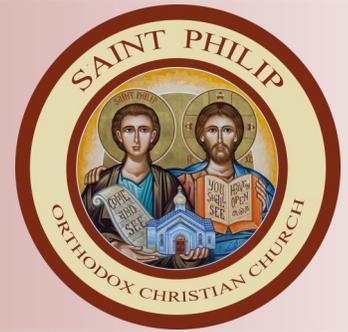


THE PARISH PRESS

St. Philip Orthodox Church

VOL. 20.10 — OCTOBER 2019



NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES!

MONTHLY OUTREACH COLLECTION: Thank you for your generosity to the needy of our community! In **October**, we are collecting **Bath & Shower Products**.

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

Winter/Cool-Weather Gear Drive:

St. George the Great Martyr Orthodox Church in Pharr, TX needs your help to stock its clothing closet for the needy. Please put new or very nearly new cool weather gear such as jackets, sizes babies to adults, in the marked box in the hallway. Your contributions are appreciated from Sept 29 to Dec 1. Contact the church office if you have any questions (215-721-4947).

MAY GOD BLESS ALL OUR
FAITHFUL GIVING & SERVICE!



FORTY DAYS OF GROWTH IN STEWARDSHIP

"Fervent in spirit serving the Lord"

To be fervent is to have the heat inside you that drives you to do the work. This heat increases as you exert yourself. You've felt heat inside if you've worked at the festival preparing food, carrying heavy things or even welcoming guests.



You've felt it if you've worked hard to provide for your family and others that you love.

You've felt it as you've worked and given generously over the years to pay for our church and provide for all we do here.

In this next year we pray that we will continue to feel this heat as we welcome new members to our community, as our families increase and we improve our church facility.

10% Tithe is the biblical standard and many people give much more! However, 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 because "God can not be outgiven!"

A Message from Fr. Noah

Dear St. Philip's Family, Christ is in our midst!

Glory to God! Our parish is bustling with activity and prayer, full to bursting with life. It is a joy and very humbling to be the spiritual father and leader of such a dynamic, devout, and dedicated group of people. It reminds me of what a privilege it is for us to be sons and daughters of God the Father and to share His life.

We are blessed to share His life in many ways, three of which I'd like to highlight for you: **MINISTRY, GENEROSITY, AND REPENTANCE.**

A sweet way to think of this is:

His work is our work; His house is our house; and His life is our life.

We will not regret one drop of sweat or blood for Christ's sake. Exhaust yourself with Eternal Deeds for God first and Neighbors second, both in formal ministry and flexible helpfulness! It is only right to roll up our sleeves since His work is our work.

We will not regret one dollar given for Christ's sake. Don't over-invest in the securities and pleasures of this fleeting life, but place your hope and your trust in God's promises, with Eternal Gifts. It is only right to open our wallets since His house is our house.

We will not regret a single tear or a solitary prayer for Christ's sake. Our interior life of prayer, repentance, receiving the Sacraments with preparation and joy, is considered a waste by the world but is actually the only thing really worth our Eternal Being. It is only right to pour out our hearts since His life is our life.

By God's mercies which are renewed and deepened daily, we are not just servants and guests, but also heirs of eternal life. What a joy to be children of our Heavenly Father!!!

In the Risen Lord Jesus Christ,
+Fr. Noah

PS – On a personal note, I ask for your increased prayers, love, and support as my family prepares to host my very-sick father in our home.

Mark Your Calendar:

Soul Saturday Liturgy
Saturday, Oct 26, 10 am

Annual Parish Meeting

Sunday, Oct 27—SAVE THE DATE!
Please attend, all Stewards are needed! We work hard keep these meetings focused, short, and positive. If you are interested in serving on the parish council or audit team, please get Fr Noah's blessing and speak with Jerry. **The deadline for PC Nominations is October 15.** May God help us to continue faithfully and successfully in His ministry!

IOCC 8th Annual Benefit Banquet
Sunday, Oct 27

See Beth McClintock for details.

