

# the Light



MARCH 2025 NEWSLETTER



## AMEN LENTEN RETREAT 2025

April 5, 2025 - Virtual

9:00 pm - 11:30 pm EST  
Details to come!



## ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT 2025

April 5, 2025 - Virtual

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm EST  
Details to come!

### CONNECT WITH US!



DOMSE.ORG



DMCDOMSE



@DOMSE



YOUTUBE



# DOMSE Winter Retreat 2025

ST. ELIAS ORTHODOX CHURCH | ATLANTA, GA

## in this issue...

WINTER RETREAT RECAP	P. 2
CLERGY SPOTLIGHT	P. 3
WINTER CAMP RECAP	P. 5





FEATURED EVENT

# DOMSE Winter Retreat

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

This January, the clergy and faithful of DOMSE gathered in Atlanta for our annual Winter Retreat. Our clergy spent several days in spiritual discussions and fellowship, a well-deserved time of encouragement and renewal. We are deeply grateful for the many sacrifices our clergy make for us, and we are always glad when they have the opportunity to support one another and spend time with our beloved Bishop Nicholas. As part of the retreat, they even had a chance to work on their golf swings at TopGolf

– hopefully returning home refreshed and ready to enter Lent with renewed energy and a smile! Thank you, Fathers, for all that you do for the faithful of DOMSE – we truly appreciate you.

On Friday morning, the faithful joined the clergy for two days of spiritual talks centered around the theme *Guarding the Heart in a World of Distractions*. Several of our clergy reflected on this theme, offering insights into how we can strengthen

our spiritual lives amidst the busyness and chaos of daily life.

In addition to the spiritual talks, our diocesan organizations held their annual winter business meetings. We are grateful for the dedicated members who work tirelessly to ensure these organizations meet the needs of our diocese. To foster fellowship, off-site events provided attendees with opportunities to build and deepen relationships.

*(continued on page 9)*





# Clergy Spotlight

## Fr. Gabriel Khoury



**F**r. Gabriel Khoury was born and raised in the suburbs of Chicago.



While he grew up in an Orthodox family, sporadically attending various Orthodox parishes in the Chicagoland area, it was not until his college years that he began to seek a deeper understanding of the Orthodox faith. Through engaging in the liturgical life of the Church and reading extensively about Church doctrine and history, Fr. Gabriel developed a deep and growing love for the faith. He sought to know more about the faith which he had grown up with, but did not fully understand. During this time, he also had the opportunity to take classes on Church History and Orthodox theology which were very influential during this formative period.

After earning a bachelor's degree in history from North Park University, Fr. Gabriel began to discern attending theological seminary. Later that year, he applied for and received a scholarship from the Antiochian Archdiocese and was assigned to attend Saint Vladimir's Seminary. Fr. Gabriel and his wife, Presbytera Elisabeth, were married in June of 2019. Two months later, they moved to Yonkers, New York, and Fr. Gabriel began his seminary studies.

After graduating from seminary in the Spring of 2022 with a Master of Divinity, Fr. Gabriel was assigned to serve as a Pastoral Assistant at St. Elias Orthodox Church in Austin, Texas. During this time, Fr. Gabriel also taught middle-school history at a classical charter school in the area.

In May of 2023, Fr. Gabriel was assigned to St. Ignatius Orthodox Church in Franklin, Tennessee. He was ordained to the Diaconate in August of 2023 by His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS. During this time, Fr. Gabriel assisted with pastoral, administrative, and youth ministries within the parish. In March of 2024, Fr. Gabriel was ordained to the Holy Priesthood by His Grace Bishop NICHOLAS. Father Gabriel now serves as the Assistant Pastor at St. Ignatius Orthodox Church in Franklin, assisting Fr. Philip with the pastoral needs of this rapidly growing community. In his free time, Fr. Gabriel enjoys roasting his own coffee and reading about various topics of interest, including history and meteorology.



# 2025 PARTS6 LIFE CONFERENCE

REGISTRATION OPEN - CLICK HERE!

