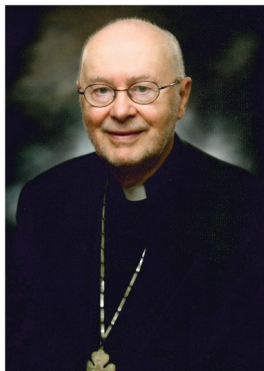


ARCHPRIEST
BONIFACE H. BLACK
MEMORIAL WEEKEND

AUGUST 12-13, 2017



COMMEMORATIVE BOOK

FEATURING
SAYINGS AND REMEMBRANCES

***Abbot Joseph** was received into the Holy Orthodox Church by Fr. Boniface at St. Philip's. He attended St. Vladimir's Seminary for one year. In July of 1986 he was ordained a deacon by His Grace Bishop Antoun in St. Mary's Church, Johnstown, PA. He was ordained a priest on August 3 of the same year by His Grace Bishop Antoun in St. Philip's Church, then located in Horsham. He was tonsured to the Little Schema in 1991, and then to the Great Schema in 2008 by Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh in the Monastery of St. Gregory Palamas. Abbot Joseph is currently the abbot of St. Gregory Palamas Monastery in Perrysville Ohio, the monastery of his repentance. Although in the monastic life Abbot Joseph is a spiritual son of Fr. Roman (Braga), he had previously been a spiritual son of Fr. Boniface from his young adulthood until the time of his entrance into the monastic life, and credits any fruitfulness in his own ministry to the teaching, example, and prayers of Fr. Boniface Black.*

WEEKEND SCHEDULE

Saturday, August 12

Retreat, 2:30-8:00 pm

Spiritual Lessons

from the teaching and deeds of Fr. Boniface Black
and his patron St. Boniface, Enlightener of Germany

Presented by Abbot Joseph (Morris)

St Gregory Palamas Monastery

Perrysville. Ohio

Prayers at the Gravesite, 2:30 pm

First talk, 3:00 pm

Second talk, 4:30 pm

Vespers, 6:00 pm

Potluck dinner (fasting menu), 7:00 pm

Sunday, August 13

Orthros, 8:45 am

Divine Liturgy, 10:00 am

Memorial, 11:30 am

*We offer here some Sayings and Remembrances
of our dear Fr. Boniface.*

*In the first section, through page 8, are sayings that
have been published already, with comments by
Fr Noah, in our bulletins and newsletters.*

*The following items were submitted by others who
were led by Fr. Boniface. Their comments have
been reproduced with only minimal editing.*

*We hope you will find inspiration and renewed
spiritual vigor from these experiences.*

SAYINGS AND REMEMBRANCES

It's not time yet. Wait until...

I heard Fr. Boniface give this advice to others, and myself, many times. “wait until... Pascha” “until... Christmas.” “until... the fast is over.” He used this in many situations, delicate as well as simple, joyful and sorrowful, to help people slow down by prayerfully embracing the fast with (almost-) patient trust in God and then re-embracing the decision with a refreshed, repentant perspective. It doesn't guarantee the correct course of action will be chosen or completed perfectly, but it does help us swim out the tide of impulsiveness that our hyper-connected one-click consumerism has thrown us into.

Fr. Boniface kept people from making foolish and dangerous decisions with that simple wisdom to prayerfully hold off until Christmas, Pascha, or the next fasting period.

A Prayer Assignment

There are many wonderful opportunities for service and sacrifice in family, work, neighbor-hood, and parish life. Be ready to respond with compassion, forgiveness, and sincerity. Also, don't forget to pray! If you need a special assignment, please come ask my blessing and I'll give you something to pray for. “Lord, teach us to pray!”

Prayer is a really a work of mercy, a way to give alms. If you don't have someone to pray for, ask me and I'll give you a prayer assignment like Fr. Boniface used to do.

What you want is what you get.

