



THE BASIL LEAF

St. Basil The Great Antiochian Orthodox Church

In this issue:

- Parish Happenings, notes from Fr. James, p. 1
- Youth activities p. 2
- Vacation Bible School p. 3
- Homeschool Group p. 4
- Dates to Remember, p.6

**“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
Philippians 4:13**

Father James Purdie

These words from St. Paul served as the Parish Life

Conference/Convention theme this year. At first glance these words sound overplayed, cliché and stereotypical. Although they come from scripture these words tend to be equated with other often used Evangelical phrases and quotes that you might find in a framed picture hanging in someone’s bathroom. So, when I read that St. Paul’s words to the Philippians formed the conference theme, I was a little disappointed, and not particularly inspired to preach upon them at the conference. They came across to me as overdone and protestant. Why not use something more special and Orthodox sounding? What was I thinking?! These words couldn’t be anymore Orthodox.

The quote begins with “I can do...” This is far from an egocentric declaration despite the opening “I,” because St. Paul adds the qualification “through Christ.” St. Paul can do all things only *through* Christ. Apart from God he can do nothing, or as Jesus Himself said, “without me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Paul has a firm understanding of his union with Christ, his abiding in Christ. If that is not special, if that is not true, if that is not Orthodox, then what is?

Secondly, we have this issue of being able to “do all things.” We might be tempted to think that Paul really means *all things*, but that is not exactly the case. A quick read of this passage in its context reveals that by “all things” Paul is referring to his ability to be hungry and to be full, to abound and to be abased. Yes, regardless of life’s circumstances Paul knows how to keep his eye on Christ regardless of whether he is riding high or being dragged through the mud. He is *not* talking about being able to achieve earthly things through Christ, such as position, title, power, or wealth.

What a lesson this is for us and for us as a Church. Sometimes it seems from an earthly perspective that God is in His Heaven and all is right with the world, and everything is turning out our way. All too often, however, those times are quickly followed by a downturn in our fortune and we experience a loss.

(Continued on p. 4)

Parish Happenings:

We are making progress on our building loans. Two loans were secured for the parish, for a total of \$490,000. Payments towards the loans have so far amounted to \$50,587.14.

We are looking for input on Adult Education classes. A survey will be sent out within the week seeking your opinion.

(Continued on p. 2)

Once the heart has been perfectly emptied of mental images, it gives birth to divine and mystical concepts that play within it just as fish and dolphins play in a calm sea. As the sea is rippled when a soft breeze moves over it, so is the heart’s abyss moved by the Holy Spirit.

-St. Hesychius the Priest

Parish Happenings (continued from p.1)

St. Basil Youth: St Basil took two teams to the Parish Life Conference this past June! We had a pre-teen team which consisted of Abby Elias, Michael Nixon, Lilly Purdie, and Vira Riske. The teen team was Emmanuel Elias, Caleb Nixon, Jude Purdie, and Jai Riske.



Both teams did SO well. What a blessing it was to participate and have such encouraging families to take the time to get them all the way to Pennsylvania for the competition! Both teams have been working since last fall. We can't wait to get started for next year!



Sunday School: Registration for Sunday School will be opening August 1st. The first day of Sunday School will be September 15th.

Chapel of St. Basil: Meets every Thursday at Christ the King Episcopal Church, 7:00pm. We invite any and all to join us.

Bible Study: Meetings start again on September 10th, 11:30am, Grand China Bistro, Poquoson.

Orthodoxy on Tap: Next meeting will be August 20. Location and Time TBA

(Continued on page 3)

Parish Happenings: (continued from p. 2)

Vacation Bible School: Our first Vacation Bible School (VBS) was a fantastic success! 29 kids were "Ship Wrecked!" and learned how rely on Jesus to rescue them.



We sang, played games, learned more about the Bible, made science-related connections, and had wonderful meals together each night!



A huge thanks goes out to the dozen volunteers that made this happen. We had a lot of fun and can't wait to do it again next summer!!



Parish Happenings: (continued from p. 3)

Homeschool: The Homeschool Group celebrated their end of year picnic at Bluebird Gap Farm in May. It was a wonderful time for the families to get up close and personal with the residents of the farm. .