## Important Deadlines

4.1.25

CREATIVE FESTIVALS

4.11.25

VENDOR DEADLINE

5.23.25

HOTEL RESERVATION

5.25.25

EARLY EVENT REGISTRATION

6.4.25

BIBLE BOWL REGISTRATION

6.4.25

ORATORICAL REGISTRATION

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT  
PLC, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH  
[MIAMIPLC@ANTIOCHIANEVENTS.COM](mailto:MIAMIPLC@ANTIOCHIANEVENTS.COM)

# JUNE 11~14, 2025

HOSTED BY ST. GEORGE CHURCH (JACKSONVILLE, FL)

“Behold the maidservant of the Lord!  
Let it be to me according to your word.” ~Luke 1:38







# Winter Camp 2025

Sueanna Alter | All Saints Church, Raleigh, NC

Thank you to everyone in DOMSE who contributed to making Winter Camp 2025 such a success! Our staff from last summer graciously volunteered their time to serve 50 campers from age 12 to 17 for the weekend of February 14-17. We were hosted by Woodland Christian Camp this year, outside of Atlanta, GA. This is a new location for us, but the Antiochian Men have used this retreat center before. Our campers got to use the game pavilion, basketball, and volleyball courts, and spent one memorable evening around the campfire making s'mores and singing songs. Fr. Herman Lasseter was our speaker and gave several enlightening talks about the armor of God and how to wear it and what it means to arm ourselves against temptations of our daily lives. We were able to celebrate a hierarchical Divine Liturgy with his grace, Bishop Nicholas on Sunday morning. Sunday night was our last night, and we threw a huge dance in the meeting room and cotton eyed Joe'd the night away. The campers and staff departed in peace on Monday morning, with promises to meet again at summer camp! Registration closes March 31 so be sure to sign your campers up soon!



**AMEN**  
ANTIOCHIANMEN.ORG

**ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN**  
DOMSEWOMEN  
ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF DOMSE

**YOUNG ADULT**  
DOMSE YAF

**SOYO**  
DOMSESOYO  
DOMSESOYO

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**  
DOMSECHRISTIANED





# Teen SOYO

Zoe Van Drimmelen  
St. John Orthodox Church  
Memphis, TN

Attention all teens! We are excited to announce that we will be holding a basketball tournament at the upcoming Parish Life Conference! This is your chance to show off your skills, have fun with friends, and connect with teens from other parishes. Whether you're a seasoned player or just looking to join in on the action, we welcome all skill levels to join us for what promises to be a fun and memorable event! Additionally, we will be hosting a free, virtual Bible Bowl workshop on March 11th at 7 pm EST. This is an excellent opportunity to see if you would be interested in competing at the PLC this year, and we look forward to having you participate. Visit our Instagram page [@domsesoyo](https://www.instagram.com/domsesoyo) for more details!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATION!

The Diocese Ministry Council & the DOMSE Scholarship Committee would like to extend a sincere thank you to **THE ORDER OF ST. IGNATIUS MIAMI CHAPTER AT ST. GEORGE CATHEDRAL**

for their \$2,500 scholarship donation towards the 2025 DOMSE Scholarships!

