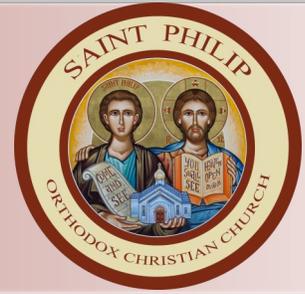


THE PARISH PRESS

St. Philip Orthodox Church

VOL. 21.11 — NOVEMBER 2020



Mark Your Calendar:

Virtual Fall Retreat & Meetings 2020 for Eastern Dioceses

November 12-15

Feast of St. Philip

Friday, November 13

Vespers & Artoklasia 6:30 pm

Saturday, November 14

Orthros 9 am & Divine Liturgy 10 am

Nativity Fast

November 15-December 24

Daily Services during the Nativity Fast:

- + Liturgies – Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday (Mask Required), Sunday @ 10 a.m.
- + Advent Services – Monday, Wednesday, Friday @ 6:30 p.m.
- + Great Vespers, Resurrectional Orthros, and Feasts as usual.

St. Nicholas

Saturday, December 5

Vespers & Artoklasia, 6:30 pm

Youth Event to follow

FORTY DAYS OF GROWTH IN STEWARDSHIP

“The Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit”

“If, [under the Old Covenant] where the getting of wealth was allowed and the enjoyment of it, and the care of it, there was such provision made for the succoring of the poor, **how much more in that Dispensation [of the New Covenant], where we are commanded to surrender all we have?**”

St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Ephesians*

NEWS ~ N ~ NOTES

+MONTHLY OUTREACH COLLECTION:

Thank you for your generosity to the needy of our community! In **November & December**, we are collecting **Turkeys & Hams**.

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

MAY GOD BLESS ALL OUR FAITHFUL GIVERS!

A Message from Fr. Noah

Dear Saint Philip’s Family, Christ is in our midst!

As you have probably figured out by now, I am not the keenest observer of society or a student of history or politics or philosophy, but I have been noticing a marked tidal change in our western world and even in our blessed United States of America.

I’ve been reading *Live Not By Lies* by Rod Dreher, a short time parishioner here about a decade ago. The title of the book is taken from a publication by Alexander Solzhenitsyn (whose son and family were also parishioners here more than a decades ago) who pulled back the iron curtain just enough for the western world to see what was really going on in the Soviet states. He notes the phenomenon of Christians keeping their faith under the Marxist regimes of last century’s eastern Europe and draws some parallels and makes suggestions to how we can survive in the “Soft Totalitarianism” that is creeping up around us. I would like all of our parishioners to read this book carefully and discuss with each other. We need to be ready to keep the faith alive in our hearts, our homes, and our parish despite the psychological trials that seem to be looming on the horizon.

As we watch traditional morality disintegrating before our very eyes it is tempting to think that this is simply an American political problem. Obviously some political platforms reflect the sanctity of life and liberty that we as Christians hold so dearly. However, the problem is actually much deeper than meets the eye. There are forces below the surface that are more subtle and sinister than the mudslinging our elections have become. I’ve listened with interest to very plausible theories of international power grabs. Some might write those off as conspiracy theories; however, we know that they pale in comparison to the big

conspiracy theory that the serpent whispered into our forebearers’ ears.

Our Christian civilization is decaying, seduced by Satan. We truly are embattled from all sides. We truly need to be strong in the Lord. We truly need to stand together under the veil of the Mother of God, along with the saints, and with each other. We see these sad realities on the news. (More prayer, scripture, saints and less screen time, please!). We see it around us in our fractured families, many of which will not be gathering for milestone events or Thanksgiving and even Christmas. Most disturbingly, we see it in our hearts, our hypocrisy, our quickness to judge, our comfortable piety, our lukewarm attitudes.

And that is the key... if we see humanity’s frailty and brokenness in our hearts, then, and only then, can we truly repent and call down God’s mercy and return to Him with thanksgiving and commitment to each other through the straight and narrow way that

leads to life. I have been astounded by the creativity and industriousness of our ministry team leaders in keeping our parish the warm and welcoming place of repentance and ministry that it has been. May the good Lord see our humble effort to stay united and pour out His Grace, overflowing from our hearts and the work of our hands to our hurting land!

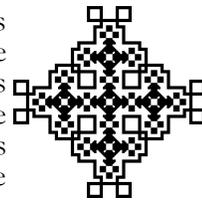
We are preparing to have daily services during the Nativity Fast, and I beg you to please consecrate these 40 days to Christ, begging His help and His Mother’s protection. “Tis the season to be sober!”

In Christ,
+Fr. Noah

P.S. – We live by faith, not by fear.

P.P.S. – Common Sense and Uncommon Love.

P.P.P.S. – If this is our darkest hour, let’s make it our finest!



Pro-Life Ministry UPDATE:



October was a busy month for St Philip's pro-life ministry! **Crossroads 5K Run and Walk for Life** - Crossroads is a crisis pregnancy center for both women and men in need faced with unexpectant pregnancies. In the past, Saint Philip has been a regular supporter of this agency. On October 3rd, Crossroads had a record turnout: for the run, and for St Philips. Over 400 people attended the walk/run, 14 of which were from St Philip. Thank you for your donations and support.

