

the Light



FEBRUARY 2024
NEWSLETTER



CAMP ST. THEKLA
WINTER CAMP 2024 (WAMP)
February 16-19, 2024
Diakonia Retreat Center

**WINTER SACRED
MUSIC INSTITUTE**
February 22-25, 2024
St. George Cathedral, Coral Gables, FL
[MORE INFO HERE!](#)

CONNECT WITH US!



DOMSE.ORG



[DMCDOMSE](https://www.facebook.com/DOMSE)



[@DOMSE](https://twitter.com/DOMSE)



[YOUTUBE](https://www.youtube.com/DOMSE)

Parish Spotlight

**ST. BASIL THE GREAT
ORTHODOX CHURCH**

CLERGY

Rev. Fr. Dimitri Leussis

FEAST DAY: St. Basil, January 1st

EMAIL: dleusicons@aol.com

WEBSITE: stbasilorthodox.com



St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church Silver Springs, FL

St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church started with a vision. Silver Springs, Florida, which sits adjacent to Ocala, has historically been a comfortable, not to mention quiet, community. This area had pretty much everything that everyone needed, but with one important exception: Orthodox churches dotted different parts of Florida, but the Ocala area didn't have one.

Enter Fr. John Hamatie, whose inspired leadership has continued to have a powerful impact on St. George Antiochian Orthodox Church and its surrounding community in Orlando for many years. In the mid-1970's, Fr. John came to Ocala to start a mission, and he named it for St. Basil the Great. The local interest was there, but as is often the case, a new mission needed people to keep it going. Building up a new church would take vision and drive.

And no one was better suited for that than Helen Pappas. An extraordinary personality, Helen was determined to support an Orthodox church in the Ocala area, and she became a driving force behind St. Basil's successful start. With her experience in commercial banking, Helen was able to network throughout the community to identify a location where the budding congregation could meet. An initial welcome was found at the nearby Methodist church, where the newly formed St. Basil's attendees were able to hold services.

(continued on page 2)



in this issue...

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION | P. 3

LENTEN RETREATS | P. 5

SACRED MUSIC NOTES | P. 8

(St. Basil - continued from page 1)

Eventually, it became necessary to expand to a different location, and Fr. Robert Askren, or Fr. Bob, at St. Patrick's Episcopal Church invited the parishioners of St. Basil's to use one of the buildings of St. Patrick's. A founding member of the church recalls an amusing incident about Fr. Bob keeping the candle sandbox in his office. His own parishioners asked if he had acquired a cat, at which point he explained that it was part of the Orthodox service, and he was keeping this safe for the people of St. Basil's.

As for these people of St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church, they represented the diverse cross-section that have made Florida their home: Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, Albanian, Syrian, and Romanian families filled this small parish and kept it going and growing.

Of course, the intrepid Helen Pappas also remained active throughout St. Basil's founding years and beyond, always ready to support the church she loved so much. She found out about a Greek Orthodox parish up north that was in the process of renovating their church; Helen collaborated with them and arranged for many of their icons to find a new home at St. Basil the Great, where they remain today.

To explore fundraising opportunities, Helen networked locally and organized luncheons and dinners that would raise money to support the church. St. Patrick's Episcopal Church welcomed the parishioners of St.



Basil's for fundraising cookouts. At Helen's request, a local restaurant owner allowed the church members to hold functions, and a nearby motel volunteered space for seasonal yard sales. The members of St. Basil's also held Greek dances to raise interest in this determined parish. Helen Pappas was, as the original founders of St. Basil's recall, "all for the church, 100%."

In time, the people of St. Basil's knew they would need a fixed home of their own, and Helen's hard work with raising money paid off when the parish was able to purchase land for their church. The building itself would have to wait, and as they continued to raise the funds for construction, the congregation would meet in trailers on the property. Perhaps inevitably, constructing the building itself would take longer than anyone had hoped, but as of 2001 St. Basil's had a church building of its own, on land that had been bought through the hard work and inspired determination of its parishioners.

St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church in Silver Springs has had the honor of welcoming a number of priests over the years to guide the congregation, each imprinting an important memory in the history of this community. Founding members of the church recall Fr. George, Fr. Peter, Fr. Damian, Fr. Meletios, Fr. Basil, Fr. Sayeed, along with visiting priests Fr. Michael Kaiser and Fr. Michael Byers: all of whom contributed to the growth of the parish.

