



# The St. Nicholas Navigator

Vol. 2, No. 8 November 2018

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## Pastoral Epistle: Philotimo & Joy

At least one Sunday a year you hear the passage from Second Corinthians that says, “God loves a cheerful giver.” You may remember hearing me say that the Greek word translated as “cheerful” is the source of the word “hilarious.”

While St. Paul’s intention is certainly not to say that God loves givers who tell jokes and make everyone laugh, it surely is his wish to convey the idea of one who gives, not grudgingly, but with spontaneous and authentic joy. For such a person, sacrifice is delight, for the heart is enlarged to contain more of God’s love through selfless giving.

Perhaps you remember me speaking before about “philotimo.” This Greek word conveys a meaning something like, “freely doing whatever is needed in the moment, because it is right and blesses others.” It is connected to hospitality, gratitude and, of course, love. It involves sacrifice, courage, and overcoming double-mindedness. Since it’s impossible to find a

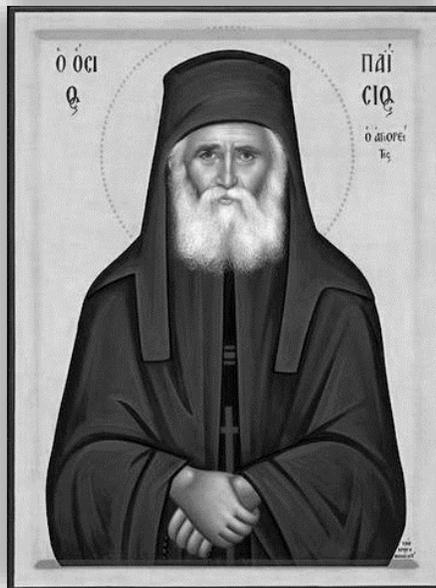
single English word that communicates all that, I say we make *philotimo* an English word. About *philotimo*, St. Paisios of Athos says, “[People] want to feel joy, but one has to sacrifice in order for joy to come. Joy is born of sacrifice. True joy arises from *philotimo*. If one cultivates *philotimo*, his life

becomes a constant feast-day!” And that is why God loves a cheerful giver — not because

God needs anything from us, but because He wants our life to be a “constant feast-day”!

Philotimo is not something that we are simply born with, or not. It is cultivated, by our continual choice to rely on God in all things, and, with His help, to imitate His generosity. However, St.

Paisios warns us against merely faking joy in our Christian life, which only ends in bitterness. Not by pursuing joy in a worldly way; not by simply putting on a smiling face and friendly facade, but by the gritty struggle to be faithful and generous day in and day out, do we discover the real thing.



We see, then, that the road to joy is paradoxical. It requires a struggle, which feels unpleasant. Yet, when we make that struggle with a humble heart, aware of our weakness and begging God for guidance, we will arrive at the feast-day, sooner or later. The test comes as we are still on the way, and, somehow or other, things go awry. How do we maintain the zeal we started with, and how do we recover the joy when we've lost it?

For starters, St. Paisios says we have to begin with inner activity before proceeding to external activity, correcting ourselves when necessary and "giving precedence to divine help" through prayer. Thus, we "will also achieve an inner serenity that will quietly help the souls of the people we encounter." On the other hand, when someone "applies himself to external activity before having polished his spiritual inner state, he may struggle spiritually, but he will be fraught with worry, anxiety, lack of confidence in God and frequent loss of serenity." When, by God's grace, he is "liberated from the old self and all things worldly, then he will receive divine Grace and be not only at peace with himself, but also able to bring peace to everyone else."

This issue of the Navigator offers us encouragement, from multiple contributors, in our struggle to cultivate *philotimo* and to approach the stewardship of our time, energy and material resources in a healthy way. Carter Jones offers a perspective on the danger of burnout, with some suggestions for overcoming it, and an important call to further conversation within the parish. Fran Presley gives us a reflection on humility and joy in our encounter with Christ. From St. Ephraim the Syrian we have a "Prayer Against Apathy," which calls our hearts to the

enlargement of Christ's love. And we find ourselves once again at the time of the year when we are called to commit ourselves to the right stewardship of our resources as members of Christ's Body; the 2019 Stewardship Form is enclosed.

