



THE PARISH PRESS



St. Philip Orthodox Church

FOLLOWING IN THE STEPS OF THE AMERICAN SAINTS: HUMILITY IN SERVICE

A Message from Fr Noah

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Fourth Book of Kingdoms (same as II Kings in the protestant Bibles) records the rise, split, and destruction of Israel. During the decay, the kings were primarily wicked, opposing God's Law and promoting idolatry and other pagan practices. There were, however, some righteous kings who unsuccessfully tried to hold back the rising tide of apostasy. For example, a righteous king, like Uzziah (a contemporary of the prophet Isaiah) "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to everything his father Amaziah had done, except that he did not remove any of the high places." (4 Kingdoms 15:3-4).

What were these "high places" that even the few righteous kings could not abolish? The high places were places of pagan worship, like shines, sacred groves, or pillars, outside of the cities in the mountains. The idolatrous worship at these barbarian hold-outs included human sacrifices, prostitution, and other abominations. These pagan worship

getaways may have been obscured from the public eye, but they seemed to be the driving force of society.

We too are called to "remove the high places" in our lives: those secret sins that plague our consciences, our families, and our society. Yes, it is good and important to show up on Sunday morning and pray with the Church, but we also need to be tearing down the secret sins of our life. We need to be repenting, changing our hearts and our habits... to be growing in godliness, step-by-step, opposing the hidden unrighteousness. We are not alone in this struggle, though it sometimes feels like it. Josiah, the young king of Judah, who rediscovered the Law of God and brought about a renaissance of righteous living in Jerusalem was not alone. Join me and the entire church in this interior battle for our hearts and our families and God willing this will spill over into society.

Your Servant in Christ,

+ Fr. Noah

Mark Your Calendar:

Chanting Clinic

Mondays, Feb 11 & 25, Mar 11, 7 p.m.

Matushka Olga Sewing Club

Tuesdays, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Learn or teach, work on your own project or on projects for those in need. All welcome.

Catechumens & Inquirers

Tuesdays, Jan 15 - Feb 26, 7 p.m.

Bible Study - The Rhythms of Prayer

Wednesdays, Jan 16 - Feb 27

Following Akathist at 7 p.m.

Upcoming Dates:

Publican & Pharisee: February 24

Prodigal Son: March 3

Meatfare/Last Judgment: March 10

Cheesefare/Forgiveness: March 17

Walking in the Steps of the American Saints HUMILITY IN SERVICE

St. Raphael who, after tireless missionary labors in America, passed into eternal life on February 27, 1915. He said of himself: I am an Arab by birth, a Greek by primary education, an American by residence, a Russian at heart, and a Slav in soul."



On the Sunday of Orthodoxy in 1911, Bishop Raphael was honored for his fifteen years of pastoral ministry in America. Archbishop Platon presented him with a silver covered icon of Christ and praised him for his work. In his humility, Bishop Raphael could not understand why he should be honored merely for doing his duty. He objected, saying, "I am an unprofitable servant, having only done what was my duty. Can we servants of God and spiritual pastors expect anything in life except labor and grief?"

NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

HOME BLESSINGS

From Theophany to just before Great Lent is the season of **home blessings**. To schedule with Fr. Noah or Fr. James, sign up on the calendar in the narthex and pick up a reminder card. To schedule with Fr. Boniface, please contact him directly.

GIVING UPDATES

MONTHLY OUTREACH COLLECTION: Many thanks to all for your contribution to our January collection. We collected 25 pounds of oral care items - and remember, toothbrushes and toothpaste don't weigh much! In **February**, we are collecting **baby care** items for Crossroads Crisis Pregnancy Center in Quakertown.



May God bless all our faithful givers!

OUR SYMPATHY IN CHRIST

is extended to the **Ferguson** family upon the passing of **John's father, Henry**, in January.

ALSO, to the **Muzekari** family upon the passing of the **parents of Reader Nicholas, Theodore and Marie**, who both reposed in the Lord in January.

MAY THEIR MEMORY BE ETERNAL!



5-Minute Guacamole

1 medium ripe avocado, peeled and cubed
1 tablespoon salsa
1 garlic clove, peeled
1/4 teaspoon salt



In a food processor, combine all the ingredients; cover and process until smooth. Transfer to a small bowl; serve immediately. **Yield:** 3/4 cup. (Add 1 Tbsp lime juice or store with the pit to reduce discoloration over time.)

<http://www.tasteofhome.com/Recipes/5-Minute-Guacamole>

Did You Know?

- **Fr. Noah, Fr. Boniface, Fr. James, and Dn. Herman** thank and pray for those who were so kind and generous to us and our families during the Nativity season.
- **Steve Kulp** is now a catechumen. Please pray for him and all of those on the journey into Holy Orthodoxy. Also, please welcome them to our community.
- A beautiful **new rug adorns the altar** thanks to a previous anonymous donation to our Church Furnishing Fund.
- **Stephen Morrash** is currently in London, England, where he will be studying for the spring semester. He is a sophomore at NYU majoring in mathematics education and minoring in theater education. Please keep Stephen in your prayers.



