

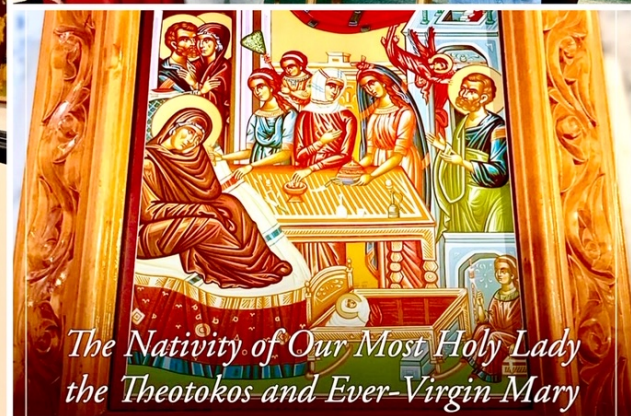
Fr. George's Pastoral Message for Friday, September 11, 2020

New Ecclesiastical Year Underway...

*On September 6th, we celebrated **September Thanksgiving Sunday** and rejoiced and gave thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ for the blessings our parishioners shared...*



On September 8th, we celebrated **The Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos and learned about the Remembrance of her Parents on September 9th – Saints Joachim & Anna**. Fr. George commended the two families pictured below whose family members celebrated one of these two Name Days – **The Nativity of the Theotokos on September 8th and her parents, Saints Joachim & Anna on September 9th**. With them is Jackie's Godmother, Jeanie (Alexandra) who read the Epistle lesson. Fr. George also photographed the video camera/videographer to remind us that even more parishioners were celebrating their Feast Days from among those viewing our live-streaming video Youtube on 9/8. **Chronia Polla to all celebrating their Feast Days!**

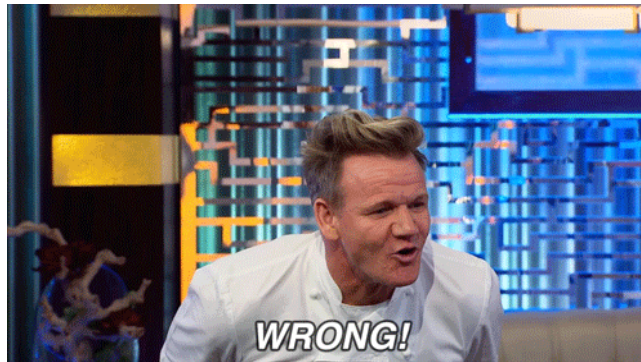


On Sunday, September 6th, Fr. George shared insights from Steven Christoforou, the Director of the Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America who reflected:

It's easy to read Scripture and miss the point.

When we see Jesus criticize the Jews, for example, we can read those passages with relief.

"He's talking to them, not us."



In this past Sunday's Gospel reading, Jesus tells a parable about betrayal.

He describes a lord who invited tenants to work his vineyard.

To cultivate good fruit.

But they didn't...

Instead, the tenants beat the lord's tenants. And even killed his son.

"The lord will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons."
(Matthew 21:41)

Of course, this points to the judgment of people who rejected Christ, and the preaching of the Gospel to Gentiles.

But we need to be careful.

We may be repeating the mistakes of those first tenants...

After all, are we “watchful” and “firm in our faith,” as St Paul says in his epistle?

Are we “fellow workers and laborers,” cultivating good fruit in the vineyard?

Or are we all talk?

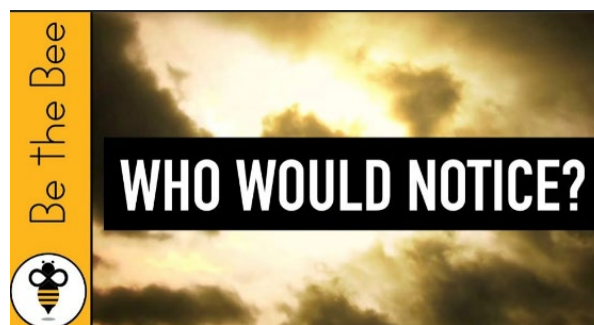
We can be self-satisfied Christians, confident that we are right and others are wrong.