Praying that the Lover of Mankind, our Lord Jesus Christ, would enlarge your hearts and mine to contain feast-day of Heaven, with love in His Name,

Fr. Daniel

### **Pleasing Jesus**

**By: Fran Presley**

Every morning on my way to my prayer corner, I pass the Virgin of Vladimir icon. I pause briefly to pray before the icon. One of my requests to Jesus' Mother is, "Help me to please your Son." After praying that request, I started noticing Scriptures all over the Bible showing the way to please Jesus.

Here is a passage from Isaiah 66:2: "... to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." That tells me that Jesus is pleased by those who are humble and obedient. And obedience requires wholehearted belief that His words are true.

A similar thought in Luke 10:21 reveals that we can even cause Jesus to rejoice! "At that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.'" Something had pleased Jesus: the quality of humility and childlikeness which He saw in His followers. He rejoices when He sees a humble follower. He told His

disciples in v. 3: "I send you forth as lambs among wolves." Jesus compares His followers to lambs and babes. They cause Him to rejoice.

Many examples in Holy Scripture show God's love for the humble. In Luke 21, Jesus noticed a humble widow in the temple. Encounters with Jesus are never accidental or coincidences. He knew ahead of time that she was there, and He understood her heart of love. " And He looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And He said, 'Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all; for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.'"

I believe Jesus had looked upon her with great love, even before her offering. Their eyes met. The love she saw in His eyes for *her* filled her with such joy that she gladly cast into the treasury everything she had. She had never felt such love before. It was worth everything.

Poverty of spirit alone is not what makes Jesus happy; He loves the poor in spirit who tremble at His word. Luke 7 tells about a centurion who was humble in heart. "And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to Him, was sick and ready to die." The fact that the centurion's servant was "dear to him" shows the humility of a very rich man. He even loved God so much that he had honored God by building the people a synagogue.

The centurion knew Jesus could heal his servant, and he sent for Jesus. When Jesus drew near, the centurion sent Him this

message: "Lord, trouble not Thyself; for I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof. Neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee, but say the word and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it."

The powerful centurion drew high praise from Jesus. Jesus marveled at such humility; a man humble enough to believe Jesus. Jesus said to the people, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." With a joyful heart I am sure, Jesus healed the centurion's servant. Someone defined meekness as controlled strength. I would add one word to that definition: God-controlled strength. The centurion exercised plenty of authority, but his authority was in obedience to God's word.

Another passage describes the ones who please God. 1 Peter 3:3,4: "Do not let your adornment be merely outward ... rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God."

The Bible is filled with stories of both the rich and the poor who love and obey Him and cause Him to rejoice. Our prime example, of course, is Jesus' own Mother, a humble woman who was given the honor of bearing the King of kings and Lord of lords. She has pleased God more than any other. And when we call on her, she gladly and patiently helps us on our journey to Heaven.

**All Flame?: Confronting Burnout in Parish Life**  
**By: Rdr. John Carter Jones**

Tell me if this sounds familiar: you've heard calls for volunteers for a ministry in the announcements for weeks... and then months... and yet it seems like nobody is interested. But, you think, it sounds like a good ministry, so you volunteer. Maybe if you're the first, someone else will hop on board, too.

You do the ministry a few times. Some people offer encouraging words. But, at the end of the day, everyone else is too busy to help, or doesn't think you need help, so the weeks and months turn into years and you're still the only one participating in the ministry. Other help comes unreliably. You feel like the burden of the ministry is falling on your shoulders alone. You feel isolated. You get tired. You want to give up. You want to pass it on to the next person who'll agree to do it because you've grown sick of it, and once you do, you wash your hands of it. You're done.

