

the Light



JULY 2024
NEWSLETTER

DOMSE FALL RETREAT 2024

September 20 - 21, 2024

St. Ignatius Orthodox Church, Franklin, TN

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DOMSE CLERGY & WINTER RETREATS 2025

January 29 - February 1, 2025

St. Elias Orthodox Church, Atlanta, GA

Details to come!

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SPECIAL EDITION

DOMSE PLC 2024

St. Stephen Orthodox Church | Hiram, GA





Parish Life Conference 2024



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

This June the faithful of DOMSE gathered in Atlanta, Georgia, for our Annual Parish Life Conference. We are very grateful to our host parish, St. Stephen Orthodox Church in Hiram, for a wonderful conference. His Grace, Bishop Nicholas presided over the gathering which included over three hundred registrants from parishes all over DOMSE.

We were blessed to receive the wonderworking Iveron Icon of the Mother of God all the way from Hawaii. This icon was present with us throughout our time together, bringing blessings to all. The faithful were able to venerate the icon, participate in services with her present, and receive anointing by the clergy from the myrrh that streamed from her. Thank you to Fr. Jacob Andoun and the parishioners of St. Stephen for the opportunity to be a part of such a wonderful miracle.

We were also blessed to be surrounded by many of the most talented Byzantine chanters of the Antiochian Archdiocese. These men came from all over the country and participated in our services and performed an amazing Byzantine concert one evening for all.

The focus of our gathering was on the encouragement of our families, and that topic was highlighted so beautifully by several talks by Dr. Philip Mamalakis. Dr. Mamalakis also spoke to our Young Adult Fellowship and encouraged them in the areas of marriage and living a holy single life. Everyone was enriched by

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being able to partake of these talks throughout the week.

We come to the Parish Life Conference each year to get reacquainted with our fellow DOMSE parishioners, but we are also blessed to be able to pray together and conduct the business that keeps our diocese running so smoothly. All of our organizations were able to have their business meetings and make decisions concerning their structure and use of funds that affects each of our parish organizations throughout the diocese.

During our Annual Diocese Business meeting, our clergy and delegates gathered to discuss and approve the budget for the coming year, as well as items that came up in the business section of the meeting. The Diocesan Ministry Council was also privileged to award Michael Baclig with the DOMSE Service award for his tireless efforts in helping to form the AMEN group for men, which has now spread throughout the diocese. The minutes for the business meeting will be available to everyone at a later date.

On Friday of the PLC we were honored to be with presentations from our DOMSE Oratorical participants and we were amazed at the speeches given. The judges' choice of winner for this year's Oratorical was Stella Hallberg of All Saints Church in Raleigh, NC. We are so proud of our young people and

their willingness to stand and speak out about their faith. May God grant them each many years!

Friday night is always a fun time of competition and a little noise as we face off in the DOMSE Bible Bowl. This year the first place award for teens AND adults was our host parish, St. Stephen Church in Hiram, GA. We are excited to send all of these young people to the summer meetings this July at Antiochian Village and pray that they do their best and represent DOMSE well.

Our conference was closed with a beautiful hierarchical Liturgy served by His Grace and the clergy of DOMSE. The Parish Life Conference is truly a family reunion and we are blessed to have such a wonderful DOMSE family to gather with each year.

As we look forward to 2025, mark your calendars for June 11-14 when we will be hosted by St. George Church in Jacksonville, Florida. They are busily planning a wonderful PLC so let us all make a point to be there! Thank you to the Diocese Ministry Council and the planning committee of St. Stephen's and of course our loving Bishop Nicholas for all the hard work this year. May God grant our diocese many, many years!





Words from Sayedna
Nicholas
will return next month.



*Sayedna is spending
time at Camp St. Thekla!*



Teen SOYO



Stella (SOYO President):

Hey DOMSE! It's your SOYO President Stella for the last time this year.

My favorite memory is our monthly Board meetings. We teens create the agendas, lead the meetings, set goals, and make decisions. Serving on the Board is such a cool opportunity to learn about leadership.



Susannah (SOYO Vice President):

Hey DOMSE!! It's Susannah, your VP/Social Media Director! This year I have learned so much about teamwork and I'm so proud of this year's board for achieving all of our goals! I've had such an awesome time serving on this board for the last two years, and I know it will be in capable hands next year!



Sophia (SOYO Secretary):

Hey DOMSE! I have loved every part of serving on the Board this year. I am so blessed to have been able to make so many amazing memories and serve alongside my favorite people.



Analeigh (SOYO Treasurer):

Hey DOMSE! Thank you all for a wonderful year in Teen SOYO! My favorite part of this year was growing closer to the Faith with the rest of our amazing DOMSE Board. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to serve our teens!

Upcoming Events

JULY

CAMP ST. THEKLA 2024 – SESSION 2

June 30 - July 6, 2024

SEPTEMBER

DOMSE FALL RETREAT 2024

September 20 - 21, 2024

St. Ignatius Orthodox Church
Franklin, TN

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2025

JANUARY

DOMSE CLERGY & WINTER RETREATS 2025

January 29 - February 1, 2025

St. Elias Orthodox Church
Atlanta, GA

Details to come!

JUNE

DOMSE 2025 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE (PLC)

June 11 - 14, 2025

St. George Orthodox Church
Jacksonville, FL

Details to come!



Theology Editor's Corner

Orthodox Christianity is more visible on the internet than it has ever been before. This is something that brings both blessings and challenges. For while more and more people visit our churches every week to see what the Orthodox Church is like, they also come with a one-sided experience of who we are from some of our online spokesmen and representatives. Here, Fr. Alexey Young's book *Letters from Father Seraphim* provides guidance from Fr. Seraphim Rose of Platina on how we can give people a fuller experience of our Orthodox Christian life and mindset within our parishes.

First, Fr. Alexey recalls that Fr. Seraphim believed that Orthodox Christianity can only take root in America if people get together and build real community. And for Fr. Seraphim a real "community of the heart" involves "people living in close proximity to each other, bearing one another's burdens, praying and receiving the Sacraments together, and growing together" [84].

In addition, Fr. Seraphim thought that one of the greatest aids to building real community within the Church is to accept other Orthodox Christians – our brothers and sisters in Christ –

"As fellow strugglers on the true Orthodox missionary path. A struggler is one who does not trust his own opinion, who does not 'know better' on everything, who does not set himself up as an ultimate authority, who does not form cliques and try to crush anyone outside

the clique. But if they are not strugglers, but only 'experts,' all their good labors will come to ruin, sooner or later [94]."



Fr. Seraphim Rose of Platina

Finally, Fr. Seraphim thought that we cannot do any of this if we are too focused on ourselves, and too concerned with showing everyone else just how correct we are about everything. He says that those who are only concerned with being "super-correct" are,

"Incompetent to discuss theology – not because they are not smart or well-read enough, but because they are too passionately involved in showing how right they always are. This is not the spirit of Orthodox theology... Therefore, we... must continue exactly in the same sober path, without great dreams of being anybody, just saving our souls and trying to share the riches of Orthodoxy with others [140, 141]."

One of the temptations of being on the internet too much and of every form of online community is that it is so easy for us to gravitate to people who are just like us, to become an echo chamber, and to lose the ability to encounter, learn from, or bless anyone who is different than us; but simple, face to face, everyday life within a parish is something that protects us from this tendency. May God be with us as we bear with one another and are thereby united as the Body of Christ, so that we can welcome everyone into the fullness of the Holy Orthodox faith!

IF YOU HAVE ARTICLES OR SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LIGHT NEWSLETTER, PLEASE EMAIL THEM TO DOMSENEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM

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