St. Philip Feast Day
Wednesday, Nov 13

Vespers & Artoklasia, 7 pm

Thursday, Nov 14

Orthros 9 am; Liturgy 10 am
Festal Potluck to follow.

Nativity Fast Begins
Friday, November 15

Taylor Kardiottissa Icon Visit
Friday evening, December 13

Food Festival Many Thanks!



to all our leaders, coordinators, cooks, runners, givers, prayers, singers, greeters, tour guides, workers, creators, mailers, heavy-lifters, assemblers, disassemblers, cleaners, supporters, sponsors, and everyone who played a part in this tremendous endeavor.

**May God bless you and grant you
Many Years!**

Office Update:

The Office Staff would like to thank all of you for your prayers and support.

We have a busy October planned - the **Stewardship Campaign** begins on October 6, at the beginning of the month and **Our Annual Parish Meeting** is on October 27 and the end of the month.

Please keep us up to date with your contact information and any family updates.

Thank you and God bless you!

Ministry Together

w/ Sdn David Hyatt



“...submitting to one another in the fear of God.” (Eph 5:21)

‘Old Blue Eyes,’ Frank Sinatra, is famous for many things, but chief among his lore is the song “My Way”:

*For what is a man, what has he got
If not himself, then he has naught
To say the things he truly feels
And not the words of one who kneels
The record shows I took the blows
And did it my way
Yes, it was my way*

This, brothers and sisters, is the life of the fool who fails to redeem the time “because the days are evil” (Eph 5:15-16). This declaration of life lived in a self-directed way has become the theme song for many in our world, perhaps even some of us.

St. Paul would have none of this attitude in the Church of God. In his letter to the Ephesians, he describes what a ‘wise’ life, lived within the will of the Lord, looks like when he says:

...filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God. (Eph 5:18-21)

If we are to minister & serve together in a way that is pleasing to the Holy Trinity, we must do so, not in “My Way,” but with “the mind of Christ,” in humility and submission to one another, doing nothing “through selfish ambition,” but “esteem[ing] others better than” ourselves (Phil 2:3). May this be true of us!

Did You Know?

- Congrats to **Billy Stonier** for recently earning 5 Boy Scout badges in wood working, leatherwork, animation, swimming, and first aid. He will be advancing to the tenderfoot task next month.
- We are in **urgent need of "classic olive oil"** for the Altar lamps. Please leave any offerings under the icon of St. Thekla with a list of names for prayer.
- Thank you to Kate Gohl, Kendra Moody, Phoebe Gohl and Liesel Moody for representing the Women of St. Mariamne in the **Crossroads Walk For Life and the 5K Run** on Saturday, October 5th.
- Pray for, welcome, and get to know our many **Catechumens**, and learn from them about our newly rededicated "St Boniface Catechetical School."

Bring Someone to church!

I would like each parishioner, old and young, to bring someone to church with them this fall. There are a lot of people starving for authentic Christian worship and doctrine. What a gift to know God and a privilege to make Him known! Maybe you can be a simple, gentle, and prayerful apostle to your workplace, school, neighborhood, family, or friends!

Parenting Suggestion

We parent toward the Kingdom ...

When we raise our children with boundaries, love, prayer, forgiveness, the Scriptures, Saints, Sacraments, and Services, such that they will gratefully pray and care for us in our old age.

Evangelism Challenge

“Practice dying to self so that Christ may increase in your life”

The words of St. Seraphim of Sarov are often quoted in Orthodox discussions of evangelism: “Acquire the spirit of peace and thousand souls around you will be saved.” However, the temptation is to repeat his words and ignore the command: *acquire!* Worse yet, the saint’s words can be used to excuse a lack of action: it is good to focus on one’s spiritual growth, but unless you are a hermit, such growth only comes about in our daily interactions with others.



This month’s spiritual focus is, “Practice dying to self so that Christ may increase in your life.” If we are “too full of ourselves,” there will be no room in our lives for Christ to fill us with His grace. If we hurry to condemn, we run from the grace that comes with silence and compassion. If we refuse to lay aside a grudge, we cannot hold the grace that comes with forgiveness.