And then the next person finds themselves going through the same cycle of initial enthusiasm and then frustration and burnout as nobody steps up to help them, either. When people do help, they help maybe once or twice, and then poof... gone again.

Of course, people's circumstances change, and not everybody can do everything, but in any organization or community we often are confronted with a lack of people who are willing (or able) to contribute their time and presence, which is more precious than all the money in the world that could be donated. People are either busy or assume that somebody else will do it. But this attitude of "somebody else will do it" often leads to

nothing getting done at all. And this leaves the people who are involved in the various ministries around the parish feeling stretched thin, stressed out, and this can lead to people wanting to quit being involved in ministries or--at its worst--quit being involved in the parish altogether, not even wanting to attend the Holy Services for fear of being guilted into doing more than they feel like they can do.

What I want to do here is offer some suggestions on how to manage feelings of burnout in parish life and help start a conversation in the parish about how we can work together to grow as a community centered, above all else, in meeting Christ in the Eucharist and laboring together in His vineyard. The Body of Christ is composed of many members with many functions, and it is necessary that we *all* work together in the common work of our salvation. Failure to do so is a failure to be Christian. Let us say with St. Ignatius of Antioch: "I wish not merely to be called Christian, but also to be Christian."

We have often heard the story of Abba Lot, who went to Abba Joseph for advice on how to advance in the spiritual life, to which Abba Joseph replied by raising his hands; to Abba Lot's amazement, flames shot forth from Abba Joseph's fingertips as he uttered the immortal words "If you will, you can become all flame."

Many, especially converts like myself, gravitate to this story and the concept of becoming "all flame." It resonates with us. After all, it is our fiery zeal for Christ and Orthodoxy that led us toward the Holy Orthodox Church, often at some expense, sacrificing former affiliations and even relationships to pursue Christ. This same fiery zeal can work against us if it is not tempered

by moderation -- we're tempted to do too much too soon, throwing ourselves headlong into all that we've felt we've been missing our whole lives. (This can go for converts as well as for "cradle" Orthodox who have rediscovered the faith later in life or found a renewed enthusiasm for it.) Many of us were very active in our former churches and are eager to bring that same enthusiasm to the True Church of Christ. All too often, however, this can lead to rapid burnout, especially as we become faced with the gritty realities of a Church that we may have idealized in our minds. People are people everywhere... especially in the Orthodox Church.

So how can we handle it when we are faced with feelings of burnout, the "demon of noonday" as the Psalmist calls it?

The first thing I would suggest is to be honest about it. When you're feeling overwhelmed and burnt out, let someone know, especially Fr. Daniel. Don't complain, but be honest and speak frankly. You are not any lesser for experiencing burnout. Everyone confronts it at some time or another, in work, in life, and in the parish. By discussing the stress you're feeling, you can work with others to help find ways to alleviate that stress. Perhaps you need to decrease the amount of responsibilities you've put on yourself and learn to politely say "no" from time to time -- it is very easy to take the path of "niceness" and agree to something that you don't really want to do and then feel like you're stuck doing it forever. This isn't healthy, and there's almost always a way to work it out. But that requires communication, as in any family -- and that is precisely what we are. We are *family*. These are not strangers you're working with, but brothers and sisters who are fed by the same Jesus Christ, grafted into the same Vine, members of the same

Body. Not in metaphor or allegory, but *really* and *truly*.

The second thing to consider doing is being sure to set up clear expectations with ministries. What are the responsibilities and obligations of both time and other resources? Burnout is sure to happen when we accidentally bite off more than we can chew. It's very easy to agree to one thing but wind up doing twenty things if expectations are not clearly laid out from the beginning, or to accidentally wind up doing more than we even need to. Again, this comes down to communicating frankly and, most importantly, with *love*.

