



THE PARISH PRESS

St. Philip Orthodox Church



SPIRITUAL WARFARE: "CONFESS"

NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

GIVING UPDATES

MONTHLY OUTREACH COLLECTION: Thank you for your generosity to the needy of our community! In **March**, we are collecting **Baby Care Items**.



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

FORTY DAYS OF GROWTH IN STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

"One Body In Christ"

We now have 103 pledges for 2019 totaling \$289,992. God will provide! Glory to God!

Future St. Nicholas House – Update

We have received our appraisal of the house, more positive feedback from the bank, and now are starting to negotiate a selling price. I am thankful to members of the parish council and others for their wisdom, generosity of hear, and practical assistance in this process. Thanks all for your prayers!

Office Update

Kh. Vera is wrapping up her time at St. Philip and will be moving permanently to Delaware sometime after Pascha.

Pray for our Catechumens!

Pray for **Zachary, Evan, Tina**, and in particular for **Tatiana (Sze)** as she prepares for Baptism on Holy Saturday (Apr 27). Let's continue to pray for, welcome, and get to know them. And pray for God to send us many more!

OUR SYMPATHY IN CHRIST

is extended to the **Ibrahim family** upon the passing of **Hertanse Ibrahim**, who reposed on February 13. The funeral was held on February 18 here at St. Philip.

MAY HER MEMORY BE ETERNAL!



A Message from Fr Noah

Dear Saint Philip's Family, Glory to Jesus Christ!

The "Tithe of the Year" is Great Lent. This is the time we rededicate ourselves to loving God and neighbor; to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving; to church attendance, spiritual reading, and reconciliation; to living out the Sacraments of Confession and Communion. Our abstinence of foods, sleep, entertainments, vacations, etc... are just the "negative" part of the fast. The "positive" part is praying deeper in stillness, in weakness.

Pascha is our common goal. We know we live from Pascha to Pascha. I'd like each of us to have a particular goal for the fast. Your secret or not-so-secret desire/prayer/intention/effort to stop a bad habit, to reorient your life... I have a goal but I am keeping it secret. May God help me despite myself. May God help you, too! May we all help each other.

I'm sad to note that in the past parishioners have "started lent slowly"... missing the Great Canon of Repentance in Clean Week, not adding the Beautiful Great Compline, Presanctified Liturgy, or the Akathist, to their weekly routine. If you start weakly, how can you hope to finish strong?

Remember, "salvation is the free gift that costs us everything."

St. Nicholas Cabasilas, in his classic sacramental work *The Life in Christ*, reminds us: "we emerge from the water of Holy Baptism without sin, we receive the divine gifts through the Chrism and we live the life of Christ by partaking of the sacred Table. In the age to come we shall be 'gods surrounding God' (Psalm 81:1), inheriting with Him His riches, reigning with Him in His Kingdom, unless of course we willingly blind ourselves in this life and rend the royal garment. For our only contribution of the life in Christ is this: that we preserve the gifts that we have received, retain the graces bestowed on us and do not reject the crown which God by much sweat and toil has prepared for us."

In Christ,
+Fr. Noah

Mark Your Calendar

Weekly Lenten Services:

Mon-Thurs: 6th Hour, 12 noon
 Mondays: Great Compline, 7 pm
 Wednesdays: Presanctified Liturgy, 7 pm
 Fridays: Presanctified Liturgy, 10 am
 Little Compline 7pm, w/ Akathist

The Lenten Services calendar has been posted and distributed. Pick up a copy from the literature rack.

Forgiveness Sunday

March 10 - Forgiveness Vespers 1 pm

Great Lent Begins

Monday, March 11 - Clean Monday

Sunday of Orthodox Vespers

March 17, 4 pm @ St Philip

Services for Annunciation

Sunday, March 24

Vespers & Artoklasia 6 pm

Monday, March 25

Orthros 9 am, Liturgy 10 am

Fish/Wine/Oil potluck to follow

Lenten Retreat – Saturday, March 30

10 am – 7 pm

Exile, Journey, Destination!

with Fr. Timothy Sas, priest at Twelve Holy

Apostles Greek Orthodox Church in Duluth, MN



Welcome Class

Sunday, March 31 after Liturgy

Lazarus Saturday & Palm Sunday

Bp THOMAS Visit

April 19-20

We live Pascha to Pascha!

April 28, 2019

Pentecost

June 16, 2019

International Food Festival

Sept 20 & 21 - Mark your Calendar!

Did You Know?

- **Home blessings** are suspended for the season. Please schedule directly with Fr Noah or Fr James for after Pascha.
- Get ready for Lent by **perusing the Mobile library** for spiritual reading and for resources on keeping the Fast, and Lenten meal planning and preparation. 
- You can offer **Altar Candles** in thanksgiving to and for the glory of God. A sign-up sheet is on the Ministries bulletin board.
- Stay connected with parish life by synching with our calendar on **Google Calendar**. See <https://www.st-philip.net/calendar.html> for instructions on how to add the parish calendar to your own device.