Celebrate Life Banquet, featuring Ken Matthews - This banquet is held annually to benefit the work of the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation Education Fund. This year's banquet was held on Tuesday October 6th and featured keynote speaker Ken Matthews. Due to pandemic restrictions, it was held in the parking-lot of the Radisson Hotel. Fr. Noah attended the banquet with four other Saint Philip parishioners. During the trip, the group was able to also schedule a nice visit to Christ the Savior, and OCA church located in the Harrisburg area.

Office Update

Greetings sisters and brothers in Christ, We are thankful and blessed to have each of you - our spiritual family at St. Philip. May you enjoy a **healthy and joyful Thanksgiving!**



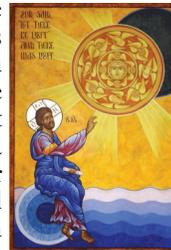
Please note: the office will be **closed Thanksgiving Week.**
In Christ, Celia-Marie (office@st-philip.net)

"Making a Defense":

Explorations in Orthodox Apologetics

REVISITING THE "COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT" FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE

The *cosmological argument for the existence of God* reasons that what exists today can only exist because a Necessary Being exists. This argument has a long philosophical pedigree, and though many people see it as extremely consequential still today, it is often misunderstood. Today, theists and atheists alike often take the argument as a claim that the universe must have a *temporal* first cause: something was needed to "jumpstart" the universe that isn't a part of the universe itself, namely God. However, historically, several of the most significant proponents of the cosmological argument (including Aristotle, Ibn Sina, and Thomas Aquinas) believed that a universe without a temporal beginning was rationally conceivable! Indeed, in its several classical forms, the argument actually proposed that the universe needs a first cause in a *hierarchical* sense. In order for anything to exist right here and now, independent of causes in time, there must be a Necessary first cause.



Think of it like this: you have a book sitting on your desk. This book is only in its current position insofar as the desk is holding it up. Is the desk the reason the book is staying in place? Of course not, because the desk is only holding the book up only insofar as the floor is holding the desk up. This is a hierarchical series. Appeals to temporal causes are not needed because the only concern is things that exist here and now, even in one frozen

moment of time. What happens when you keep following this hierarchy? The floor is being held up by the house, the house is being held up by the foundation, the foundation by the Earth, etc. It keeps going either infinitely or until it terminates with a Necessary first cause. Everything that exists is a part of such a hierarchical series, which is to say that everything in the universe exists only insofar as something else allows it to exist. Unlike the temporal approach to the first cause, this type of argument concerns what is called *ontology*, or the study of Being itself. The most fundamental ontological question is, "why is there anything at all?"

The Catholic philosopher Edward Feser offers a poignant illustration of the problem with suggesting that a hierarchical series can extend infinitely, without a Necessary first cause. Such an infinite hierarchical series can be likened to a series of mirrors reflecting a face without there being an initial face supplying the image that is being reflected. From where did the reflection of the face come? Logic demands that there be a face at the beginning of the series of mirrors. Similarly, any hierarchical series of causes must

have an ultimate source for its power. If everything that exists is contingent on something else allowing it to exist, what supplies the ability for anything to exist in the first place? To say it just keeps going or that it "just exists" without a need for explanation—as "rational" proponents of a mechanical, materialist, self-existent model of the universe must—actually undermines the very notion of reason itself. (*To be continued next month ...*)

— by Zach Willits

St. Philip Cemetery Notes



A new monthly feature is being added to the St. Philip Newsletter that will provide information on the St. Philip Cemetery. With the influx of new parishioners, it seemed appropriate to share with these new members, as well as, long time members, the history of our cemetery and some basic information about the cemetery. Eventually, this new feature will be used to keep parishioners updated on what is happening at the cemetery.

In the meantime, if you are interested in finding out more about St. Philip Cemetery or have any questions, please contact either Fr. Noah or Jim or Doris Eggers (609-680-0907 / jdkceggers@aol.com) from the Cemetery Committee.

Did You Know?

- **The Fast is Coming Up** – Pray and Plan for a Profitable Advent.
- Build Saturday evening **Vespers** into your weekly routine. If you make this investment in the rhythm of prayer you will reap dividends in joy and peace! Confession is available following vespers. Bring a friend or family member.
- The **liturgical offerings** of our parish (e.g., Altar Candles, Wine, Classic Olive Oil) are simple and profound ways to offer our talents to God and to each other.
- 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!

Parenting Suggestion

Money doesn't grow on trees.

One day, our kids will be on their own and will need to know how to pay bills. Teach them at an early age that doing work is how they get money. Have them do jobs to earn their spending money. Teach them the importance of stewardship and of tithing to the church, and of general care for finances. The Book of Proverbs has many great passages that show the importance of being wise with finances, of planning ahead, and of hard work. There is a time to give money to kids, but let's be careful and do our best to make sure our kids understanding the value of money, so that they can become good stewards.



(Adapted from <https://myoen.net/10-ways-orthodox-parents-set-children-up-for-moral-failure/>)