Love brings me to the last thing I'll suggest here: *love one another*. Don't assume that "someone else will do it" -- always offer to help when you can, while maintaining a proper balance and perspective. Show each other love and compassion, remembering the great love that Christ has for all of us. Love is active, and not always pleasant -- love entails suffering for and with one another, bearing one another's burdens in an unselfish way. Everyone is busy. We get it. But this is the most important community that you are a part of, *bar none*. The investments of time and energy here will yield eternal returns. Extra hours at the office will get you a few more dollars, sure, but a few extra hours laboring in the vineyard of Christ will earn you imperishable treasures in heaven that won't be gone the next time an unexpected expense pops up.

Count the costs of your ministry, whatever it be in the parish. And once you've put your hand to the plow, don't look back... but don't let yourself get plowed under, either. Use experiences of burnout to become humbler, praying to Christ in Whom we "live and move

and have our being,” and without Whom we can do absolutely nothing.

I love you all so very much, which is why I offer you these thoughts and reflections. We’re in this together. We are family. We must, *must* love each other, for in this every commandment is fulfilled.

Love is the whole of the Gospel. It is not easy. But it is so, so very worth it.

Glory to Jesus Christ. Glory forever.

### **A Prayer Against Apathy**

**By: St. Ephraim the Syrian**

The sinless Lamb of God freely chose to suffer the cross in the flesh and was slain for the salvation of us sinners. In incorrupt flesh did He taste death in order to save our fallen nature. Thou Who art the Wisdom and the Strength of God the Father, the Radiance of His glory, O incomprehensible Jesus, O unfathomable Christ, O only kindhearted Lover of mankind, pour out on me, a sinner, Thy great mercy; and by Thy grace chase away from me all apathy, slothfulness and impatience, that in Thy second coming I might not hear Thy terrible denunciation: What didst thou suffer for My sake?

In that terrible and frightening day, O Lord, Thou wilt say to us sinners: you all know well what I suffered for your sake. I, Who am God, took flesh for your sake. I, Who am invisible, visibly dwelt on earth for your sake. For your sake I hungered, thirsted and labored. For your sake I was persecuted and stoned. I, Who am blameless, was struck in the face and spat upon for your sake. I, Who am sinless, suffered a dishonorable death for your sake. For your sake my ribs were pierced with a spear and I was given vinegar

mixed with gall to drink. All this have I suffered for your sake, in order to make you saints in heaven. I have given you the kingdom of heaven, I have called you all brothers, I have sent down to you the Holy Spirit. O men, what have you suffered for My sake?

What shall I, who am wretched, wicked, sinful and defiled, say in response? The martyrs will point to their wounds, their torments, their detached limbs, their endurance to the end. The ascetics will point to their asceticism, their lengthy fasts, vigils, non-acquisitiveness, their tears and all their sufferings. But I, who am slothful and sinful, to what shall I point, but the shameful fruits of gluttony, sensuality, somnolence, acquisitiveness, impatience, vainglory and apathy?

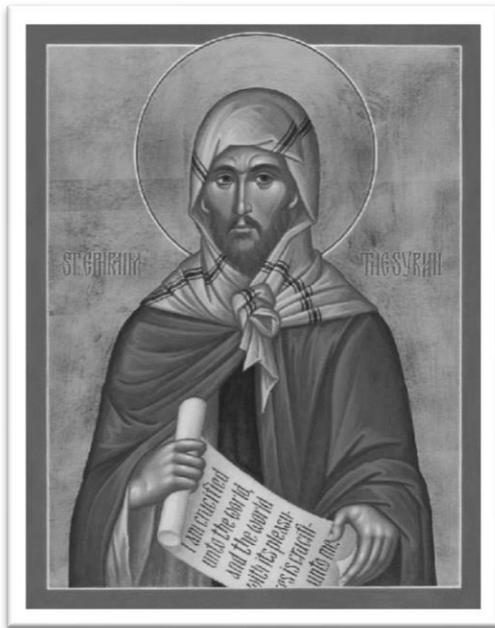
If Thou demandest from me, O Lord, an account of the time which I was given for repentance, but spent in negligence, how shall I justify myself? And if I am interrogated about my idle talking, wicked thoughts and desires, then what fear, what confusion will embrace poor me, and what torments will follow thereafter?

