



THE PARISH PRESS

St. Philip Orthodox Church



WISDOM FROM FR. B: IT TAKES 10 YEARS TO BECOME ORTHODOX ...

A Message from Fr Noah

Dear Saint Philip's Family,

Jaroslav Pelikan (+2006), world-famous historian and theologian at Yale University and convert to Orthodoxy said, "If Christ is risen, nothing else matters. And if Christ is not risen, nothing else matters." Indeed, Christ is risen! Indeed, nothing else matters!

Along those same lines, my best sermon:

Life is a struggle.

Death stinks.

But, that is not the last word, because God is with us and loves us.

Amen.

It is because of the resurrection that we forgive, we repent, we keep our consciences clean, we labor with faith, hope, and love. Since Christ is risen, please remain "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58)

I remain, Your Servant in the Living Hope of Jesus Christ,

+ Fr. Noah

Challenge for 2017: Be led by the Spirit, not pushed by the passions (Romans 8:12-14)

St. John of Damascus gives us clear and simple instructions for overcoming the passions (disordered desires):

- +gluttony, by self-control
- +unchastity, by desire for God and longing for the blessings held in store
- +avarice, by compassion for the poor
- +anger, by goodwill and love for all men
- +worldly dejection, by spiritual joy
- +listlessness, by patience, perseverance and offering thanks to God
- +vanity, by doing good in secret and by praying constantly with a contrite heart
- +pride, by not judging or despising anyone



Missions Minute

OCMC is seeking Orthodox Christians from all walks of life to prayerfully consider filling long-term (2yr+) missionary positions in the following locations. (Visit ocmc.org for details.)

Albania - teaching

Fiji - social work, teaching

Guatemala - clergy, medical, parish development

Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Singapore - admin support, Byzantine chant instruction

India - office admin, teaching

Kenya - teaching, clergy, medical, development, admin

Tonga - parish development

Everyday Evangelist

"As the Father has sent me, so I send you." (Jn 20:21)

Organize a dinner party. Introduce a few non-Christian friends to a few Christian friends who are living out John 13:34-35 ("Love one another").

Mark Your Calendar:

Men's Fellowship
Friday, May 19, 7 p.m.
Become a better husband.

Services for Ascension
** Held at Holy Ascension Church, West Chester **
Wednesday, May 24
Vigil & Artoklasia 4:45 pm,
Liturgy 6:30 pm



Pentecost
Sun, June 4 - Kneeling Prayers, 1 pm

High School Graduate Recognition
Sunday, June 11

Parish Life Conference
June 28 - July 2 Morristown, NJ
Hosted by St George, Little Falls
www.antiochianevents.com/ny.html#

Sacred Music Institute
July 12-16
At the Antiochian Village

Apostles' Fast - June 12-28

Services for Sts. Peter & Paul
** Held at St Paul Church, Emmaus **
Wed, June 28 - Matins 6 pm, Liturgy 7 pm

Vacation Church School
August 7-11
The Parables of Christ

Fr Boniface Memorial & Retreat
August 12-13

International Food Festival
Sept 15 & 16 - Work & Pray & Invite!

OUR SYMPATHY IN CHRIST



is offered to the **Tina Vleisides & family** upon the passing of her father, **John Mitchell**, who reposed on April 22. The funeral was held at Corpus Christi Church in Lansdale. **MAY HIS MEMORY BE ETERNAL!**



NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

GIVING UPDATES

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

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

NEWSPAPERS: Salfid Rescue Kennel, our neighbor on Clearview Road, is always in need of old newspapers. Look for the box in the hallway.

MAY GOD BLESS ALL OUR FAITHFUL GIVERS!

Did You Know?

- We're starting to pray, consider, and discuss building, or repurposing a space as, a little **chapel** that would be secure but also available all the time for prayer, lighting candles, etc. If you have thoughts or a desire to help with this work, please see Fr. Noah.
- Fr. Noah has lots of **great help** (Fr. James, Kh. Vera, Fr. Herman during the week, choir, teachers, cleaners, coffee hour, holy bread bakers, etc.) and needs lots more. Please pray for our church and **ask Fr. Noah how you can help.**
- **The Forty Days of Pascha** are a sublime time of reflection and rejoicing in the resurrection that Christ makes available to us in the sacraments.
- **The Apostles' Fast** (June 12-28) is a time to tune up our souls and bodies with escalated prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and other spiritual disciplines to bring us closer to God and make us more apostolic.
- **Modesty** is an important offering to God and to each other, even in the summer months. Modesty doesn't have to mean homely. Beards and head-coverings are traditional expressions of modesty that can stylishly complement respectful and beautiful clothes.
- **VCS** is just around the corner: Aug. 7-11.
- Please save the date for our **Food Festival** – to help out and to bring a friends, families, colleagues, and neighbors! Pray for a successful outreach event. **September 15-16, 2017.**



**Wisdom
St. Paisios**

[St. Paisios responds to the comment: 'Geronta, no matter what good I do, I end up losing it because I immediately become prideful.'] - Do you know what you are doing? You make honey and then you allow the devil to steal it, so that the only thing you are left with is your effort. Just as a beekeeper dazes the bees with smoke and collects the honey, so does the devil daze you with the smoke of pride. He steals your spiritual honey, rubbing his hands with glee. In other words, he steals the precious gifts of God from you; and then, he rejoices. You are smart. How can you not see this? Why don't you catch the thief, the evil one, who is robbing you?

Wisdom from Fr. B.

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 advise when I was baptized about 25 years ago and it has proved very true for myself. Why is this true? It's not due to actual catechumenate: historically speaking, the catechumens 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 information or other educational opportunities. It is because being Orthodox ("right worship" and/or "right teaching") means interior transforming 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 theology 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!



**Read a
book of the
Bible!**

**Read the Gospel of St. John during
the Paschal Season.**

Ask Abouna

Previous Question: Fr. Noah, tell us about your upcoming pilgrimage to Romania.

Answer: God willing, Julian and I will travel to Romania June 5-16 .

This is a "Graduation Pilgrimage" that we are making with our dear friends in Washington State, Fr. David Sommer and his son John, who actually is graduating from high school this year (whereas Julian is completing his Junior Year). Fr David had this wonderful idea and we settled on Romania because we both have contacts there through parishioners and had wanted to experience a land rich in Orthodox heritage and successfully emerging from the Communist cloud of unbelief. It has about 650 monasteries and we hope to visit each several, especially some of the famous "Painted Monasteries" and Siharstia where the recent saintly Elder Cleopa lived and is buried.

I share all of this with you for several reasons:

- Your prayers for our safe and spiritually rewarding travel.
- To try to inspire you to transcend the worldly "Vacation" with a "Pray-cation."

But you don't have to get in a plane to sojourn to a holy monastery: there are many within a day's drive.

It is an inexpensive alternative to a fancy vacation, which will not leave you financially and spiritually bankrupt.

PS - If anyone would like to help us make this journey, including donations to monasteries along with names of our parishioners as well as bringing prayer ropes or other spiritual souvenirs back for all, please make a donation to St. Philip's earmarked "Romanian Pilgrimage."

PPS - Elias Neno and I are starting to discuss a group pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Please pray for this to come together. Elias' father's life's work was as a tour guide to the holy places .

New Question: Fr. James, tell us about your summer plans. Any pilgrimages brewing?

Parenting Suggestion

From *Parenting Toward the Kingdom* by Philip Mamalakis:
"There is nothing harder than learning patience and love, except for living without patience and love."

