



DEACON DAVID LOCHBIHLER, J.D.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

AN ORTHODOX
ANTHOLOGY

ORTHODOX LOGOS PUBLISHING



FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:
AN ORTHODOX ANTHOLOGY



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by Deacon David Lochbihler, J.D.

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	11
ABOUT THIS BOOK.	16
PROLOGUE	
OUR FIRST CHRISTMAS TOGETHER	17
CHAPTER ONE	
LOVE	21
CHAPTER TWO	
JOY	34
CHAPTER THREE	
PEACE	39
CHAPTER FOUR	
LONGSUFFERING	45
CHAPTER FIVE	
KINDNESS	54
CHAPTER SIX	
GOODNESS	62
CHAPTER SEVEN	
FAITHFULNESS.	68
CHAPTER EIGHT	
GENTLENESS	83
CHAPTER NINE	
SELF-CONTROL	91
COMMENCEMENT IN CHRIST	102
EPILOGUE	
THE JOY OF ORTHODOXY.	113
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	120



To
Jacquelyn Amanda for inspiring me to Write,
Langley Georgia for encouraging me to Write,
and
Lucia Marie and Maximus Ashby for Writing



Fruits of the Spirit
by
Millie Ruth Frazier

Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Kindness,
Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-control.
These are the Fruits of the Spirit.

Love obeys God.
Joy watches new puppies being born.
Peace hears the ocean waves.
Longsuffering endures.
Kindness cares for others.
Goodness has a good attitude.
Faithfulness has a good relationship with God.
Gentleness speaks kindly to those around you.
Self-control controls your temper.

Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Kindness,
Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-control.
For these are the Fruits of the Spirit!



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you and warm welcome to His Eminence Metropolitan Saba Esper, Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America, as he visited Saint Patrick Orthodox Church in Virginia for Sung Vespers and a potluck dinner on Monday 22 May 2023. Our beloved Metropolitan joyfully reminded us, “The purpose of the Christian life is to acquire the Holy Spirit in us, to be children of God.” Thank you also to His Grace Bishop John Abdalah for ordaining me at Saint Patrick Orthodox Church while celebrating the Feast of Saint Patrick on Sunday 17 March 2019. Bishop John recently visited our church during Pentecost and shared these wise words with our precious people in the pews: “God knows that the world is complicated and complex; but He is with us and will guide us, if we allow ourselves to get out of our own way and allow Him to love us and show Himself through us.”

Our kind bishop also blessed us with these most memorable words: “This community is a miraculous one.” Truly blessed at age sixty-six to find myself serving at both the best church and the finest school in the world.

David and Jo Thoburn hired me to teach fourth grade at The Fairfax Christian School in Dulles, Virginia, eight years ago. I am eternally grateful to them and my esteemed col-

league, David McElfresh, for his positive recommendation leading to my hiring and for welcoming my students into his high school Chemistry laboratory to teach them how to compete successfully in the Science Fair each spring. My life was changed forever upon landing this most magnificent assignment teaching fourth-grade scholars at the very best school in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

An author must never forget his friends from university shaping his life forever. Thank you to the Sorin Seven from the University of Notre Dame: Doctor Dick Duffey, Doctor Mark Heberlein, Steve Jehl, Father Bob Loughery, Paul Peralta, Rick Remick, and Kevin Ryan of blessed memory. My freshman roommate Tom Rigsby and two Fighting Irish friends continuing their commitment to academic excellence with me in graduate studies at the University of Texas, Diego Peña and Bob Savage, remain lifelong friends. Special thanks also to CBS political analyst Robert Costa and architect and author Michael Molinelli for their enthusiastic encouragement. Graduating from Notre Dame with Hall-of-Fame quarterback Joe Montana, perhaps the greatest player in N.F.L history, and driving cross-country to witness the memorable Cotton Bowl battles of 1978 and 1979, a National Championship victory and perhaps the greatest comeback in college football history, respectively, brought an abundance of joy into my heart to last a lifetime.