• **Sandy Miller** was offered an opportunity for her hand-made jewelry to be a part of the celebrity gift bags at this year's Oscars. She created 100 pairs of earrings that will be distributed to Hollywood celebrities, actors and actresses. The Oscars will be held in February.

- **Nick Burke** is beginning to organize a fellowship for the young adults (18-38) of the parish. Please look out for a kick-off event this spring. Everyone, please pray for this important ministry to have a strong start in keeping our young adults engaged in the life in Christ!
- Our **Bible Bowl** teams are studying after Great Vespers on Saturday nights. Save the Date to support our diocese's Parish Life Conference: July 3-6th, 2013, hosted by St. Paul, Emmaus.
- We're hosting the **Delegates' Meeting and Bp. Thomas' Visit** – November 15-17, 2013. Please mark you calendar and see how you can help.
- We are in the process of transitioning to **Google calendar** on our website and published calendars. This will allow parishioners to subscribe to have the church calendar downloaded to their own electronic calendar. Please look for instructions in the next month. (Through February, the current website calendar is the most accurate; beginning with March, check the Google calendar, also on our website.)
- Registration for **Summer Camp** is still open. <http://www.antiochianvillage.org/camp.html> – our parish's children usually attend the 1st Session: June 16-28 in 2013.



- I am thankful for the donations to the **Camp Scholarship Fund** as well as the families who are able to send their children to camp because of this! Please speak to Father Noah about providing or utilizing a scholarship.
- The **altar boys** are serving in two teams to serve every other week; this has alleviated the crowding issue and helped with education and communication.
- Do you come to **Vespers**? There are several families who benefit from the habit of attending this peaceful and solemn Saturday night service of psalms, hymns, and litanies. This is also a great service to introduce someone to Orthodoxy as well also the most convenient time for me to hear confessions. Bring a friend!
- We live from **Pascha to Pascha**: May 5th, 2013!
- Our stewardship of God's house, is not just financial, we must all be involved in a **ministry**. What talents do you have to offer? Please be ready to roll up your sleeves as I will be approaching you, "I need your help..."

Ask Abouna

Previous Question: I want to be more peaceful, what can I do?

Answer: We lack peace for many different reasons:

- Perhaps we are not organized and every day is an emergency.
- Perhaps we don't struggle wisely... "working harder, not smarter."
- Perhaps we have unthinkingly stirred up discord within our family, our colleagues, and our parish and we are reaping the bitter fruit.
- Perhaps we don't pray, or pray as we ought, from a humble and grateful heart and a quiet spot.
- Perhaps we have given in to the negativity, anger, and selfishness of society, the media, and those around us.
- Perhaps we expect other people, including God, to fix our problems.
- Perhaps we are judgmental and unforgiving.

In the face of these and other reasons, a little bit of "healthy self-talk," like that suggested below by St. Symeon the New Theologian (11th Century), can be helpful in getting out of a rut and give us the psychological room to repent, making the needed changes in our broken situation.

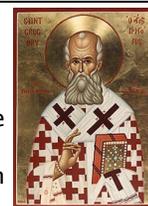


You may find yourself hampered by someone who sows tares of despondency. He tries to prevent you from climbing to such heights of holiness by discouraging you with various thoughts. For instance, he will tell you that it is impossible for you to be saved and to keep every single one of God's commandments while you live in this world. When this happens you should sit down in a solitary place by yourself, collect yourself, concentrate your thoughts and give good counsel to your soul, saying: "Why, my soul, are you dejected, and why do you trouble me? Put your hope in God, for I will give thanks to Him; for my salvation lies not in my actions but in God (cf. Ps. 42:5). Who will be vindicated by actions done according to the law (cf. Gal 2:16)? No living person will be vindicated before God (cf. Ps. 143:2). Yet by virtue of my faith in God I hope that in His ineffable mercy He will give me salvation"

New Question: Fr. James, tell us about the mission parish you presided over before retiring back East.

CHALLENGE FOR 2013: Arrive before Liturgy to help sing the Great Doxology!

Wisdom On Almsgiving St Gregory Nazianzen



- The grace of the deed is doubled when it is done with promptness and speed.
- There should be no delay between your intention and your good deed.
- Not even night should interrupt you in your duty of mercy.
- He who does acts of mercy should do so with cheerfulness.
- Let us visit Christ whenever we may, let us care for Him, feed Him, clothe Him, welcome Him, honor Him, not only at a meal or by anointing Him as Mary did, or by giving Him gold, frankincense and myrrh, like the Magi.