Our first meeting of this school year will be September 6, 10am at York River State Park. We will meet Deacon John Gresham for a guided Fossil Beach hike. Park admission is \$5 per person. Bring a sack lunch and a change of clothes.



SACRED ARTS FESTIVAL

September 7, 2019 / 10 AM – 5 PM

Followed by Vespers Service

1520 Todds Lane, Hampton, VA 23666

Agenda:

- Sacred arts displays
- Icon fresco demonstration
- Gold leaf demonstration
- Sacred arts lecture
- Byzantine icon symbology
- Sacred Music Concert
- Church Tour
- Kids Activities:
 - ✓ Making prayer ropes
 - ✓ Icon painting
 - ✓ Egg painting
 - ✓ Candle making

Cast Iron BBQ Catering (Lunch) & Refreshments (all day)
Saint Basil the Great Orthodox Church

(continued from p. 1)

Our earthly gains are taken, or something occurs that reveals their inability to satisfy us. When that happens, it is usually because we have taken our eye off Christ as we reveled in our earthly success and haven't yet learned how to abound. The same can happen spiritually. The moment we think we have walked the road of humility we are swiftly reminded of just how far we have left to go. On the flipside, when things don't go our way, or we see the depths of spiritual ignorance, we find that we struggle to count our blessings and thank God for our suffering and invite Him into them. We haven't learned to be abased. And so, once more, St. Paul's writings prove to extend beyond superficiality. They speak right to the core of the Orthodox spiritual life.

Lastly, although so much could be unpacked here, Paul "can do all things through Christ who *strengthens*" him. What is this strength? The root word in Greek would be transliterated as "doonamis." From this comes the Deacon's call during the divine liturgy: "With strength!" "Dynamis!" It is the same strength that is translated as power in the Lord's prayer "...but deliver us from evil: for Thine is the Kingdom and the *power* and the glory forever." (Matthew 6:13). This is no ordinary strength. It is the miraculous power from God and of God. It doesn't get more Orthodox than that.

There is a bonus lesson in all this too. I told you how at first I doubted the efficacy of this quote and that it came across as hackneyed. I was wrong. I, we, should be careful never to forget that each word(s) of scripture contains the fullness of our faith. They may hang as decals on the wall or stickers on a car, but they are the words of life. If they lose their meaning it is not because they are unorthodox, but because we have not approached them as we should. May we learn how to abound and how to be abased through Christ who strengthens us.

Pursuing Holiness

using



August 9th - 10th

Friday
Teen SOYO Gathering
Dessert at 7pm

Saturday
Christian Education Retreat
10 am—3:30 pm
(potluck lunch)

Vespers
6:30 pm

*Come enjoy lively and interactive discussions,
along with icebreakers and some prizes!*



Archdeacon Saed Rihani

from St. Mary Orthodox Church in
Palos Heights, Illinois

Dates to Remember

Great Vespers, Saturdays 6:30 PM. Matins, Sundays, 9:25 AM.
Divine Liturgy, Sundays, 10:30 AM.
Sunday School & Adult Ed, Sundays following Liturgy.

August

- 1 Dormition Fast Begins
Paraklesis, 6:30p
Chapel of St. Basil, 7:00p
Sunday School Registration opens. Classes start Sept. 15
- 4 Parish Council Meeting, 12:45p
- 5 Vesperal Liturgy for the Transfiguration, 6:30p
- 7 Paraklesis, 6:30p
- 8 Chapel of St. Basil, 7:00p
- 9 Pursuing Holiness Retreat,
Teen SOYO Gathering, 7:00p
- 10 Pursuing Holiness Retreat,
Christian Education Retreat, 10:00a-3:30p
- 13 Paraklesis, 6:30p
- 14 Vesperal Liturgy for the Dormition, 6:30p
- 15 Chapel of St. Basil, 7p
- 18 Antiochian Women's Meeting, 12:45p
- 20 Orthodoxy on Tap (Location TBD)
- 22 Chapel of St. Basil, 7p
- 29 Chapel of St. Basil, 7:00pm

