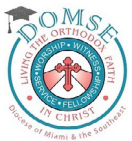


the Light



JULY 2023
NEWSLETTER



**DOMSE
SCHOLARSHIP
APPLICATION NOW OPEN!**
June 1 – July 1, 2023
[APPLY HERE!](#)



**AMEN VIRTUAL
BIBLE STUDY**
July 20, 2023
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm EDT - Zoom

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SPECIAL EDITION

DOMSE PLC 2023 St. George Cathedral | Coral Gables, FL





Parish Life Conference 2023



BY PROTODEACON DAVID KEIM | ALL SAINTS ORTHODOX CHURCH | RALEIGH, NC

The faithful and clergy of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast gathered for their annual Parish Life Conference in Miami, FL, June 14-17, 2023. DOMSE was overjoyed to welcome to the diocese His Eminence Metropolitan Saba, who presided over the conference. It was a special privilege to be in the presence of both His Eminence and His Grace Bishop Nicholas for these blessed days.

The conference was hosted by St. George Cathedral in Coral Gables, FL, led by the V. Rev. Archpriest Paul Solberg, interim pastor.

This PLC was also blessed to welcome the V. Rev. Archpriest Ayman Kfouf to the diocese. Fr. Ayman was recently appointed pastor of St. George Cathedral. He begins his tenure at St. George on July 1, 2023.

The PLC was very well attended, with faithful and clergy present from all corners of the diocese.

The conference was full of planned activities and opportunities for informal fellowship, as well as corporate worship at divine services, and inspiring homilies from our

priests. The choir at all services was under the direction of Kh. Nora Bleam.

Our teens' performance in the oratorical competition was exceptional, with Judges' Choice going to Sofia Griffith of All Saints Church (Raleigh, NC) in the Junior Division, and Isaac Abdelmessih of St. George Church (Orlando, FL) in the Senior Division. Congratulations to all our young orators, who spoke eloquently on the conference theme!

The Bible Bowl was exciting and raucous (in a good way!). Every

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(PLC - continued from page 2)

participant had fun and demonstrated impressive knowledge of the book of Genesis. Congratulations to the winning teen team from St. Stephen Church in Hiram, GA, and adult team from St. Philp Church in Davie, FL. And special thanks to V. Rev. Archpriest Philip Rogers for emceeing the event, with help from judges V. Rev. Archpriest Stephen De Young and Rev. Priests Nathaniel Trembley and David Bibeau.

Throughout the conference, we were blessed to hear words of wisdom and encouragement from Sayedna Saba and Sayedna Nicholas.

The conference culminated at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on the morning of Saturday, June 17. The service was concelebrated by both of our hierarchs, several priests, and two deacons.

The Hierarchical Divine Liturgy with both our hierarchs was reprised on Sunday at St. George Cathedral, as the cathedral community celebrated their 70th anniversary. May God grant them many more years as a community of faith! Several of the faithful and many clergy stayed over in Miami to help celebrate this important anniversary.

More photos can be found on Facebook. [CLICK HERE!](#)



Oratorical Contest

By Sh. Shell Keim,
DOMSE Oratorical Coordinator
All Saints Orthodox Church
Raleigh, NC

This year our DOMSE Oratorical participants were amazing! We were blessed to hear our young people defend their faith and speak on the Genesis theme "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness." There were three Junior participants and four Senior participants.



In our Junior Division, our Judges' Choice award went to Sophia Griffith of All Saints Orthodox Church in Raleigh, NC.

For our Senior Division, our Judges' Choice award went to Isaac Abdelmessih of St. George Orthodox Church in Orlando, Florida. Isaac will represent our Diocese at the Archdiocese Convention in Phoenix, Arizona this July.



The talent and courage of our young people was an inspiration to all of us. His Eminence METROPOLITAN SABA was in attendance as well as our beloved BISHOP NICHOLAS. Thank you to all our 2023 Oratorical Participants. We are praying for you and are blessed to have you as the future of our Diocese.