This was the harshest thing I ever heard him say. He quietly commented this way on a few occasions after observing someone destroy their lives by consistently ignoring godly advice and plenty of warning signs. It is a startling way to remind us of the God-given and God-honored free will that we have by virtue of our being made in the Image of God - a quiet reminder that we are, or can be, our own worst enemies.

Lord, deliver us from selfishness, self-centeredness, pathological self-love, self-direction, and self-destruction.

Lord, deliver us with loving family, true friends, and courageous spiritual fathers! Deliver us from the Evil One who would tear us to shreds while we think we are fulfilling our deepest longings.

Lord, deliver us from our false selves and deliver us into your patient “tough love”!

Don't Say 'Boo Boo' if you only have to say Boo.

As all who knew him remember, Fr. Boniface was a wise and shrewd man. He was very careful not to over-speak. It is a lesson he tried to teach me over and over again. I think I've finally begun to learn it. Let's ask ourselves these questions before we open our mouths: “Why do I want to speak? Is it pleasing to God? Is it for the hearer's benefit or my own benefit? Is this the best time? Is this the best place? How should I say it?” We don't want to overthink our every word, unto “paralysis of analysis,” but we do want to measure our words carefully since we will be measured against them by others and especially by God.

Let's be quieter and open our mouths with love, joy, peace, filled with the Holy Spirit. Always ask yourself prayerfully before you speak the five Ws: who, what, when, why, how.

A Holy Task for you...

Fr. Boniface was a master of giving people the right task, a Holy Task. He did so directly and with great confidence. He also did it with prayer and with love for God and for the person being tasked. For some it was a prayer assignment. For others it was a simple one-off service project or financial donation. For others the Holy Task grew into a life-long ministry that blossomed in several cases into ordination. For some, who didn't choose to see it as a Holy Task but as another burden authoritatively placed on them, it became a source of frustration.

If you don't have a ministry, please pray for and ask me for how you can help our parish be more pleasing to God!

You must have a reason to say that.

On several occasions I witnessed from Fr. Boniface a most calm and healing response to verbal assault. Instead of reacting, he tried to draw the reason for the upset. We who knew him know that he was a strong man and could take up a fierce verbal battle when necessary. But, he also had a deep inner peace that he was able to transfer to those who came to him with humility and listened to him. Let's pause before we react and try to develop understanding.

Fly under the radar.

Fr. Boniface, as the wise and loving pastor and father that he is, constantly reminded me and others to be humble by keeping a low profile. His response to God's love was to be as effective as possible in reconciling people to God. Join me in applying this simple wisdom to every aspect of our lives. Do your job.

Start it with a prayer. Do it well. Get it done quickly. Say a prayer of thanksgiving. Rejoice in God's mercy, but don't be puffed up in success. Fly under the radar and you will be shot down a lot less.

How are you, Father? “Never Better!”

Only on two occasions did I hear Fr. Boniface not say “never better” to a question about how he was (and that was when I pressed him). Frankly, from the perspective of physical health, it was not true. He had terrible sinus pain and terrible hip pain. But, from the perspective of the soul, it was true. He was more and more transformed into Christ’s image by every year, month, week, day, and moment of service to God’s people. This showed the positive side of repentance. Repentance is ever-awakening to God’s continual mercy, making each moment a movement from glory to glory. This was also evidence of the nobility of his soul: he was hesitant to put any unnecessary burden on another; he was loath to steal the focus from God and to himself. I’d like to ask him now: “How are you, father?” I can’t wait see his face in glory, his eyes glowing with love, and his smile framed by the joy and peace of heaven, and his gentle voice replying: “Never better!”

Camelot Can Not Go On Forever ...