## SUMMER 2025 DATES

25 JAN

Staff Applications Open! Apply Now!  
NOW - FEB 28TH

Camper Registration Opens!  
FEB 1 - MARCH 31

1 FEB

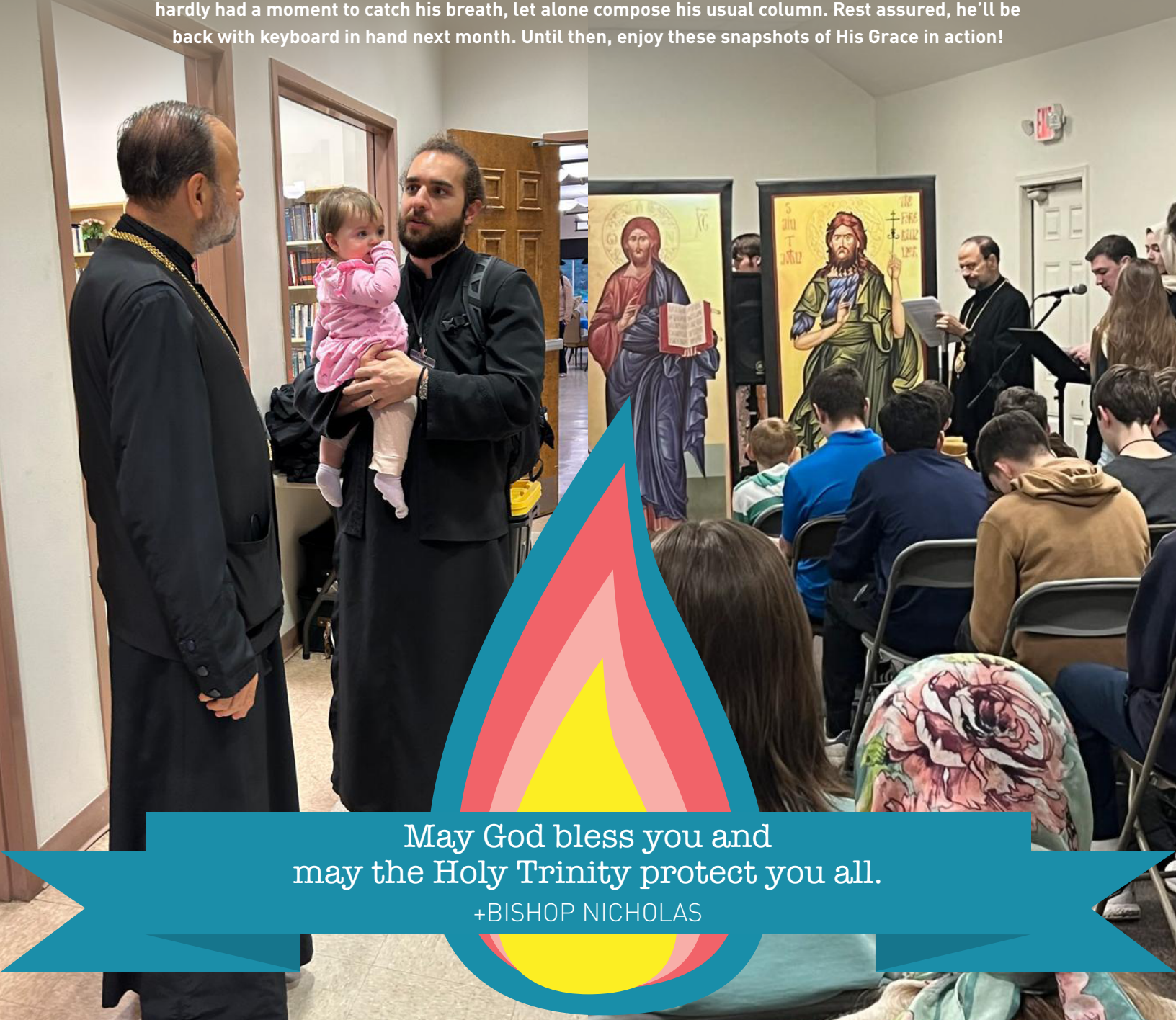
[campsaintthekla.org](http://campsaintthekla.org)





# Words from Sayedna Nicholas

Our beloved Bishop Nicholas has been on a whirlwind tour since the start of the year, crisscrossing DOMSE for our clergy and winter retreats, winter camp, and hosting Metropolitan Saba as he has visited here and there—all in quick succession! In the midst of this holy hustle and bustle, he has hardly had a moment to catch his breath, let alone compose his usual column. Rest assured, he'll be back with keyboard in hand next month. Until then, enjoy these snapshots of His Grace in action!