Today, St. Basil's remains under the thoughtful guidance of Fr. Dimitri Leussis, whose commitment to Orthodox practice and supporting the local Orthodox community provides an



ongoing positive vision for St. Basil's. This might be a smaller parish, but the size of the parish doesn't define the hearts of its people. As one of the visiting priests says when he returns for a few weeks each year to support St. Basil's, "It's always impressive the way you keep this church alive. No matter the challenges, you keep going, and that's an inspiration."

St. Basil's has certainly faced its share of challenges, one of which still rests heavy on the hearts of the congregation: the recent loss of the beloved Fr. David Randolph. He had retired from his own parish in Andersonville, South Carolina, some years before but continued serving the Orthodox community of Silver Springs and Ocala as co-celebrant with Fr. Dimitri. Fr. David's enthusiasm and kindness were a weekly fixture, and his commitment to those needing to experience the love of Christ was evidenced by his active prison ministry.

(continued on page 8)



FEATURED ORGANIZATION

Christian Education

DOMSE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COORDINATOR:

Anna-Sarah Farha | St. George Church, Jacksonville, FL



DOMSECHRISTIANED

The Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, February 2

From the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Education Ministry

The Orthodox Christian Church celebrates the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple on February 2nd each year. The feast has many names, each of which helps us better understand an aspect of it. We can talk with our children about the feast's names as well as how important each name is to help us know what we are celebrating!

Here are the names for this feast:

1. "The Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple"

– This name helps us to remember that on this day, our Lord was brought to the Temple. This shows that Christ really was fully human and therefore, had to be presented to the Temple, as the law required of faithful Jews. If He were not human, then that law would not have applied to Him.

We can help our children understand this with an object lesson. Talk with your children about what it means to be real. One way to do this would be to select a stuffed animal for which your child has seen/experienced the real animal (for example, a stuffed dog). Ask, "Is this (stuffed) dog real? How do you know? Does it eat, drink, sleep? No! We can pretend that it does, but if we put food in front of this dog – even really yummy food like your favorite snack (set the snack in front of the dog, wait to see if it eats it) – it will not do anything, because it's a toy dog. It is not a real, living dog. The name 'The Presentation of Christ in the Temple' shows us that the infant Jesus was a REAL person, a real human. He wasn't just an angel or something pretending to be a real human, or He would not have needed to be presented at the Temple like that. This feast reminds us that Jesus, even though He is God, was also a real human, just like us."

2. "The Meeting of the Lord" – This name reminds us that this is the day on which Righteous Simeon and Anna met our Lord, as they hopefully waited for His appearance in the Temple. This helps us to realize that, just like they were able to meet the Lord, we can meet Him, too, if we are looking and hoping for Him, and living righteous lives.

We can help our children understand this aspect of the

feast by learning more about [Ss. Simeon](#) and [Anna](#) through reading the story of their lives. (Young children may enjoy [coloring an icon of the two Saints in the Temple while they listen to the story](#) or see page 4.) After reading to our children about these saints, ask the children to help us figure out why these two saints are called "righteous." We can make a list (or sketch, if our children can't read) of characteristics of Ss. Simeon and Anna, that made them righteous. Then, we can challenge ourselves and our children to imitate those characteristics, so that we, too, can be better ready for Christ when we meet Him. (Let us also remind ourselves and our children that we meet Christ every Sunday, in the Eucharist! May we meet Him with righteous lives and hopeful hearts.)

3. "The Purification of the Virgin" – The Theotokos came to the Temple to fulfill the purification required of her by Mosaic Law. She also brought the required sacrifice. So, this name reminds us that the Theotokos did everything according to the religious law of that time; it was a way that she could show her determination to follow God. It is a good reminder to all of us as parents that we need to do everything that we can to remain in right standing with God.

We can help our children see the parallel between this feast and the practice of "churching" which takes place to this day in our churches. We can talk with our children about any new babies in our parish; as well as what happens on the first day that baby (and his/her mother) comes back to our church. This is a chance to review what a "churching" is for; as well as what happens at a churching. If a child(ren) in your family was churching as an infant, this would be a wonderful time to look at photos together and explain how he/she was brought to the Church with joy just as Jesus was brought to the Temple.

Note: the name, "Candlemas," is also used for this day, by some churches, especially in western parts of Russia. The tradition of blessing candles to be lit in church, as a reminder of the lights burning in the Temple on that day, is celebrated by some churches. If your parish celebrates the blessing of candles, this would be a good



(continued on page 4)

(Christian Education - continued from page 3)

time to discuss why we light candles in church; and perhaps decorate a few to take to church to be blessed.

Regardless of which name we use to refer to this feast, we are reminded of God's great love for us as well as our need to live in a way that leads us to Him! Let us celebrate the feast!