I remember clearly when Fr. Boniface told me this. I was strolling down memory lane (seminary or Alaska, probably) and he interrupted with that phrase. It was a little difficult for me, initially. But I became grateful for the call back to reality. Fr. Boniface is a man of action and he tried to instill love of labor into each of us, his spiritual children. So, my question for you: what beautiful days are your “Camelot”? “I remembered days of old, I meditated on all Thy works, I pondered on the creations of Thy hands” (Psalm 142). It is good to remember the past from time to time, but not get stuck in the past. By the example of our dear Fr. Boniface, may we rise up to the opportunities of service, sacrifice, and growth that are presented to us today!

It takes 10 years to become Orthodox ...

Fr. Boniface said this to calm people in their anxiety of entering into the church and to encourage them to keep growing afterward. I received this same advice when I was baptized about 25 years ago and it has proved very true for me.

Why is this true? It's not due to actual catechumenate:

historically speaking, the catechu-mens were educated and prepared for baptism for three years. (Now, our bishops direct that one year is sufficient in most cases.) It's certainly not because of a lack of informa-tion or other educational oppor-tu-nities. It is because being Orthodox ("right worship" and/or "right teaching") means interior transform-ing not just exterior conforming, worshiping God in spirit and truth. Just as it does take 30 minutes of the Divine Liturgy to "lay aside all earthly cares," it does take 10 years to have a convert's mind and heart really settle deeper than book learning. For most it takes ten years of sweat and tears for the ink of academic theolo-gy to be replaced by the blood of prayer-theology. Similarly, a priest in our patriarchate is not given a cross to wear on his chest for at least ten years.

Indeed, the smells and bells, the beards and the bluster, the brute force of asceticism and the heavenly glory of sacramentalism need to become, not just a wonderful web, but a womb of ever becoming simply a child of God, the God who is everywhere present and filling all things. Maybe it takes not just ten years, or our entire life, but even ages of ages. Amen!

Keep on Smiling!

Many times early in my ministry here at St. Philip's, when I was particularly weary and stressed, Fr. Boniface would say “keep on smiling.” Initially this seemed inauthentic to me, but over the years I witnessed how his quiet discipline of staying positive actually aided God's transformation of his life. Now, I am missing his smile and trying to keep it on my face. And, anyway, it isn't inauthentic, it is actually who we are as the children of the God who created us, redeemed us, and is sanctifying us! Lord, give us joy and gladness!

Well, I wouldn't emphasize that so much.

This saying shows the deep and patient pastoral approach that Fr. Boniface had with people who were coming to him for advice. It also demonstrates his keen intellect – he studied the Classics in university – and the wisdom of his years shepherding souls to God. This piece of wisdom is important for us to apply to our lives, our relationships, our occupations, our prayers, our ministries. Take a break, step back with a prayer, and examine your emphases so that God's love, not our brokenness, can shine through every word and deed!



I guess you didn't want a blessing ...

He's already had his reward.



Prayer is key.

Advice to a brand new mission community.



Grow up!

I was in a mood and avoiding Church because of a gal. I was just a young pup (not too young to be admonished) right out of the Army and in college. Fr. B actually came to the mall where I was working to track me down and set me straight. It felt like Jude 1:23 (“save others by snatching them out of the fire”). I still think of that if I’m not in a right frame of mind. Took guts. I always respected him, but I especially respected him for that - a shepherd taking a risk for a knucklehead sheep. I always thought that was the best example of love I ever saw from a priest.



A little prayer every day is better than a lot of prayer once in a while.

Since it is Forgiveness Sunday I know you will forgive me for saying...



Let me get back to you on that.

Fr. Boniface recommended we say this when someone makes a request of us. Don’t say No right away. This gives us an opportunity to pray about it, and think of a kind way to say No.



This is EARTH!

One of my favorites, which he said in a few homilies, reminding us why things are broken & not perfect.



**Is he working yet?
She should be working.
Keep on him.
She's a good servant of God.**
(About members of the church.)

You can say that again!
(About dysfunctional people in church.)

We want him!
(About a catechumen, making a grabbing motion
with his hand.)