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

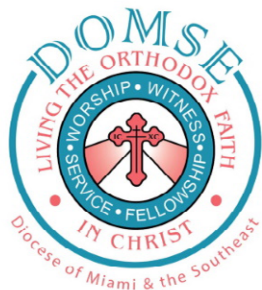
+BISHOP NICHOLAS



# Save the Dates!

## 2025, 2026, & 2027 Event List

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
<b>2025</b>		
April 5, 2025	AMEN Lenten Retreat	Virtual
April 5, 2025	Antiochian Women Lenten Retreat	Virtual
April 5, 2025	SOYO Lenten Retreat	Virtual
April 6, 2025	YAM Lenten Retreat	Virtual
June 1 – July 1, 2025	2025 DOMSE Scholarship	Virtual
June 11 – June 14, 2025	Parish Life Conference 2025	St. George (Jacksonville, FL)
June 22 – June 28, 2025	Camp St. Thekla Summer Camp Session 1	Asbury Hills (Cleveland, SC)
June 29 - July 5, 2025	Camp St. Thekla Summer Camp Session 2	
September 19 – 20, 2025	Fall Retreat 2025	St. Ignatius (Franklin, TN)
November 5 – 8, 2025	AMEN Conference & Retreat 2025	Woodland Camp (Temple, GA)
<b>2026</b>		
January 28 – January 31, 2026	Clergy & Winter Retreats 2026	St. Elias (Atlanta, GA)
February 14 – 16, 2026	Camp St. Thekla Winter Camp 2026	TBD
TBD, 2026	AMEN Lenten Retreat	Virtual
TBD, 2026	Antiochian Women Lenten Retreat	Virtual
TBD, 2026	SOYO Lenten Retreat	Virtual
TBD, 2026	YAM Lenten Retreat	Virtual
June 1 – July 1, 2026	2025 DOMSE Scholarship	Virtual
June 10 – June 13, 2026	Parish Life Conference 2026	St. Nicholas Church (Springdale, AR)
June 22 – June 28, 2026	Camp St. Thekla Summer Camp Session 1	TBD
June 29 - July 5, 2026	Camp St. Thekla Summer Camp Session 2	
September 18 – 19, 2026	Fall Retreat 2026	St. Ignatius (Franklin, TN)
November TBD, 2026	AMEN Conference & Retreat 2026	TBD
<b>2027</b>		
January 27 – January 30, 2027	Clergy & Winter Retreats 2027	St. Elias (Atlanta, GA)
February 13 – 15, 2027	Camp St. Thekla Winter Camp 2027	TBD
TBD, 2027	AMEN Lenten Retreat	Virtual
TBD, 2027	Antiochian Women Lenten Retreat	Virtual
TBD, 2027	SOYO Lenten Retreat	Virtual
TBD, 2027	YAM Lenten Retreat	Virtual
June 1 – July 1, 2027	2025 DOMSE Scholarship	Virtual
June 9 – June 12, 2027	Parish Life Conference 2027	TBD
June 21 – June 27, 2027	Camp St. Thekla Summer Camp Session 1	TBD
June 28 - July 4, 2027	Camp St. Thekla Summer Camp Session 2	
September 17 – 18, 2027	Fall Retreat 2027	St. Ignatius (Franklin, TN)
November TBD, 2027	AMEN Conference & Retreat 2027	TBD



Clergy & Winter Retreats = Always the last weekend of January  
 Camp St. Thekla Winter Camp = Always President's Day weekend  
 Parish Life Conference = Always the 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of June  
 Camp St. Thekla Summer Camp = Always the last 2 weekends of June  
 Fall Retreat = Always the 3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of September



[Retreat - continued from page 2]

We were blessed to be hosted by St. Elias Orthodox Church in Atlanta, Georgia. The warm hospitality, wonderful meals, and welcoming church community made it an ideal setting for our diocesan gathering. Bishop Nicholas led us in prayers, services, and fellowship throughout the retreat. We are also especially thankful for those who volunteered to provide childcare, allowing parents to participate fully in the retreat.

Friday evening brought a time of lighthearted fun as some of our clergy participated in our annual *DOMSE Jeopardy* game. We learned a lot and even got to know some of our newer clergy a little better!

We look forward to seeing everyone in Jacksonville, FL, this summer, June 11-14, 2025, when St. George Orthodox Church will host our DOMSE Parish Life Conference (PLC). If you've never attended a DOMSE event, this is your chance! You'll experience spiritual nourishment, meaningful fellowship, and, of course, some of the best company you could ask for.

A special thank you to our Diocesan Ministry Council (DMC) and Bishop Nicholas for their hard work in planning and organizing these events. We are grateful for all you do!



## Upcoming Events

### APRIL

**AMEN LENTEN RETREAT 2025** - Virtual  
April 5, 2025; 9:00 am - 11:30 am EST  
Details to come!

**ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN'S LENTEN RETREAT 2025** - Virtual  
April 5, 2025; 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm EST  
Details to come!

**SOYO LENTEN RETREAT 2025** - Virtual  
April 5, 2025; 8:00 pm - 9:00 pm EST  
Details to come!

**YAM LENTEN RETREAT 2025** - Virtual  
April 6, 2025; 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm EST  
Details to come!

### JUNE

**2025 DOMSE SCHOLARSHIPS!**  
June 1 - July 1, 2025 - Details to come!

**DOMSE 2025 PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE (PLC)** - In person  
June 11 - 14, 2025  
St. George Orthodox Church, Jacksonville, FL  
Details to come!

### SEPTEMBER

**DOMSE FALL RETREAT 2025** - In person  
September 19 - 20, 2025  
St. Ignatius Orthodox Church, Franklin, TN  
Details to come!