"Thou Who didst sanctify the Virgin's womb by Thy birth and bless Symeon's hands as was fitting hast now come to us and saved us, O Christ our God. But grant peace in the midst of wars to Thy community, and strengthen the Church which Thou hast loved, O only Lover of mankind."

Kontakion of the Meeting

Presentation of Christ



February 2

Teen SOYO

Hey, DOMSE! To start the new year off on the right foot, our SOYO officers have each come up with a New Year's resolution to share. Take a peek and let us know your resolutions by sending us a DM on Instagram [@domsesoyo](https://www.instagram.com/domsesoyo/)!



STELLA'S RESOLUTION

My New Year's resolution is to listen to the Daily Orthodox Scriptures podcast every day!



SUSANNAH'S RESOLUTION

My New Year's resolution is to either say or listen to morning prayers every day!



SOPHIA'S RESOLUTION

My New Year's resolution is to improve my chanting by learning all the tones!



ANALEIGH'S RESOLUTION

My New Year's resolution is to attend more weekday services and Vespers when we have them!

Still looking for a way to make this year great? Start by [signing up for our virtual Lenten Retreat](#) on March 30th, 10-11AM EST! We will be joined by our wonderful guest speaker, Karen Hanna, who will be talking about living out Orthodoxy in our everyday lives. We're looking forward to seeing all of you there!



CAMP ST. THEKLA STAFF APPS

WILL BE OPEN JANUARY 29TH
THROUGH MARCH 8TH!



SUMMER CAMP REGISTRATION
opens February 1st

at 8 PM ET / 7 PM CT

REGISTRATION CLOSES: 3/15
FINAL PAYMENT DEADLINE: 3/15
NO REFUND DATE: 3/15

SAVE THE DATES

2024 Organization Lenten Retreats



SOYO

Living Orthodoxy

**TEEN SOYO LENTEN RETREAT
WITH KAREN HANNA**

**MARCH 30TH
10AM-11AM EASTERN**

JOIN US ON ZOOM!

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!](#)



YAF

**Young Adult
Lenten
Retreat**

Join us on zoom!
The morning of
April 13th

**How to be
a Sinner**
—
by Peter
Boueteneff
with Fr. Ayman Kfoo

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS!](#)



AW

Embrace the Season

Join the Antiochian Women
Saturday, April 20th
10am-12am Eastern Time

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS!](#)



AMEN

**5TH ANNUAL
THE AMEN
LENTEN VIRTUAL RETREAT**

SATURDAY 4/6/24

*From
OBJECT to ICON*

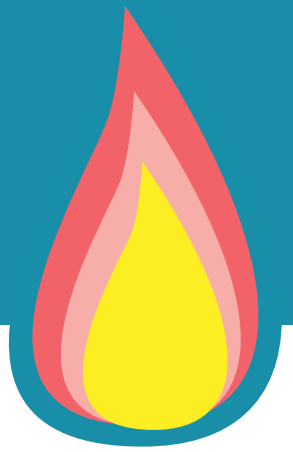
Event #1 @ 10 am EST
Books, Breakfast,
& Brotherhood Part IX
Discussion led by
Michael Baclig

Event #2 @ 12 pm EST
Guest Speaker:
Fr. Hans Jacobse

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS!](#)



Words from Sayedna Nicholas



As young adults start to date, I ask them to consider the advice I give to my spiritual children. I do know that it sounds foolish and undoable to a young adult mind to heed this advice. However, when one thinks about it objectively and realistically, one would find it sensible, reasonable, and very doable. Please note that I used the word "think" not "feel" due to the fact that people in general, prefer to use and mean the word "feel," as our secular society has been proclaiming, teaching, and even imposing it on us. To prove this concept to yourself, just observe someone speaking for a few minutes! I have! This is just an observation and NOT a condemnation to people who use the word "feel" more than "think." It is NOT a condemnation of feelings either. As human beings we need feelings and the thought process. Both are necessary! Nevertheless, when we escalate a feeling to a thought, we discover why we feel that way. If the feeling is justified, then we keep it and cherish it. Otherwise, it needs to be discarded. This escalation can be in itself an involved process and does not take place overnight. We must train ourselves with the help of our spiritual fathers for, possibly, an extended time to improve the way we do it. I often advise my spiritual children to PTA: Pause, Think, and then Act. It requires discipline and training. All of us are capable of doing so if we are willing to do so. Our feelings are much faster than our cognitive abilities. Our feelings are reactive instantly but may not be justified. For this reason, I recommend pausing to allow our mind to catch up with our feelings in order to act properly. This is not easy! Again, it takes practice, discipline, and guidance from spiritual fathers. The process of thinking differentiates us and distinguishes us from other beings that are unable to think but react solely instinctively. I advise my spiritual children to enter into a relationship with an open mind and a closed heart for at least six months. The complaint immediately is stated: that takes away spontaneity, or I don't have control over my feelings, or this is not fun, or feelings are what make the relationship worthwhile, or...While there

