of men within the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast (DOMSE). AMEN was founded four years ago in early 2019 by His Grace, Bishop NICHOLAS. The top goal of The Antiochian Men is to become more like God. We help each other to do this in local brotherhoods at each of our parishes in DOMSE. The primary areas of focus for AMEN are serving the church, being positive role models, appropriating the Gospel of Christ, and fellowship with a spiritual focus. The core values of the Antiochian Men are (1) Leadership, (2) Obedience, (3) Vigilance, (4) Endurance, and (5) Love.

AMEN was formed because our Church and our men face many challenges today. While The Antiochian Women has existed for over fifty years, there was a need to organize the approximately fifty percent of our diocese made up of men. Many young men do not have father figures, and many fail because they do not have someone to talk to or a mentor to show them the way. This is our job, the job of spiritual fathers, and the job of older men to younger men. The proliferation of technology has created many challenges for men, especially young men, and this challenge is unprecedented in the history of the Church. AMEN strives to understand these challenges and to learn how to help. The goal is to create and maintain AMEN chapters in every parish with leadership. Every parish has different needs and AMEN will address those specific needs in each church.

On February 25, 2022, an official Constitution of The Antiochian Men in DOMSE was signed and ratified by His Grace, Bishop NICHOLAS. Additionally, an AMEN Member Charter was created and approved by His Grace which is an optional tool for the men at each parish in DOMSE to use to get things started. The Charter is customizable and can be adjusted to meet the specific needs and circumstances of each parish. Both the Constitution and the Charter are available at antiochianmen.org on the "View and Download AMEN Documents" page.

The Antiochian Men have had many successful events since its founding. Fr. Stephen De Young, pastor of Archangel Gabriel Orthodox Church in Lafayette, LA, hosts a Monthly Men's Bible Study on the third Thursday of each month via Zoom. AMEN has two virtual retreats per year, one in the fall and one during Great Lent. Each retreat focuses on a book that the men in DOMSE read together as an organization. To receive the Zoom links for the Monthly Bible Studies and the Virtual Retreats, be sure to subscribe to the AMEN Email Newsletter. You can sign up at antiochianmen.org at the bottom of the homepage.

AMEN also has created an extensive library of original Orthodox Christian content for men. The Antiochian Men YouTube Channel has over 240 videos with recorded events, interviews, a VLOG series, a Tour of the Diocese series, and more! AMEN even has a podcast called "Coming Out of Chaos" with AMEN President Michael Baclig and AMEN Social Media Director Bryce Kirk as hosts. This podcast and all the AMEN videos are available on antiochianmen.org in addition to the YouTube Channel.

The month of April has been designated as AMEN Month by His Grace, Bishop NICHOLAS. During the month of April, the men in DOMSE are encouraged to do extra tasks at their parish, with the blessing of their priest, such as reading the Epistle, ushering, and passing the collection plates on Sundays. If your parish doesn't have an active AMEN Chapter, perhaps you are the man to get things going! If you would like to serve with The Antiochian Men in your parish, see your parish priest and he can direct you to the Antiochian Men Chapter President at your church. You can also reach the members of the AMEN Board by sending an email to amendomse@gmail.com. We would love to see all Antiochian Men in Miami at the 2023 Parish Life Conference where we have many exciting things planned for the men in DOMSE. There will be lots of face-to-face fellowship with men from all over the diocese! [Go to the DOMSE website and register today!](#)



Parish Life Conference

Important Deadlines

4.1.23

CREATIVE FESTIVALS

5.22.23

HOTEL RESERVATION

5.22.23

EVENT REGISTRATIONS

6.1.23

VENDOR DEADLINE

6.1.23

ORATORICAL REGISTRATION

6.1.23

BIBLE BOWL REGISTRATION

VISIT MIAMIPLC.ORG FOR
DETAILED INFORMATION

"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.



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

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER



Words from Sayedna Nicholas

As we approach the Resurrection of our Lord, I greet you on this Feast of Feasts and Season of Seasons. May the Light of our Risen Lord, Savior, and God Jesus the Christ be a blessing on you all and guide you on your journey to become God-like. His inspiration is invaluable, His blessing is precious, and His gifts are irreplaceable. Let us use them wisely for our spiritual edification and our divine ascent. Until the Feast arrives, however, we all need to keep vigilant and keep our focus on the remainder of the Great Fast in order to reap its spiritual benefits as we celebrate the Sunday of Mary of Egypt, the Triumphant Entrance of Lord into Jerusalem, and Holy Week. It is time to intensify our efforts, prayers, and focus so that our celebration of Great and Holy Pascha is more edifying and complete.