### NOVEMBER

**AMEN CONFERENCE & RETREAT 2025**  
November 5 - 8, 2025 - In person  
Woodland Christian Camp & Retreat Center, Temple, GA - Details to come!

## 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!

IF YOU HAVE ARTICLES OR SUGGESTIONS FOR THE LIGHT NEWSLETTER, PLEASE EMAIL THEM TO [DOMSENEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DOMSENEWSLETTER@GMAIL.COM)

Fr. Nathaniel Trembley, Theology Editor  
Deborah Abdo, Editor and Manager  
Chelsea Beazley, Graphic Designer  
Sh. Shell Keim  
Bishop Nicholas



**AMEN**  
ANTIOCHIANMEN.ORG

**ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN**  
DOMSEWOMEN  
ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN OF DOMSE

**YOUNG ADULT**  
DOMSE YAF

**SOYO**  
DOMSESOYO  
DOMSESOYO

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**  
DOMSECHRISTIANED





# Theology Editor's Corner

Great Lent is just around the corner, and it is not too early to start preparing ourselves for the season of repentance. Most of us know that Lent involves fasting from certain foods – from meat, dairy, eggs, fish, and wine – but it is also a season of increased prayer, with many more church services at our local parish from week to week. Here, the simple mathematical operation of subtracting certain foods from our diet while also adding prayer gives us an image of what it means to repent – for repentance involves turning away from ourselves and our own selfish desires and turning toward God. But just as we add prayer to our lives during the Fast, it is also a good thing to add spiritual reading to our normal schedule each day. Here, Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's book *Great Lent: Journey to Pascha* is one of the best guides for entering into the spirit of the Lenten season, and in it he helps us to understand the purpose of fasting. He says,

There are indeed two ways or modes of fasting rooted both in Scripture and Tradition, and which correspond to two distinct needs or states of man. The first one can be termed *total* fast for it consists of total abstinence from food and drink. One can define the second one as *ascetical* fast for it consists mainly in abstinence from certain foods and in substantial reduction of the dietary regimen. The *total* fast, by its very nature, is of short duration and is usually limited to one day or even a part of one day. From the very beginning of Christianity, it has been understood as a state of *preparation* and expectation – the state of spiritual concentration on that which is about to come. Physical hunger corresponds here to the spiritual expectation of fulfillment, the “opening up” of the entire human being to the approaching joy. Therefore, in the liturgical tradition of the Church, we find this total fast as the last and ultimate preparation for a great feast, for a decisive spiritual event. We find it, for example, on the eves of Christmas and Epiphany [or Theophany], and above everything else it is the Eucharistic Fast, the essential mode of our preparation for the messianic banquet at Christ's table in His Kingdom. Eucharist

is always preceded by this total fast... which for the Church constitutes a necessary condition for Holy Communion...

Quite different are the spiritual connotations of the second type of fasting which we defined as *ascetical*. Here the purpose for fasting is to liberate man from the unlawful tyranny of the flesh, of that surrender of the spirit to the body and its appetites which is the tragic result of sin and the original fall of man. It is only by a slow and patient effort that man discovers that he “does not live by bread alone” – that he restores in himself the primacy of the spirit. It is of necessity and by its very nature a long and sustained effort. The *time* factor is essential for it takes time to uproot and to heal the common and universal disease which men have come to consider as their “normal” state. The art of ascetical fasting... is rooted in the example of Christ Himself who fasted forty days and then met Satan face to face and in this encounter reversed the surrender of man to “bread alone,” thus inaugurating man's liberation. The Church has set apart four periods for this ascetical fast: the seasons before Easter, Christmas, the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, and the Dormition of the Mother of God. Four times a year she invites us to purify and liberate ourselves from the dominion of the flesh by the holy therapy of fasting (49-50, 51).

Today, we struggle to appreciate just how much expectancy and anticipation can add to the final experience of joy and fulfillment, which is why we rush from one empty pleasure to another without any lasting satisfaction. And while Fr. Alexander identifies only total fasting as a state of spiritual expectancy, we can also see the entire Lenten fast as an extended period of anticipation and preparation. For when we gain even a little mastery over our sinful impulses with God's help, we are made new and enter into the joy of the Resurrection. May God give us strength this Lent as we turn away from our selfish desires and turn toward Him – the true Bread – the Resurrection and the Life!