might be truth to such complaints to some people, it is far more rewarding in the long run to heed the advice than not to. This advice greatly reduces the chances of future surprises, conflicts, and even divorces! Benefits of the advice is that the adults who participate in this relationship have time to discover the red flags of the other. As both walk through this relationship seeking their spiritual father's guidance every step of the way, it becomes abundantly clear how to proceed. If those red flags are acceptable to the other person in the relationship and can live with them for the rest of his/her life, then the heart can start to open up and feelings are allowed to be. Red flags will not be obliterated, and they are the person's trait for the rest of his/her life in most cases. Capable spiritual fathers can help their spiritual children improve and mitigate the red flag by prescribing spiritual remedies and practices. On the other hand, a person might not be aware of his/her own red flags and can reduce them greatly when they are brought up to his/her attention in a constructive, kind, and loving way. It is worthy to note that everyone has red flags. It is true without exceptions! Nevertheless, some of them are relative and are unacceptable to some. Discovering them before the relationship proceeds to marriage is crucial so that there will be no surprises after the wedding that lead to major problems or divorces.

Please point your browser to www.DOMSE.org and scroll down to the listed events in order to be aware of the 2024 DOMSE events schedule and register for them. Looking forward to seeing you all at the various DOMSE events and at your parishes.

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

+BISHOP NICHOLAS



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!



AMEN
ANTIOCHIANMEN.ORG

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN
DOMSEWOMEN
ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF DOMSE

YOUNG ADULT
DOMSE YAF

SOYO
DOMSESOYO
DOMSESOYO

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
DOMSECHRISTIANED



Sacred Music Notes

DOMSE MUSIC CHAIR: Kh. Nora Bleam
St. Andrew Orthodox Church, Pensacola, FL

DOMSE! THE TIME HAS COME!

Q. Would you like your chanters to be refreshed and get to know other chanters in the archdiocese, including our brilliant Protopsaltis Rev. John El-Massih?

Yes. We have been isolated in our parish island for years.

Q. Would you like for the music at your parish to keep growing and improving?

Yes. If we are not growing, we are declining.

Q. Have you considered going to the Village for the Summer Sacred Music Institute but it's never quite happened?

Not sure... I'd like to try something in our own diocese...

[REGISTER HERE](#) for the Winter Sacred Music Institute

[HOTEL LINK](#) for Reservations at the Courtyard Miami Coral Gables

If you have any questions, as always, contact me! I am here for YOU.



the
Pentecostarion
from Pascha
to Pentecost

With the blessing of Metropolitan SABA,
the Department of Sacred Music
invites you to join us for the annual

Winter Sacred Music Institute
February 22-25, 2024
SAVE THE DATE

Hosted by
St. George Cathedral
Coral Gables, Florida



(St. Basil - continued from page 2)

His loss continues to be felt. The church continues, as Fr. David would have wanted, and the people of St. Basil's carry on his legacy.

No matter the changes, St. Basil's remains firm in its vision: a parish for the greater Ocala area, practicing the Antiochian tradition of drawing together Orthodox Christians from a variety of backgrounds. With Ocala consistently ranking as one of the fastest-growing cities in Florida, in one of the fastest-growing counties in the country, St. Basil the Great Orthodox Church continues to welcome new

attendees weekly. Some are looking for an Orthodox home in Ocala; others are passing through; and yet others have set themselves on this new path and are taking the first steps toward it. Today, St. Basil's continues to draw in established Orthodox families, along with the converts who have discovered the pearl of great price and are actively exploring and practicing Orthodox Christianity.

If you're in the Ocala area, feel free to stop by. You'll find a friendly welcome at St. Basil's!

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY

CAMP ST. THEKLA WINTER CAMP 2024 (WAMP)

February 16-19, 2024
Diakonia Retreat Center

WINTER SACRED MUSIC INSTITUTE

February 22-25, 2024
St. George Cathedral, Coral Gables, FL
[REGISTER HERE!](#)

MARCH

AMEN CONFERENCE & RETREAT

March 7 - 9, 2024
Woodland Christian Camp & Retreat Center, Temple, GA
In person: [REGISTER HERE!](#)

SOYO LENTEN VIRTUAL RETREAT 2024

March 30, 2024
8:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT - Zoom
[REGISTER HERE!](#)

APRIL

AMEN LENTEN VIRTUAL RETREAT 2024

April 6, 2024
8:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT - Zoom
Details to come!