Spare me, O Lord! Spare me, O kindhearted One! Spare me, O Lover of man! Spare me, O only good One! Be merciful and have mercy on me according to Thy singular kindness. Strengthen my soul which has been corrupted by my slothfulness and apathy, O Thou Who exaltest the lowly and rescuest the distressed!

Thou knowest how negligent and wretched I am, Thou knowest how many cunning and evil thoughts war against me, Thou seest the enemy’s malice and the many wiles which he uses against me. Help me according to Thy

great mercy, make me sober and vigilant, quicken me and save me by Thy grace through the prayers of our most pure Lady the Mother of God and of all the saints.

Taken from *A Spiritual Psalter, Saint John of Kronstadt Press (1997)*



*St. Ephraim the Syrian. Damascene Gallery.*

### The Forgiveness Psalm (Part 1)

By: Peter Bethancourt

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy and according to the multitude of thy compassions blot out my transgression.”

This psalm was made by King David in the Old Testament while he was in a time of repentance. It shows us that we have many chances to turn to God and ask him for forgiveness. It shows us that God gives us all many chances in the statement, “according to the multitude of thy compassions.”

Multitude as said in the psalm means “large quantities of,” meaning that God is giving us

large quantities of compassion or chances of forgiveness. Even though this is in a psalm, we should also realize this in our everyday lives, too. We should recognize the multitude of God’s compassions!

“Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me.”

This is the second part of the psalm that King David created while repenting. The statement, “wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin,” shows us that we should ask God to cleanse us and wash away all of our sins. It represents the asking of forgiveness by us human beings. The statement, “For I know mine iniquity and my sin is ever before me,” shows that we should recognize our sins while repenting. We should also ask for forgiveness from others or forgive them!

*(To be continued.)*

### Parish News & Announcements

- The Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos is on Nov. 21. We will celebrate with Vespers on Tuesday, Nov. 20 at 5:30pm and Orthros (8am) and Liturgy (9am) on Wednesday, Nov. 21 (the day before Thanksgiving).
- **Banquet with Bishop BASIL:** Please sign up with Barry Busada ([gbb@dda.edu](mailto:gbb@dda.edu)) to attend the Reception Banquet with Bishop BASIL on Saturday, Dec. 1, when we'll have the Reveal of our new Church design! The cost is \$15 per adult and \$10 per child; if this is cost prohibitive for anyone, please let Fr. Daniel know. **We hope everyone can be there!**

- **New Red Altar robes** in time for Bishop Basil's visit. If anyone would like to sponsor a robe, or part of a robe (they are \$215 each) please earmark your donation for that purpose.
- **Stewardship for 2019** - please fill out your Stewardship Form (which is being sent out and is also found in this issue) and return it by Dec. 9.
- **The 2019 DOWAMA Parish Life Conference** will be hosted by St Peter/Fort Worth, TX, Wednesday through Saturday, June 19th-22nd which is the fast-free week following Pentecost. The Conference theme is "The Antiochian Village Past, Present and Future: I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." The study topics for the Bible Bowl are the Epistles of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Ephesians, the Philippians and the Colossians. The Oratorical theme is "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Our featured guest speaker will be Father James Coles [Godson of Fr. Daniel!] of St Ignatius/Mesa, AZ. Mark your calendars now!
- There will be **Liturgy in Texarkana** at Christ the King Chapel (St. James Episcopal Church) on **Saturday, Nov. 24**. All are welcome to join. For directions, please ask Fr. Daniel or Rdr. John Carter.
- Please consider donating to the **St. Daniel of Pereyaslavl Burial Fund**, which has been established to provide a decent and holy burial for those who lack the means. To contribute to the fund, you can send a check or drop it in the offering basket with the earmark "Burial Fund."