I remember in one of his sermons, addressing the topic, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant,” in admonishing us to live good lives, he also urged us to remain humble. **“Let Him tell you, thou good and faithful servant.”** Those words have stayed with me all these years.

I remember another statement Father Boniface made along the way. He said, **“The Liturgy never ends.”** As we gather in church to worship and pray together, we are stepping into the Heavenly Liturgy which is ongoing and unceasing. We join the “cloud of witnesses” in praising God and singing of His glory.



**A successful church requires three things: a good choir,
a good Sunday school program, and ample parking.**
He would say this to those starting mission churches.



Here are some things Fr. Boniface said to us over the years. We wrote them down and often have looked at them and found comfort when we've been concerned or afraid.

Beneath thy protection we take refuge, O Theotokos.

During a sermon on a Feast Day for the Theotokos, Fr. Boniface emphasized how Mary is our role model who always said "Yes" to God. He reminded us how we can always rely on her for help, that he always relied on her for intercessions. Fr. Boniface really loved the Mother of God, and he wanted us to love her as much as he did. I wrote it in my prayer book as he said it:

Make a vow to yourself. Vow to yourself that for the rest of your life 'I will never miss a service on a Feast Day for the Theotokos.'

Self-preservation is not a sin.

This was extra special advice he gave to a Christian person, his spiritual daughter, who was burdened from years of guilt imposed by toxic family members. He was advising her to not allow herself to be abused. (She had endured it, thinking to do so was what God wanted her to do.)

To another woman who was abused by her husband but was afraid to leave him he advised,

Always tell yourself the truth about this person.

(Fr. Boniface was trying to get her to face reality because she was very confused by her feelings.)

God never lets us go.

(He never gives up on us.)

Incrementally, every day should get better than the day before.

Fr. Boniface always said that we never stay on one level in our spiritual life; “Either you rise up, or you slip down. We never stay in the same place.” (This was to challenge us not to take our salvation / spiritual health for granted.)

Trials aren’t meant to crush us, but to bring us closer to God, more dependent on Him.

Remember His blessings every day.

Ask for His love. Seek His love.

Count your blessings every day. I do.

Whenever your thoughts wander away, say to yourself, ‘I don’t have to think these thoughts.’ Change them to positive thoughts. Be encouraged ...
(Regarding sinful or anxious thoughts.)

Use the Jesus Prayer.

Always say to yourself, ‘God is my Helper.’ I do.

Always remember and say to yourself, ‘God is Near.’

‘Perfect love casts out fear’ (1 Jn 4:18). There is no fear that this doesn’t apply to.

Whenever we would miss the Divine Liturgy, later that same week we would receive a bulletin sent to us from Fr. Boniface. He would always write things like Blessings, Fr. B. or Hope you’re feeling better. We saved these because his kindness could be felt in his letters.



I will never forget an anecdote that I relate to people over an over that I feel articulates, in a brief way, how I view Father Boniface. It was at his “Retirement Banquet” at which he did anything but retire.

In the Church Hall, when it came time for him to speak everyone became hush. It was his moment after all. We had gathered far and wide to celebrate HIM.

So we waited for what we expected to be some amazing words. The time came. Father stood.

He held up his finger in his Father Boniface way. He lifted his eyebrows in his Father Boniface way.

We knew it was coming ... wise words! Profound words!

He drew a breath.

Amidst the pregnant pause the silence was deafening. Here it comes, we thought! We had all heard his sage advice and his amazing sermons before. This was going to good!

After the pause, what did Father B say? He said,

If you see a piece of trash, pick it up.

“If you see a piece of trash, pick it up”? Really?

It was an odd thing to say. At first I wondered if it was the opening line of a joke. But the words stayed suspended in the air without a punchline.

Father continued with a few more things to say but this is what stuck out to me. “If you see a piece of trash, pick it up.”