YAF LENTEN RETREAT 2024

April 13, 2024
8:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT - Zoom
Details to come!

ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT 2024

April 20, 2024
8:00 am - 5:00 pm EDT - Zoom
Details to come!

JUNE

2024 DOMSE SCHOLARSHIPS!

June 1 - July 1, 2024
[CLICK HERE FOR INFO!](#)

DOMSE 2024 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE (PLC)

June 12 - 15, 2024
St. Stephen Orthodox Church
Hiram, GA - Details to come!

CAMP ST. THEKLA 2024 - SESSION 1

June 23 - 29, 2024 - Details to come!

CAMP ST. THEKLA 2024 - SESSION 2

June 30 - July 6, 2024 - Details to come!



Theology Editor's Corner

In the Divine Liturgy, just before the Great Entrance, we sing the Cherubic Hymn, saying,

"Let us, who mystically represent the cherubim and sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-giving Trinity, now lay aside all earthly care, that we may receive the King of all invisibly escorted by the angelic hosts. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia."

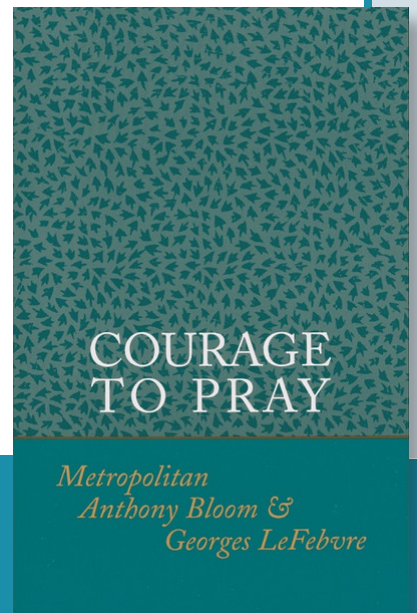
This is an important part of the Liturgy, and an important reminder to each one of us: we can only receive our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of All, if we first lay aside all the cares, worries, and anxieties that normally occupy our attention from moment to moment. But how can we do this? And is it something that we are responsible for alone? Do we have to struggle to lay aside our cares as a sheer act of the will? Here, Met. Anthony Bloom gives us powerful guidance for how to lay aside our earthly cares in his short book *Courage to Pray*. He says,

The world can distract us from God in our prayers. But when we are worried about something and unable to encounter God in silence, we often try mistakenly to put worry out of our mind, as if it were a barrier between us and God. We think it wrong that anything else could claim our attention when we are in the presence of God. I think that often we could encounter God by sharing our worry with Him rather than trying to push it aside. We ought to present it to God in detail but with precision and sobriety. We should present it as a mother brings a child to a doctor she trusts. We should say to God, 'This is all I can talk about to you at the moment. You know everything, look at my problem, understand it with Your own understanding.'

When we have thus offered a person or a situation to God, we should be able to become detached from

it. This requires faith, and the ease with which we can detach ourselves from care is the measure of our faith. If we can say, 'Lord now I have told you everything, my heart is peaceful, and I can rest in You.' If our heart is really at peace, if our mind is really freed from worrying, then our faith is complete. We have laid our burden at God's feet and now He is carrying it on His broad shoulders (49-50).

In our Christian lives, we are not alone in anything – least of all in the cares and worries that press down on us from moment to moment. God is with us, and we can trust Him with everything that troubles us. Indeed, this is what we do as a church community during the Great Entrance, for we pray to God for all who are present and all Orthodox Christians, for the metropolitan and the brotherhood of all bishops, priests, and deacons, for the president, the civil authorities, and the armed forces, for the living (especially those who have special needs or difficulties) and for the departed. But here, it is also fitting to add to our own specific prayers as the priest passes by with the bread and the wine or as we quietly reach out and touch the priest's phelonion. By doing so we place our burdens on our Lord Jesus Christ's broad shoulders, while also fulfilling the Scriptural mandate to cast all our cares upon Him, for He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). And this simple action allows us to focus on the rest of the Liturgy without distractions and to receive the King of All when we hear the words, "with the fear of God, and with faith and love, draw near." May God be with us as we entrust our cares to Him!



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