



# THE PARISH PRESS

## St. Philip Orthodox Church



### SPIRITUAL WARFARE: "DISREGARD"

#### 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 Supplies**.

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

##### STEWARDSHIP 2019 "One Body In Christ"

10% Tithe is the traditional and biblical standard. Not all parishioners are able to give at that level but all who continue to grow in generosity, as well as ministry and hospitality and prayer and repentance, are blessed beyond expectation.

##### Future St. Nicholas House – Update

We are expecting a counter-offer to come back any time.

##### Office Update

- ◆ As of May 1, **Office Hours** have **changed** to 10 am to 3 pm, Monday thru Friday.
- ◆ Changing & Rearranging in the office and library. If you make use of the St Philip Library (and you should!) you might have noticed some changes. Changes have been made in the office as well: new computers, swapping desks, rearranging furniture, clearing out files. A fresh start for everyone!

##### Holy Mysteries

**Baby Ophelia Anne**, daughter of Nick and Martha Morelli, was baptized into Christ at St. Philip on April 14.



**Tatiana (Sze-Man) Yau** was baptized into Christ at St. Philip on Holy Saturday (April 27).

**Baby John**, son of Nathan and Rebecca Jekel, was baptized into Christ at St. Philip on May 5.

**MAY GOD GRANT THEM MANY YEARS!**

#### A Message from Fr Noah

Dear Saint Philip's Family, Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is risen!

Physically exhausted but spiritually refreshed by our rich and solemn journey of Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha, I write on a quiet morning of Bright Week. This is a "week of Sundays" without fasting, with the shortened Paschal services, and living between Christ's appearances to the disciples in the Upper Room.

First, thank you to Fr James and Fr Dennis, and the choir, altar boys, office, handmaidens, hospitality team, cleaning, and all who contributed to our celebration. Thanks to the many kind people for remembering me and my family as well as Fr James with gifts and baked-goods. Our parish is truly alive with repentance, fruitful and joyful, as well as ministry, hospitality, and generosity. The priesthood is a challenging vocation – a cross at times – especially for the Mother and the children, but your love and care highlight so clearly the resurrection that has dawned from the grave.

Second, I asked you during Holy Week to consider what metaphorical gift you'd bring to Christ when you receive the new light on Pascha night. What will you pledge, give up, give over, habitualize, etc., in thanksgiving to Christ for His loving sacrifice. If you haven't dedicated a discrete particular aspect of your life (relationship, habit, fear, hope, goal, burden, vice, virtue, etc.) to God yet, please take a minute to prayerfully do so right now.

Finally, please pray for me and each other more and more. Newcomers, Oldtimers, babies, youth, and all. May we be more perfectly one.

In the Risen Lord Jesus  
Christ,  
+Fr. Noah

PS – I was very thankful to you all for making your confessions prior to Holy Unction. It helped me and Fr James a great deal conserve our energy and attention for prayer and the services.

#### Mark Your Calendar

**Men's Breakfast**  
Saturday, May 11, 8-10 am

**All-Church Cleaning Day**  
Saturday, May 11, 10 am - 1 pm



**Memorial Day**  
Monday, May 27  
Outdoor Liturgy & Trisagion in Cemetery 10 am;  
Cook-out & Farewell to Kh. Vera

**Blood Drive**  
Wed, May 29, 2-7pm  
"Every 2 seconds someone in the US needs blood!"



**Ascension**  
Thursday, June 6

**Pentecost**  
Sunday, June 16  
Kneeling Prayers, 1 p.m.

**Apostles' Fast**  
June 24-29

**Parish Life Conference**  
June 26 - June 30

**Vacation Church School**  
July 29 - Aug 2

**International Food Festival**  
Sept 20 & 21 - Mark your Calendar!

Wednesday night Compline & Patristic reading **resuming in May** – discussing our way through *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*.



#### The Doors! The Doors!

Starting May 1st the south entrance doors to the Great Room will be locked by the Ushers at 10am. This is to provide a little more security to the great room and classrooms. Also, all the doors will be opened for services with Allen Wrench keys from the inside.



**Did You Know?**

- **Home blessings:** Fr Noah and Fr James are available again during May to bless your home if it was not blessed during Theophany. Please contact the church office or email or text them directly to schedule.
- **Emily Case** will be away this summer after receiving two internships to monitor breeding sites of the Common Tern. She'll be spending 3 weeks at Lake Ontario, Canada for Penn State University and the rest of summer at Lake Oneida, NY for Cornell. Please keep her in your prayers!
- We are starting to **burn olive oil rather than paraffin on the seven branch altar candelabrum.** I am thankful to David and the other altar men for learning this art – traditional, biblical, historical, spiritual, time-consuming, and sometimes miraculous. Your offering of "classic" olive oil (not virgin or especially not extra-virgin) is an assistance to our ministry. You can put your bottles under the icon of St Thekla on the north/left of the iconostasis with prayer requests.
- **St-Philip.net:** If you haven't seen our parish website recently, please check out the excellent resources: blog, podcast, up-to-date calendar, thanks to Justin and David.
- A note on **Church Etiquette** from Fr. Noah: Please remember that **the narthex is an important part of the church-temple and is not a place to talk.** It is reserved for parents of young, wiggly children. We should not be conversing during the readings, sermons, and prayers of our service. I'm grateful for the bond of love that we have but I remind everyone that God's love is the priority and then our brotherly love flows from that. Thanks for disciplining yourself.