Maybe I’ve read into this “speech” and glorified and magnified it after the fact. Maybe. I don’t think so. Right or wrong, I have interpreted his “If you see a piece of trash, pick it up” as being, first of all, a way to deflect attention from himself on an

occasion that was to be about him. I saw it as an act of self-aware yet unpretentious humility.

Secondly, I have seen this as a message to be taken and received on any level.

At face value? Yes! Pick up trash if you see it!

On a deeper level, Do your part! Pitch in! Serve!

On the deepest level, deal with sin. Look at yourself. Be introspective and clean up your heart.

Father Boniface was a smart, well-read, worldly-wise, insightful, sensitive man. Did he mean “If you see a piece of trash, pick it up” to be understood on many levels? I believe so.



**If it once again becomes illegal to be Christian
we should make sure there is enough evidence to
convict us.**

**The devil’s favorite lie is, ‘there is plenty of time to
repent.’**



**I would like to get the main entrance to the church
repaired and repainted soon.**

As I was patching a column that got damaged.



Watch out for cops!



I would like to share some account of Fr. Boniface ...

First of all, what was so striking about him was his humility.

He would always refer to St. Spyridon about difficult matters.

He would never hesitate to give his wise advice no matter how often I would call him. I could never get enough of this from this Holy man. Every time I would ask him for his guidance, he would say “let me pray about it,” and then he would call me.

I could tell that Fr. Boniface acquired a gift of clairvoyance like St. John the wonderworker, and when I would mention this resemblance to Fr. B, he would say “but I don't have a beard like him,” and he would smile.

I remember going through my divorce and being quite annoyed with the process (not to mention the cost of it), and sitting next to Fr. B - all of a sudden he says: “but you will see your ex quite soon at the hospital, when your son is very sick.” Sure enough it happened exactly the way he said.

Fr. B was always encouraging me with my goals as musician and advised me not to mind other people who were quite discouraging.

He was always happy to see me involved in a good friendship with a particular person, as if he had seen something divine in it, or would reprove other connections.

I know that even after he died he interceded on my behalf and I was accepted into a particular master's program with a scholarship, straight from a community college where I earned my associate's degree. May God be Glorified in his Saints!!!

I am missing this Holy man every day, and when I am so overwhelmed with my situation, I go to his grave to tell him all. I know he hears. Grateful forever!



The Church is the arena.

Meaning that, you do not need to look outside the Church for trials and tribulations. Walking the life of faith, you will encounter difficulties and opposition and frustrations and opportunities for spiritual growth right here, within the Church itself. Everything that we learn about how to be a patient Christian, praying continuously, trusting in God, being charitable, you will find that you need here in the life of the Church, every day. **The Church is the arena.** This is where your struggles will happen, and this is where your spiritual growth will occur. Fr. B always emphasized that to be successful, you must be faithful in these three things: praying, fasting, and almsgiving, AND actively participating in the sacramental life of the church.



◆
Memory Eternal
Father Boniface
◆

A Short Biography of Fr. Boniface

The Archpriest Boniface Black was ordained in the Orthodox Church in 1978, after serving Lutheran Churches in Iowa and Pennsylvania for 20 years. As an Orthodox priest, he served as Pastor of two churches he established: Saint Philip Church in Souderton, PA, from 1978 until 2009; and Saint Andrew Church in Lewes, DE, from 2005 until his passing in 2016.

Fr. Boniface was active in mission work for the Diocese of Charleston, Oakland, and the Mid-Atlantic (formerly the Eastern Region), serving as Missions Coordinator for many years. He helped start seven congregations in Pennsylvania, Virginia, Delaware, and Maryland. Under his guidance over the years, seven men were ordained into the Orthodox priesthood, and he was a treasured mentor to many.

Father Boniface reposed in the Lord on
August 7, 2016.



St. Philip Antiochian Orthodox Church

1970 Clearview Road ✦ Souderton, PA 18964

Phone: 215-721-4947

E-mail: office@st-philip.net

www.st-philip.net