Spiritual Warfare:

Taking Every Thought Captive to Christ "Confess"

As we enter in upon Lent, we are reminded that the Christian life is a spiritual war. If perhaps we tend to forget that, Lent brings it clearly before us. We are reminded of the "space" between who we are in Christ in the "inner man" and how we often live and think according to the "outer man that is perishing" (2 Cor 4:16). Yet it is this very self-knowledge that leads to authentic Christian *confession*—which has three sides:

1. As Christians, we confess to the world what is *real*, what our eyes have seen, our hands have touched, what we have tasted in our God and all He has revealed (1 Jn 1:1f; Heb 6:4-5).

Therefore will I confess to thee, O Lord, among the Gentiles, and sing to thy name. (2 Sam 22:50)

2. We confess that to which we *aspire*. We confess the Creed and in so doing, we reach out in faith, in the Church, to receive the Triune God and His self-giving and transformative life and love in and to us.

He who confesses the Son has the Father also. (1 Jn 2:23)

3. We confess, sacramentally and personally, to God, with our priest, to the Church, and to one another *how we fall short*:

Thou hast appointed repentance unto me that am a sinner: for I have sinned above the number of the sands of the sea. (Prayer of Manasseh 1:8-9)

May God enable us to make a good confession!

Knowing, Praying, Living the Holy Scriptures

"How I have loved thy law, O Lord! The whole day it is my meditation." (Ps 118:97)

What is the Rule of Faith?

The Scriptures are God's gift to the Church. But the Church has realized from the very beginning that, like all of God's good gifts, Scripture can be misused. The Church, then, has never related to Scripture as the sole, self-sufficient source for our understanding of God and all the matters of Christian faith and practice—it is a *central source*, but not a self-sufficient one.

The reason for this is twofold. First, the life of the Church is first and foremost a communion of persons, of the Triune God and all those who are in Christ, preeminent of which are the Apostles. When we hear the words of Scripture, then, we are hearing the personal voice of the Apostles exercising their *living*, divine authority in the Church.

Second, the Church is a living reality that cannot be boiled down to a text or traditions of textual interpretation. It has never been the case that every belief or practice of the Church has had or needed some explicit, "self-evident" statement in the Scriptural text as a kind of "external" validation.

How, then, does the Church—and her Bishops—guard the Apostolic inheritance and "rightly divide the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15), that is, make the important distinctions between right belief/practice and heresy?

In the 2nd century, St. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon (France) clearly articulated the principle of interpreting Scripture by the Church's "*Rule of Truth/Faith*." The "Rule of Truth" is essentially the Creed which we "received by means of baptism" (*Against Heresies* 1.9.4). This Creed and the worship of the Church in and from which it flows, allows us to fit all the diverse expressions of Scripture, like pieces of a mosaic, into one coherent "body of truth," that is the Image of God/Christ the King.

Tertullian of Carthage (ca. 155-220), who himself perhaps did not end up avoiding the taint of heresy, even went so far as to refuse to debate the meaning of Scripture with heretics, since "no one may be admitted to the use [of the Scriptures] who has no title at all to the privilege" (*On the prescription of heretics* 15).

These early fathers are clear: Scripture belongs to the Apostolic Church and can only be faithfully interpreted with the "mind of the Church," which is the "mind of Christ" himself (1 Cor 2:16). This "mind" is entered into in the Creed, worship, and sacramental life of the Church: "For as we believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so also we are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (St. Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* 12,28).

Ministry Together

w/ Sdn David Hyatt

"Love suffers long and is kind."

1 Corinthians 13:4

"Love is the ultimate criterion of Christ's service," according to Matthew the Poor. Love is the motive and measurement of all that Jesus is and does, reflecting the eternal life of the Holy Trinity to us.

In 1 Corinthians 13:4, calling us to that same love, St. Paul writes, "Love suffers long and is kind." That is easy to write, but hard to do. Serving others in difficult and trying conditions feels like suffering, feels like an ascetic struggle that puts a little part of our pride and self-love to death. At the very least, it steps on the toes of our sense of self-importance and triggers our sense of injustice, that others might dare overlook *our* effort.

As we enter into the Great Fast, let us consider how our faith might grow and our pride might shrink if we considered our ministry a spiritual *askesis*—exercise or training—whether that ministry is to our parish, or to a spouse or one of your children, even if they are ungrateful, or perhaps to a boss or client at work who is full of complaints despite your best efforts.

The "athletic" spirituality of our Orthodox faith requires a willingness to suffer, to sweat, to sacrifice for love. And ministry is a perfect training ground for putting our desire for recognition and for being in charge to the test.

St. Paul, in 2 Timothy 4:6, writes that he is "being poured out as a drink offering." What a picture! A drink offering was a



portion of wine that was poured out onto the ground or on the altar as an offering to God. St. Paul's life – the wine – was being poured out "as a sweet aroma to the Lord an offering to God." (Num. 15:7)

Sometimes the call to serve is also a call to suffer for love, and in the struggle, we have the opportunity to be conformed more and more into the likeness of God.

Elder Porphyrios writes, "A person can become a saint anywhere. He can become a saint in Omonia Square [commercial center of Athens], if he wants. At your work, whatever it may be, you can become saints – through meekness, patience and love" (*Wounded by Love*, pp. 143-144).

Indeed, without love we are nothing and our best efforts fall short. May we be poured out in love as we serve in our various ministries and become a sweet aroma to the Lord!