



# THE PARISH PRESS



## St. Philip Orthodox Church

**SPIRITUAL WARFARE: "I AM NOT MY THOUGHTS."**

### NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

#### GIVING UPDATES

**MONTHLY OUTREACH COLLECTION:** Thank you for your generosity to the needy of our community! In **September**, we are collecting **Cleaning Supplies**.

**NON-PERISHABLE FOOD COLLECTION:** We continue to collect non-perishables of all kinds for the food pantries.

#### MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

**Choir - Women singers needed!** If you are interested in participating, please get Fr. Noah's blessing and speak with Kh. Elizabeth about singing in the choir.

#### Festival Preparations Continue ...

Work and pray for success in this our major outreach event of the year! Success means showing hospitality to many from our community, bringing visitors into contact with the Orthodox Church and Her Gospel. Success means our parish community grows closer from our common work. Success means we can help with funding for some local charities and, lastly, for special projects for our parish.



MAY GOD BLESS ALL OUR FAITHFUL GIVING & SERVICE!



### Holy Mysteries

**Anthony Sawicki**, son of Slawomir and Aleksandra, was baptized into Christ here at St Philip on August 19.



**Robert Sommer & Laura Hendershot** were united in the Sacrament of Marriage here at St Philip on August 25.

**MAY GOD GRANT THEM MANY YEARS!**

### A Message from Fr Noah

Dear Saint Philip's Family, Glory to God!

We are asking God's blessing on "The Crown of the Year", as the services call the Indiction. With this new ecclesiastical year, we have a new focus for our spiritual lives. This will join past themes for basic spirituality—"baby steps to holiness", "Following in the Steps of American Saints", and, most recently, "Wisdom from Fr B". The theme is Spiritual Warfare. I hope to get across to you that this primarily means "mental warfare" for the thought-life is the truly the arena of the spiritual battle. St Paul enjoins us to "take every thought captive" for Christ (2 Corinthians 10.5). This will be broken into two categories: 1) Basic Themes in the Spiritual Life and 2) How to Deal with Thoughts.

It has become apparent to me over the few years of my priesthood that all of us, especially youth, don't have the ability, habit, and skills to differentiate their thought-world from reality. I am sure that anyone with only a few grey hairs can list several reasons for this.

As the year goes along and these ideas trickle out, please put them into practice and talk about them with your family, friends, after Vespers, during coffee hour, etc.

Though we are dragged into confusion, isolation, depression, and suicide by the demons—and the culture and media that are increasingly in their thrall—we are positioned for victory in the unseen warfare, participating in Christ's victory!!!

In Jesus Christ, the Wisdom, Word, and Power of God!

+Fr. Noah

### Mark Your Calendar:

**Compline & Patristic Reading**  
Wednesday evenings (6 pm) beginning Sept 5

**Sunday School begins Sept 9**

**Nativity of the Theotokos**  
Friday, Sept 7 - Vespers & Artoklasia 6 pm, Orthros 7 pm

(Men's Campfire Fellowship, 8 pm)

Saturday, Sept 8 - Liturgy 10 am w/ Potluck Luncheon to follow

**Feast of the Elevation of the Cross**  
**STRICT FAST**

Thursday, Sept 13 - Vespers & Artoklasia 7 pm

Friday, Sept 14 - Orthros 9 am, Liturgy 10 am w/Fasting Luncheon to follow

**20/40 Group Event**  
Hike at Lake Nockamixon, 1 pm

**International Food Festival**  
12pm-8pm, Sept 21 & 22



**Intro to Orthodoxy Class**  
Begins on Saturday, Sept 29 at 4:30 pm

**IOCC Presentation**  
September 30 after Liturgy

### SEE YOU IN CHURCH!

Saturday: VESPERS, 6 p.m.

Sunday: MATINS, 8:45 a.m.  
DIVINE LITURGY,  
10 a.m.



Wednesday: COMPLINE, 6 p.m.  
(unless a festal service supersedes)

CONFESSIONS before or after Vespers and during Matins as time allows, or by appointment.

Check our calendar for special services!

**Challenge for 2018:**

**Keep the Feasts & the Fasts**

As we embark on the new Ecclesiastical Year, we are invited into a renewal, a new birth, symbolized in the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Sept 8). Like our Mother, Mary, we have been born to enter into God's Temple and to *become* God's Temple. We have been born in the Spirit to bear God's Word in us, and to give birth to Christ by incarnating Christ in our lives, thus becoming God-bearers (*theotokoi*) and royal heralds of the Gospel.