### November Birthdays

Nov. 2 – Natalia Hand  
 Nov. 3 – John Olsen, Juliette Gill  
 Nov. 7 – Ethelyn LaHaye  
 Nov. 10 – Sophia Johnston  
 Nov. 18 – Jessica Busada  
 Nov. 19 – Tina Edmiston  
 Nov. 22 – Dr. Halim Aboufaycal, Nadia Johnston  
 Nov. 25 – Anna Bloss, Liz Gouletas

### November Name Days

Nov. 3 (St. Raphael) – David Beason  
 Nov. 8 (Holy Archangels) – Angela Benson, Mike Busada, Michaela Filipek, Michael Allen, Mike Busada, Kiki Casten  
 Nov. 13 (St. John Chrysostom) – John Hunter Berry  
 Nov. 14 (St. Philip) – Philip Johnson, Philip LaHaye  
 Nov. 16 (St. Matthew) – Charlie Berry, Matthew Baker  
 Nov. 25 (St. Catherine) – Jan Johnson, Kim Allen, Pres. Ashley Foster, Cheryl Floyd, Maya Aboufaycal



**Contact Us! Let us know what you'd like to see in the newsletter! Call, text, or email us at:**

tel: (903) 949-1239  
 email: [jones.c4@gmail.com](mailto:jones.c4@gmail.com)

## Time & Talent

In addition to contributions of "treasure," our tithе involves contributions of "time" and "talents." Please use this list to indicate the ways in which you would like to be involved in the life of the parish. Each ministry and task is important for "building up the body of Christ." Indicate whether you'd like to continue a task, or begin a new one. Families, please use initials to mark boxes for each member.

MINISTRIES	SPECIFIC TASKS	CONTINUE	INTERESTED
Worship & Temple Beautification	Altar server (men & boys)		
	Choir/Reading		
	Baking prosphora		
	Flower arrangement		
Building & Grounds	Caring for items in church (clean, iron, etc.)		
	Seamstress work (repairs, covers, etc.)		
	Building Committee (plan future construction)		
Education & Learning	Building maintenance & cleaning		
	Gardening & landscaping		
	Clean-up after services & events		
Youth Ministry	Teaching Sunday school (or substituting)		
	Maintaining bookstore and/or library		
Childcare	Hosting or coordinating youth activities		
	Providing child care for events		
Hospitality	Greeting visitors on Sundays		
	Refreshments for coffee hour & special events		
Pastoral Care & "In-reach"	Hosting or coordinating parish social gatherings		
	Visiting sick, shut-ins		
	Providing meals, rides, other special needs		
Outreach	Phone calls & correspondence		
	Coordinating community outreach activities		
Administrative	Participating in community outreach activities		
	General office assistance		
	Website/Facebook/PR		
Other (specify):	Bulletins, Newsletter, other publications		

Name(s) (all participating family members)

## Treasure

Your annual pledge enables us to budget for our parish's financial needs. The Operating Fund covers general expenses of the parish. The Building Fund covers mortgage payments. As we pay down the mortgage, we are shifting into fundraising for our future building project. For 2018, budgeted expenses totaled \$144,993, of which \$14,762 was for building payments and \$130,231 was for general expenses.

I pledge the following amount for 2019:

**Tithe/General Pledge**

\$

*This is the amount that will go towards the Operating Fund for 2019.*

*In addition to your Tithe/General Pledge, please consider a pledge to the Building Fund for one or more years:*

**Building Fund Pledge**

\$  for 2019 only

\$  per year for

- 2 years       3 years  
 4 years       5 years

Print Name(s)

Signature(s)



*The*  
**St. Nicholas**  
**Navigator**

*November 2018*

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**St. Nicholas Orthodox Christian Church**  
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**Shreveport, LA 71115-3607**