It is a tradition of the Ancient Patriarchate of Antioch, to which we belong, not to fast for the forty days after Great and Holy Pascha until the Feast of Ascension, following the statement that our Lord Jesus uttered in the Gospel according to St. Mark:

**“And Jesus said to them,
Can the friends of the
bridegroom fast while the
bridegroom is with them?
As long as they have the
bridegroom with them they
cannot fast.” (Mark 2:19)**

The Bridegroom is with us every year between Great and Holy Pascha and the Feast of Ascension. At the Feast of the Ascension He ascended to heaven as we recite in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed: **“...And [He] ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father...”**

Why do we fast then at other times? There are many reasons for us to fast. It is a choice we make in order to achieve certain goals. It certainly is not compulsory, especially if our health does not allow it or our physician recommends against it. However, we need to be honest with ourselves if we can fast. On the other hand, fasting is supposed to improve our life on many fronts. It is beneficial for us to fast! The first major benefit is to discipline ourselves and give relief to our internal organs from the content of regular food that may include meat, fat, and other items. Discipline and self-control, which are virtues, are cardinal rules of life and Orthodoxy. Without self-control, we may allow ourselves everything that might cause us harm or addiction as St. Paul says:

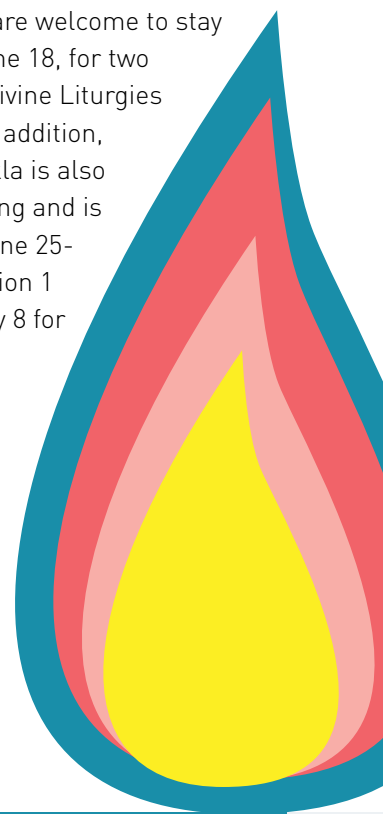
**“All things are lawful for
me, but all things are not
helpful. All things are
lawful for me, but I will
not be brought under the
power of any.”
(I Corinthians 6:12)**

Another major useful aspect of fasting is the willful obedience to the Church by eating or abstaining from the food groups that the Orthodox Church prescribes. Practicing obedience is a beneficial quality of our spiritual life since it is a virtue and makes us more like God.

There are other benefits to fasting like saving some money and giving it to those who are less fortunate than us. All these benefits and others help us along in the process of becoming God-like.

In other news, the PLC hosted by St. George Cathedral, Miami, FL, is upon us. It is planned to be held during the period June 14 to June 17. However, you are welcome to stay on Sunday, June 18, for two Hierarchical Divine Liturgies in two days. In addition, Camp St. Thekla is also fast approaching and is planned for June 25-July 1 for session 1 and July 2-July 8 for session 2.

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





Theology Editor's Corner

This Lent has given me an occasion to reflect on the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy that we serve every Wednesday evening. The service is more quiet, respectful, and reverential than our normal Sunday services, and so much of this is because our Lord Jesus Christ Himself – the King of Glory – is present at the altar in His Body and Blood from the very beginning of the service. Indeed, He is not only present there, but has even been waiting for us while we were hurrying through the first part of our week.

In the Gospel of Luke, our Lord teaches us about the love of God through three connected parables – the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:1-31). In the first two, we learn that God is actively looking for us – He is the good shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine sheep together in the wilderness to go out looking for the one sheep that is lost; and He is the woman who had ten silver coins but then carefully cleans up the entire house looking for the one coin that is lost.

This is how we experience our Lord Jesus Christ during the Divine Liturgy. He enters into the church so that He can fill us with His divine life – first through the entrance and reading of the Holy Gospel, and then through the entrance of the bread and the wine and the consecration of His Body and Blood. Indeed, He comes down to us again and again since He is the one who “has come to seek and save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

But in the parable of the Prodigal Son, we see that God is also waiting for us. He is the loving Father who patiently waits for His sons to repent and to return to His Heavenly Kingdom. This is how we experience our Lord Jesus during the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy. Yes, we try to do more during Lent. But our extra efforts often show us that we are weak and still struggle to make much spiritual progress. Nevertheless, when we come to the Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, our Lord Jesus is already waiting for us, and He strengthens us – putting a robe on our shoulders and a ring on our finger and killing the fatted calf so that He can feast with us and rejoice with us.

What is more, our Lord Jesus Christ is risen even now, and He patiently waits for us as we take each step in our Lenten journey. May we hasten to His Cross so that we might see His Glorious Resurrection!

Upcoming Events

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 LEADERSHIP AND LOCAL CHAPTER PRESIDENTS MEETING

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

AMEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

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

JUNE

2023 DOMSE SCHOLARSHIPS!

June 1 - July 1, 2023
[CLICK HERE FOR INFO!](#)

DOMSE 2023 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE (PLC)

June 14 - 17, 2023
St. George Cathedral, Miami, FL
[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)

CAMP ST. THEKLA 2023 - SESSION 1

June 25 - July 1, 2023
SESSION FULL

JULY

CAMP ST. THEKLA 2023 - SESSION 2

July 2 - July 8, 2023
[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)

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