**Spiritual Warfare:**

**Taking Every Thought Captive to Christ "Disregard"**

We live in a society that is overwhelmed by the "tyranny of the urgent." The scattered chaos of the secular world would engulf us, if we had not been given the Spirit "of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim 1:7).

With *this* Spirit, we have the freedom to not play by the world's "rules," or accept its premises. As a wise banker, we take in what is good, multiply it, and disregard and discard that which is not unto our salvation.

**Knowing, Praying, Living the Holy Scriptures**



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

**The Letter & Spirit of Scripture**

When the Fathers preached and taught from the Scriptures, they tried to simply follow the pattern that the Apostles had established. One text to which the Fathers often appealed is 2 Corinthians 3:6 where St. Paul says that:

*[God] made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

This is a startling statement: the Scriptures, if wrongly understood, if read solely according to "the letter," can actually lead to *death*, whereas if read according to "the Spirit," they give life.

St. Paul is setting forth what has been called the *incarnational analogy* for Scripture—that Scripture operates on the same principles as the Incarnation of Christ God Himself. Indeed, Scripture is another form in which Christ *is incarnate*, another "Body" of Christ.

To fail to understand and interpret Scripture in relationship to Christ Himself—and His whole economy of salvation, including the Theotokos and the Church, etc.—is to read *unto death*, just as many people walked and talked with Jesus in His incarnate life, but failed to ascend to a true understanding of His messianic Divinity. They knew Christ "according to the flesh," or *the letter*, but not according to the Spirit. Scripture reading is only transformative when it is according to the Spirit, for it is only then that we behold Christ's divine Image in Scripture (2 Cor 3:12-18).

St. Maximos the Confessor (*Chapters on Knowledge* 2.60) offers a dense but helpful summary of this understanding of Scripture:

*The Word of God is called flesh not only as having become incarnate but as God the Word understood simply in the beginning with God the Father, who possesses the clear and naked forms of the truth of all things and does not include riddles or enigmas or need allegorical stories. When he is present to men who cannot with their naked mind reach naked spiritual realities, and converses in a way familiar to them in a variety of stories, enigmas, parables, and dark sayings, then he becomes flesh. Our mind does not in this first encounter hold converse with the naked Word, but with the Word made flesh, certainly in a variety of languages; though he is the Word by nature he is flesh to the sight, so that many think they see flesh and not the Word even if he is truly the Word. For the [true] understanding of Scripture is not what appears to the many but is otherwise than it appears. For the Word becomes flesh through each recorded word.*



**Ministry Together**

w/ Sdn David Hyatt

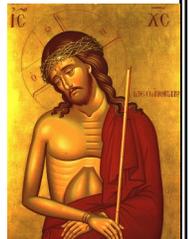
"My strength is made perfect in weakness."

2 Corinthians 12:9

On Holy Thursday, during the reading of the Twelve Gospels, we hear of Jesus' final evening with his disciples before His Passion. One final night of prayer with the three disciples – Peter, James and John – into whom He poured a special measure of His life. Despite their best intentions, the Rock and the two Sons of Thunder couldn't keep vigil with Jesus. The weakness of their bodies overpowered the zeal of their hearts.

It is easy for me to listen to this account in the comfort of our beautiful Temple and imagine that I would be strong for Jesus. I would willingly sacrifice my sleep, my comfort, my needs in order to stay awake and pray with my Lord. But all too often my flesh overpowers my spirit, and when I wake from my slumber, I wonder why Christ God would even bother with me a weak sinner.

In 2 Corinthians 12, St. Paul reveals two apparently conflicting details about his life. First, he experienced a mystical revelation of heaven. Second, he was afflicted with a "thorn in the flesh." Strength (a gift from God) and a weakness (also a gift from God). These dual realities were the context for St. Paul's life and ministry. And it was into this paradoxical condition that God spoke, "*My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*"



We are called to put our 'strengths'—the 'gifts' that the Holy Spirit gives us in our Chrismation—to good use for building up the Body of Christ. But we are also called to offer the weakness of our lives (as earthen vessels, 2 Cor 4:7) which reveals the power of God. St. Paul even went as far as to "*take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*" (2 Cor 12:10).

May God help us not to rely upon our own strength, knowledge, experience and zeal as the source of our ministry, but instead, may we follow the example of our Lord who poured Himself out in prayer on the night before his arrest, praying "*not as I will, but as You will*" (Matt 26:39). May we, like St. Paul, find that the strength and power of God is revealed most clearly through our weakness as we rely on His immeasurable mercy and grace!