God has granted us difficult people in our lives that we may become icons of Christ, that their abrasiveness might make our rough spots smooth. But only in seeking His grace can we ever hope to acquire it; otherwise, the bruises we get from other people’s insensitivity, thoughtlessness, and cruelty will only fester and worsen. If we are to acquire the spirit of peace of which St. Seraphim spoke, let us also hear these words of his: “You cannot be too gentle, too kind. Shun even to appear harsh in your treatment of each other. Joy, radiant joy, streams from the face of him who gives and kindles joy in the heart of him who receives.”

“Making a Defense”:

Explorations in Orthodox Apologetics
IS BELIEF IN GOD CREDIBLE?

Two centuries ago, the Enlightenment German theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher, coined the term “cultured despisers of religion” to describe the emerging anti-religious spirit in the West. Increasingly in the West since, in different ways and for various reasons, the “idea” of God, of *belief* in God, has become increasingly “incredible,” that is, difficult to sustain.

Some of the reasons for this are experiential. In the past two centuries, we have faced multiple upheavals—Revolutions, World Wars, the corruption of venerable institutions both civil and religious, all resulting in massive destruction, abuse of the weakest among us, and a general loss of “meaning.” Where could God be in all of this?

Other (related) reasons are ideological, particularly among the Western “elite” who view traditional religion with disdain, as trafficking in primitive, out-of-date moral codes, and superstitious (“non-scientific”) ways of understanding the world. We have thus come to be surrounded by a culture of “unbelief”—either expressed as outright hostility to faith and people of faith, or in the more subtle reality that it is possible (“credible”) to approach the basic questions of identity, how to live, the nature of reality, the

meaning of life, without connection to God or anything “transcendent” or, certainly, “revealed.”

Are we truly to believe that “progress” means relegating belief in God to the historical dustbin of an immature, “less evolved” human race? This *is* the message our youth (and all of us) are imbibing on a daily basis, and it is serious business. We might refer to a recent Pew poll in which “[e]ssentially, Pew discovered that nearly half of all Orthodox Christians leave the religion once they become adults” (www.thenationalherald.com/87376/orthodoxys-sad-decline-america/).

There are many reasons why we as Orthodox Christians would answer the above question with, “Absolutely not!” Some of these reasons relate to what we could call “empirical evidence”—not evidence to “prove” God exists, but evidence that shows that a purely scientific, rationalist worldview is unable to account for reality’s depth as it stands. While due to modern science we may be able to explain more precisely *how* the universe works, we can still give no “reason” for the existence and origin of life itself, the fine-tuning of the universe, the order and structure of the “natural world,” etc. And we certainly have no *control* over these things! In short, rightly understood, science brings us into an even deeper realization that the universe is a *mystery*. In philosophy, some of these insights have been expressed in terms of “logical arguments” for God—the “Ontological,” “First Cause,”

“Teleological,” and “Moral” Arguments (see <http://www.existence-of-god.com/existence-of-god.html>).

But at base, we as Orthodox would say that **belief in God is at the very core of our existence as humans**. We are created in the Image of God (Christ), and we were created to know and worship our Creator. While we may suppress that reality, we nevertheless *know it*—and reject it—at a level so deep that “arguments” cannot touch it.

The Orthodox Faith tells us that the primary problem is *our vision*. We humans are caught in the cycle of idolatry that keeps us locked in self-delusion such that we cannot see and accept things for what they really are—that the human person and the whole universe are one giant “mystery” that participates in and points to the eternal God and Father who reveals Himself through His eternal Son and Holy Spirit. This was the purpose of the Incarnation, Cross, & Resurrection—to restore our nature and to raise our vision up to Christ God, through His voluntary Suffering, such that we might be *converted & attuned* to what is true.

This is the Orthodox Church’s gospel: “Come and see!” Regain your vision of what is real in the Divine Liturgy, in the Sacraments, in the Icons, in the Apostolic Tradition revealed by Christ in and to the Church. Come and *know God* personally, physically and spiritually, through the life and worship of the restored Humanity in Christ.