The New Year & the Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos is a divine gift—namely, the opportunity to take stock of our life. Is our posture towards life the same as the Virgin Mary, and her parents, Ss. Joachim and Anna?

Quickly following the Feast of the Nativity is the Feast of the Elevation/Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross (Sept 14). While Mary's Feast reminds us that the Gospel does not begin with the Cross, the Elevation of the Cross reminds us that the Gospel is the good news of a life-giving death. Christ's passion and death is the doorway into new life, and so we are not ashamed to proclaim and venerate the Cross as that which defines us as Christians. Our calling is to die to ourselves and the world daily, in and with Christ, and live unto newness of life in the Spirit.

How would our lives, our nation, our world be different if we took the paradigm of the Cross to heart?

**Spiritual Warfare:**

**"I Am Not My Thoughts"**

In his essay "The Mind, the Heart and the Way of Salvation", Archimandrite Meletios Webber offers a profound evaluation of our situation in the West:

The entire basis of Western experience, summed up definitively by Descartes as "Cogito ergo sum" ("I think therefore I am") is, in Orthodox terms, the greatest of deceits. Far from being true, it is actually an expression that perpetuates the very factor that causes the ongoing fragmentation of the human person.

<http://pemtpousia.com/2016/10/22256/>

In other words, what if it is our inability to "get out of our heads" that is the source of our undoing as individuals and as a civilization?

Orthodoxy has a rich and deep tradition of teaching about the *nous* (the mind/heart), a tradition which is central to our salvation both in its essential truth and its practical application in our lives.

We were created to *know God*, to find our life, purpose, and meaning in Him. Humanity's "fall" came in the Garden when we started to "*think*"—that is, when we ceased communing with God and started to analyze God and his Word as an external object on the basis of a (satanically inspired) thought.

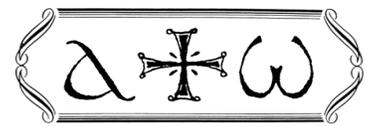
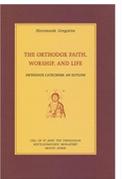
The Church tells us that what was involved in the Garden was the separation of our "intellect" (our reasoning faculty) from our "mind/heart" as the unique faculty by which we "see" and "know" God—that is, where God's Image is imprinted on us and reflected by us.

Ever since, rather than resting in God, we have been battling with the turbulent sea of our intellect, with its distorted self-talk and its susceptibility to demonic thoughts that plunge us into self-destruction and despair.

The first step for us as Christians is to *be aware of this battle*, to understand its dimensions. Secondly, we must *be active in this battle*, bringing "every thought"—whether external or internal—"captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor 10:5). Thirdly, we must *be constantly reorienting our life towards Christ* through immersion in Scripture, prayer, and the life of the Church. It is through these things that we allow our head to descend into our heart, our inner true selves, and find there Christ Himself, for we have died and our lives "are hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3:3).

**Did You Know?**

- Beginning on Wednesday, Sept 5, come and participate in the service of **Little Compline** and **reading/discussing** the *Ladder of Divine Ascent* on **Wednesday nights at 6 pm.**
- You can help make our many visitors feel welcome by a warm smile and a kind greeting. Please take a minute to **say hello to visitors** and invite them to coffee hour!
- Our **Sunday School, Teens, and Young Adults** need your prayers and love to keep them living and growing in Christ.
- The **liturgical offerings** of our parish (Prospora, Artos, Kolyva, Altar Candles, Wine, Flower Decorations) are simple and profound ways to offer our talents to God and to each other.
- Interested in learning more about and growing in the Orthodox Faith? All are welcome to participate in the **Intro to Orthodoxy Class** beginning on Saturday, Sept 29 at 4:30 pm!
- Your **Amazon** purchases can benefit St Philip's! Simply start your shopping from the link at the top of every page of the **St Philip's website.**
- Thanks to God for our **new mothers** and many **young families!** What a wonderful opportunity for us to give and receive love and service.



**Wisdom**

**Practical Spiritual Life**

Our life depends on the thoughts we nurture. If our thoughts are peaceful, calm, meek, and kind, then that is what our life is like. If our attention is turned to the circumstances in which we live, we are drawn into a whirlpool of thoughts and can have neither peace nor tranquility.

*Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnika,  
"Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives"*

**St Philip's Closet**



Always accepting donations & items free for you to take, St. Philip's Closet is located in the south entrance foyer! Leave bags on the left side upon entering to be sorted and put up. Any questions, contact BethAnn Hyatt or Inga Kovalenko.

As we approach Fall, we will be looking for some good, lightly-worn warmer clothes that others might be able to use.