PLC UPDATE

Bible Bowl

By Sh. Shell Keim
All Saints Orthodox Church | Raleigh, NC



A giant congratulations to our 2023 DOMSE PLC Bible Bowl Champions! If you have never attended a PLC Bible Bowl night, then you are really missing something. After meetings, meals, and fellowship nothing is more exciting than seeing all the teams gathered for a roaring night of Bible Bowl questions and cheers. We are blessed to have had our Bible Bowl emceed by V. Rev. Fr. Philip Rogers of St. John Orthodox Church in Memphis, TN. Each year we have an adult team winner and a teen team winner. Our teen team winner will go on to represent DOMSE at the Archdiocese Convention this July in Phoenix, AZ. Our adult team winner was St. Philip Orthodox Church in Davie, FL and our teen team winner was St. Stephen Orthodox Church in Hiram, GA. Bible Bowl night was a huge success, and we are grateful to all the teams that studied and prepared. The night ended with cheers, lots of picture taking, and a bit of music and dancing in celebration in the hotel lobby. Don't miss it next year, you won't be disappointed.

Parish Spotlight

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

CLERGY

V. Rev. Fr. John E. Hamatie, Pastor

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St. George Orthodox Church Orlando, Florida

The word 'spotlight' infers shining a light on a specific object or lighting up something in the dark. The history of St. George in Orlando and the many, many miraculous happenings that the Lord has showered on us is long and truly wonderful! However, we would like to "spotlight" the present and GOD-willing, the prayed for future.

St. George Orthodox Church in Orlando is located in the beautiful center of Orlando on Lake Eola, the premier lake and park of our city. Our parish is truly "pan-Orthodox" and represents faithful from all traditional Orthodox Christian lands. As in all parishes, we are blessed with two kinds of converts: those from outside of Holy Orthodoxy and those from within. Those from within are they, who though being members of Christ's Church, have had a spiritual awakening of the "Pearl of great price" that they have always had, but were not really living and receiving

the blessed benefits of life within the Church. Our demographics include all age groups. In the last 18 months, we have been blessed to baptize forty-five people, the majority of whom are in the 17 - 32-year age category. The young adults of the parish are very active, not only in doing work around the Church, but more importantly, in evangelical outreach to the community. Mostly, they are reaching out to others in their generation with great success!

St. George Church is open every day of the week between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM. This affords us a true opportunity to be a witness to the downtown community. The daily community is made up of businesspeople as well as a large residential population. During the hours that the Church is open, from speakers outside the Church, we broadcast the Divine Liturgy, which in a manner invites people to come

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inside and pray. The person who welcomes them offers a brochure inviting them to “come and see” the worship of the Holy Orthodox Church.

For eleven- and one-half years, we fed hundreds of homeless and poor people in the parking lot behind the Church six days a week. This interaction with the homeless blessed us to, in a small way, fulfill one of the lines of the Troparion of St. George, “Defender of the poor.” Though the daily homeless feedings ended with the onslaught of the Coronavirus, still until this day, the homeless come and sleep on the sidewalk outside of St. George. When asked why they are there, since the feedings have ended, their response is, “We feel protected and welcomed here.” Quite often we are blessed to have some of the homeless community attend the Divine Liturgy and learn about the reality of Christ in the Holy Orthodox Church. A number of the homeless have joined the Church and are succeeding in putting their lives together in the Lord.

With the Blessing of Almighty GOD, our prayed for future goals are to establish a Multi-Ethnic Cultural Center so that we can address the scourge of xenophobia. In our society, with so many different ethnic backgrounds coming together in the same city, there is a fear of “the other.” The Multi-Ethnic Cultural Center will be a place where local people can learn about others so that “fear morphs into friendships.” As part of the outreach of the parish, we are also working on opening a “coffee-house-library” so that people can “sit & sip” as they learn more about our beautiful faith. On Friday and Saturday nights, literally thousands of youth cram Orange

Avenue (the main artery in downtown) looking for fun. Our outreach will be there to offer those who are seeking fun, a more lasting “fun” in Christ. The coffee-house-library will be a safe haven for youth who have lost their way and are looking for real answers to real problems in their lives.

