



THE PARISH PRESS



St. Philip Orthodox Church

BABY STEPS TO HOLINESS - WRITE OUT YOUR BLESSINGS AND THANK GOD FOR THEM

NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

GIVING UPDATES

MONTHLY OUTREACH COLLECTION: Thanks to all for your generosity to the needy of our community! For **February**, we are collecting **paper products**.



SOUPER BOWL OF CARING: Thanks to all who contributed cans of soup for the Sunday School's annual collection. Soup will be given to the food pantries at Keystone and Manna.

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

May God bless all our faithful givers!

HOME BLESSINGS

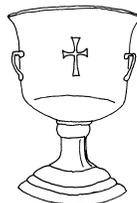
From **Theophany** to just before **Great Lent** is the season of **home blessings**. To schedule with Fr Noah or Fr James, please see the scheduling calendars on the table in the narthex. Instructions are posted and reminder slips are available. (If you'd like to schedule your home blessing with Fr Boniface, please contact him directly via phone or email.)

A Message from Fr Noah

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
As my family welcomes a new member into the world and prepares to welcome her into the church, I am pondering the great mystery of baptism. During the procession at the end of the service we'll sing, "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

These beautiful words of St. Paul form a most joyous moment of the baptism service, but they also are the theological foundation of our life in Christ. Baptism for us is at once many things: 1) the remission (clearing up) of sins, 2) the entrance into the church, and 3) the ordination to the "royal priesthood." Baptism is the great mystery of our personal Pascha (dying and rising with Christ) as well as our personal Pentecost (receiving the Holy Spirit).

I invite you to my daughter's baptism (1 p.m., February 9), not only to pray for her and celebrate this beautiful day with us, but also to renew your own spiritual life which was regenerated in Baptism.



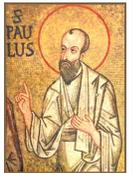
Thankful to be clothed in purity and glory by our Lord Jesus Christ, I remain,

Your Servant in Christ, + *Fr. Noah*

Mark Your Calendar!

Chanting Workshops
Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.
through February 26

Bible Study: Apostle Paul
Saturdays at 5 p.m.
through February 15
Presented by Fred Kompass



Catechumens & Inquirers
Tuesdays at 7 p.m.
through February 25

Pre-Lenten Retreat - Fr John Oliver
'All Things are Thy Servants': Our Dark Emotions in the Light of Christ
Saturday, February 22

Friends & Family Day
Sunday, February 23
Bring a friend or family member to liturgy on this beautiful "meatfare" Sunday.

ROAST BEEF DONATION LUNCHEON hosted by the Women of St Philip's supports Syrian war relief.

Great Lent begins Monday, March 3

Choir Concert
Sunday, April 6, 2 p.m.
Invite a friend!

Pascha - April 20, 2014

Wisdom from Amma Sarah

There were a number of Desert Mothers that lived out their extreme Christian life in the Egyptian Thebaid alongside the Abba Anthony and the rest of the Desert Fathers. May we all be so "manly" in our spiritual life.

- For 13 years she waged warfare against the demon of fornication. She never prayed that the warfare should cease but she said, "O God, give me strength."
- Once, after failing to entice her away from her life of prayer, the spirit of fornication appeared to her and said, "you have overcome me." But she said, "It is not I who have overcome you, but my master, Christ."
- She said, "I put out my foot to ascend the ladder, and I place death before my eyes before going up it."
- She also said to the brothers, "It is I who am a man, you who are women."



See
You in
Church!



Just as in paradise,
God walks in the Holy Scriptures,
seeking man.
St. Ambrose of Milan



Challenge for 2014:
**Be like the Bee,
not like the Fly!**

Did You Know?