Identifying as a Christian isn’t enough.

By itself, being Orthodox isn’t enough.

We actually need to act like Christians.

And that’s the challenge of this week’s new episode of “Be the Bee.”



We share the story of one young adult who left the Church because of the way his parish behaved.

That should never happen!

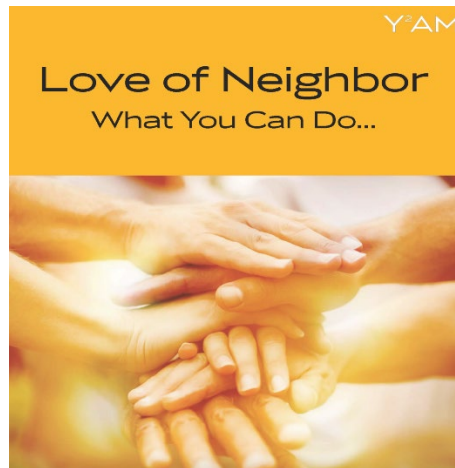
So we challenge you to not simply “talk the talk,” but to “walk the walk.”

To act like Christians.

Do you think you can do more to help the needy in your community?

Do you think your family and community can do more?

Then watch the episode and download the workbook to learn what you can do.



Let us support one another as we all try to act like Christians.

“Brethren, be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.” (1 Corinthians 16:13-14)

Peace,

Steve Christoforou

The reflection above, including the **“Be the Bee”** episode, **“Who Would Notice?”** helps us now head in a new direction using the **companion workbook, “Love of Neighbor; What You Can do...”** [Click here to view the video](#) if you missed it and [click here to view and download the companion workbook](#), which we will use for the remaining Sundays of September in our Adult Religious Education Class. Thank you for joining us! [Use this link to join our Zoom videoconference lesson at 3 pm on 9/13/20.](#)

In closing...

Fr. George & Presbyteria Marinda visited their family in Charleston, South Carolina after Adult Religious Education Class on Sunday, September 6th. **On Monday morning, we walked past The Huguenot Church, also called the French Huguenot Church or the French Protestant Church. *From the photos below, you can see it was being painted by professionals using a tall ladder.*** It is a Gothic Revival church located at 136 Church Street in Charleston. Built in 1844 and designed by architect Edward Brickell White, it is the oldest Gothic Revival church in South Carolina, and has been designated a National Historic Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The congregation it serves traces its origins to the 1680s and is the only independent Huguenot church in the United States.



Fr. George shares the three photos he took above as a reminder that indeed, our Holy Church dates to the *Old Testament Books* and the teachings of Jesus Christ some 2,000 years ago. As Orthodox Christians at St. Christopher Church, we are not just an independent or single parish. We are part of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and are included in the 300 million Orthodox world-wide.

When we stay at home and fail to join together through video live-streaming for our worship services and adult education during the Covid-19 Pandemic, or if we are healthy and able but prefer to sleep in or skip online services or come in person provided it is safe to do so (keeping our health and risk factors in mind), we risk losing the stamina and strength of our spiritual life. Our example becomes a model for our entire family. Remember the photo... ***“Don’t try this at home”*** is right. As ***“trained professionals”***, our church family comes together for worship, fellowship, witness, and service, even if it is via video live-streaming to ensure our safety.



Remember the ***“Ladder of Divine Ascent” icon*** described by St. John Climacus? Rather than be tempted to “fall off” metaphorically speaking, I encourage us to stay in touch regularly through the safest means we may need to ensure our safety and health. **Together, we grow closer to our Lord Jesus Christ and His Body of believers at St. Christopher Church. *We are here for you and appreciate your prayers and support.***

– Fr. George Tsahakis