The faithful of St. George Orlando are excited about attaining a spiritual life that grows each moment of each day. We feel that the Lord has positioned us to be in the right place at the right time, so that with Christ’s Blessing we can become a spotlight shining in the darkness that envelops so many today.

Please come and join us. Our weekly services are Friday, Divine Liturgy at

8:00 AM; Saturday, Great Vespers with confession at 5:00 PM and Sunday, Matins at 9:00 AM followed by the Holy Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM. After the Divine Liturgy, everyone is invited to come to the Fellowship Hall for some refreshments (which always includes freshly made popcorn), and to attend Father John’s class on the depth of the Divine Liturgy.

“AS DELIVERER OF CAPTIVES, AND DEFENDER OF THE POOR, HEALER OF THE INFIRM, CHAMPION OF KINGS; VICTORIOUS GREAT MARTYR GEORGE, INTERCEDE WITH CHRIST OUR GOD FOR OUR SOUL’S SALVATION.”





Words from Sayedna Nicholas

will return next month.



Sayedna is spending time at Camp St. Thekla!





Theology Editor's Corner

It was a joy to be together in Miami for the 2023 Parish Life Conference, and especially to meet our father and chief shepherd – His Eminence Met. Saba! May God grant His Eminence, and our Bishop Nicholas, and all the clergy and the faithful of our Diocese many years!

The theme of the PLC was “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26), and one of the highlights of the conference was hearing the speakers, homilists, and even the youth and young adults of the Oratorical Festival explore this theme in their talks, homilies, and speeches.

St. John of Damascus says that God formed human beings from the dust of the earth and then breathed into them a “rational and understanding soul, which... is the divine image” (*An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 2.12), and the speakers at the PLC gave everyone a lot to think about from day to day. Here, teaching and education are very important in our Orthodox Christian faith, because part of what it means to be created in the image of God is to have a mind that can think, understand, and come to know the truth; and our Lord Jesus Christ Himself says: “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

But the image of God within us means more than this, because from all eternity the Godhead has existed as a Trinity of Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – who are united by a common intention, will, purpose, and love; and this means that we are also fundamentally social beings who can only do well by developing strong relationships with one another. Here, we fulfill the image of God and experience the life of the All-Holy Trinity whenever we come together in prayer and fellowship, and especially when we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, for it is here that we who are many become one body, because we all partake of the one bread, which is our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10:17).

Our DOMSE events – the PLC, and the Fall and Winter Retreats – are sometimes difficult to attend in person depending on how far we must travel, but the opportunity that they give us for friendship with one another, for fellowship, and for Christian love is irreplaceable. I pray that more of us will be able to make these events a priority in the future, and that those of us who attend can bring something back from the larger community to our home parishes!

May God enlighten our minds and hearts, so that we can love one another as He commands, and thereby experience the joy of the All-Holy Trinity!

Upcoming Events

JULY

CAMP ST. THEKLA 2023 – SESSION 2

July 2 – July 8, 2023

SESSION FULL

AMEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

July 20, 2023

7:00 pm – 8:00 pm EDT – Zoom

AUGUST

AMEN VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

August 17, 2023

7:00 pm – 8:00 pm EDT – Zoom

SEPTEMBER

DOMSE FALL RETREAT 2023

September 22-23, 2023

St. Elias Orthodox Church, Atlanta, GA

Details to come!



DOMSE.ORG

2023 FALL RETREAT

Hosted at St. Elias Orthodox Church,
Atlanta, GA

September 22 - 23, 2023

Break out sessions

Guest speakers

DOMSE Jeopardy

Movie & popcorn

Fellowship time

Raffle

Child care



“Thy Word is a Lamp Unto My Feet”

Psalm 118:105

IF YOU HAVE ARTICLES OR
SUGGESTIONS FOR
THE LIGHT NEWSLETTER,
PLEASE EMAIL THEM TO

DOMSENEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM

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