- **Modesty** is something that we learn from Jesus Christ and the Saints. We are not only modest in our putting on our "Sunday Best" but also out in public.
- Pick up a book at the **Bookshelf or the Library** to gear up for a spiritually profitable Great Lent. 
- Add **prostrations** to your prayer rule now (ask Fr. Noah if you need guidance how to do this safely), so you are in shape for Great Lent.
- It takes a lot to **keep a parish going**. Money, yes of course. Your tithes and offerings are always needed. But that is not all. It takes time and talent, too! **How can you help?** Pray about it and ask Father Noah what is needed!
- **Confession** is not only a spiritual duty (four times a year) but it is a great medicine of the soul and a second baptism! Got something on your heart?
- The **kingdom of heaven** is not a reward for works, but a **gift of grace** prepared by the Master for His faithful servants. Are you a faithful servant?
- **Singing along with the choir** is the best way to keep your mind from wandering in church.

Memory Eternal

OUR SYMPATHY IN CHRIST
 is offered to the **extended Ibrahim family** upon the passing of Michael's aunt, Silvanie, recently, in Lebanon.
MAY HER MEMORY BE ETERNAL!

Baby Steps to Holiness

February: Write out your blessings and thank God for them

It is very easy for all of us to focus on the negative aspects of our life. But as Christians we are called to transcend this worldly thinking by overlooking peoples' shortcomings and thanking God in every situation, even the most dire! The trials in our life, of course, are allowed by God so that we can come to maturity in Him and be more sympathetic with those in need.

Psalm 102 tells us to "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His

Five Roads of Repentance

St. John Chrysostom

- Let me describe to you five ways of repentance; each is different, but all point toward heaven.
- ✦ The first road is the **acknowledgment of sins**. If you acknowledge your sins to God, He will forgive you; and this act of acknowledgment will help you stop sinning. Let your conscience be your accuser, so that you will not have to face a far different accuser at the Lord's tribunal.
 - ✦ The second road of repentance is the **forgetting of the wrongs of others**. This requires you to control your temper and to forgive the sins that others have committed against you. If you forgive others, the Lord will forgive you.
 - ✦ The third road is **prayer**: not perfunctory routine prayer, but fervent, passionate prayer in which you lay yourself wholly before God.
 - ✦ The fourth road is **generosity**, in which by acts of thoughtful love you make amends for the sins you have committed.
 - ✦ And the fifth road is **humility**, whereby you regard yourself as having no virtue, but only sins to offer to God; He will then take the burden of sin from your back.

At times it will be right to travel on one of these roads, at other times to travel on another. **But ensure that every day you walk along at least one of them.**

benefits." But how can we not forget all of God's blessing? Well, when I want to remember something, I write it down and store it in a safe and organized place.

So, make yourself a cup of tea, get out pen and paper or open a new document on your computer and start plugging away. You'll be surprised how many blessings are in your life.

Review your blessings from time to time, especially if you are feeling down, and then Give Thanks to God, the Father of Mercies, the Giver of every good and perfect gift!



Ask Abouna

Previous Question: I am having trouble maintaining a prayer rule, how should I start again?

Answer: What an excellent question. I have to tell you frankly that I, too, struggle to say my prayers every day. For me, as for most, this is a struggle against laziness, against busyness, against hard-heartedness and against distracting thoughts. Prayer is indeed a struggle, but it is certainly a struggle worth every effort. My answer is simple: we need to be **consistent**, to be **simple**, and to be **open-hearted**. Like a dentist might advise: "two minutes twice a day is good, but 20 minutes once a week is harmful."

Practically speaking:

Consistency: start with a small prayer rule. Trisagion Prayers, Intercession List, a few prostrations (or bows if you can't prostrate), a prayer rope of the Jesus Prayer. It is good to use short extemporaneous prayer (talking to God) in the context of your prayer rule. Once that is established, add the Creed, Psalm 50/51, and other Psalms.



Simplicity: It must be "doable." Some people get excited about lighting incense. This is good, but for some people it might be too complicated and actually contribute to their not praying.

Open-Heartedness: We should not just "say our prayers," but "pray our prayers" - truly call out to God for help. He is our loving Father and will accept even our dark emotions. To ensure softness of heart and concentration, before you pray pause from the busyness of life and consider all your blessings as well as your failings.

If you live in a family, you ought to pray together as a family and also personally.

This all has been simplified by a grandmother, "Go to church, say your prayers, and remember God."

In Christ,
 + Fr. Noah

New Question: I am tired of fasting. Isn't that just for monastics anyway?