As a varsity high school coach nearly two decades ago, my teams at Bethlehem Baptist Christian Academy and Fair Oaks Academy in Fairfax, Virginia, inspired me by capturing four Northern Virginia Independent Athletic Confer-

ence championships in five years. Soccer's fabulous Four Horsemen – Jae, Will, Danny, and Matt – stole the crown against an undefeated and highly-skilled perennial championship rival after double overtime by delivering a perfect penalty kick shootout, and on the basketball court, my Assistant Coach James G. Slater and I celebrated three magnificent playdown and conference championship runs. Danny da Prodigy, Matt, Jae, Andrew, and Josh won the first with a dramatic dive and a flurry of threes; Cristos, David the Pistol, Sam, James, and Darryl captured the second with a 49-47 buzzer beater; and Cristos, Bobak, Daniel, Tyler, and James staged a dramatic 48-43 come-from-behind victory to steal the third. Thank you to all my players and assistant coaches during the past three decades, far too many winners and Christ Champions to mention by name.

Innumerable pen pals bring immeasurable joy to my heart. My most famous pen pal was Metropolitan Kallistos Ware of blessed memory, kind enough to send a few thoughtful postcards from Oxford, England, during the early years of my entry into Orthodoxy a decade ago. Franciscan priests Father Walter Dolan of blessed memory, Father Zachary Hayes of blessed memory, Father Henry Wilkenborg, Father Mike Haney, Father Chuck Faso, Father Don Blaeser, and Father Tom Nairn of the Sacred Heart Province corresponded faithfully for more than three decades. Lindsay Marie and I have been premier pen pals for nearly a quarter of a century. Besides sending pen pal letters and postcards, Craft Captain Luci Marie planned countless Sunday School team-taught classes. Maggie McLaurin continues penning long letters after many years,

and I still receive loads of letters from my prayerful pen pals Maximus Ashby, a sports superstar, and Millie Ruth, a prestigious poet.

I am eternally grateful to Coptic priest Father Anthony Messeh, Father Alexander Atty of blessed memory, Father Peter Gillquist of blessed memory, and Father Patrick Cardine, for being my first four contacts guiding and inspiring me into Orthodoxy.

My wonder-ful family gathered last month to celebrate Mom's one-hundred-and-first birthday, and there is much joy whenever I visit my older siblings Fred, Lyn, and Vince and their families. Each day I also pray by name for Whitney and Judy, Angela Marie and Kevin, Grant and Nolan, Stephanie Lynn and Isaac, Brett Jordan, Fred and Tania, and Frederick Fuechee and Leilala Hli Nra.

Finally, a profound personal and professional thank you to Subdeacon Scott Richardson, my faithful American advisor and editor recently returning home after completing his fourth Camino de Santiago pilgrimage in Spain. Holy and heartfelt love and appreciation to Maxim Hodak and Max Mendor of Stichting Orthodox Logos and Ksenia Papazova, the Managing Editor of Glagoslav Publications, in Nederland, for your admirable assistance in publishing my five theological books. Your deep commitment to our beloved Orthodox faith inspires.

Life is a most miraculous mystery. Baptized at Saint Patrick Catholic Church in Indiana as an infant in 1957, I was chrismated at Saint Patrick Orthodox Church in Virginia in 2013. "May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in your faith, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, your whole

life and outlook may be radiant with hope” (Romans 15:13 PHILLIPS). We all are too, too blessed.

Friends in Jesus and Mary, Angels and Saints,

Deacon David Lochbihler

Saint Patrick Orthodox Church

Friday 8 September 2023

Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Consecrated with Chrism Oil a Decade Earlier

orthodoxdeacondavid@gmail.com

ABOUT THIS BOOK

All of our lives strive to mirror the Fruit of the Spirit described in Galatians 5:22-23. Prior to becoming a published author, I submitted articles to *The Word*, the premier periodical of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, and the magazine published five of my essays. As an anthology of Orthodox essays, this work utilizes a format distinct from my other four books. As separate articles spanning several years, the chapters of this book stand independently and sometimes overlap. For example, some chapters use footnotes, while others place citations within parentheses inside the text. As distinct articles, the chapters in this book need not be read in succession. I hope and pray various chapters within this book truly touch your heart and draw you closer to union and communion with our Uncreated God.

PROLOGUE

OUR FIRST CHRISTMAS TOGETHER

(*The Word* published “Our First Christmas Together”
in May 2015.)

“The authors of the Holy Writ boldly proclaim this most scandalous message that the uncreated eternal Holy God would become, could become flesh and remain flesh for all eternity. And in so doing would sanctify and make divine that which is created.” Father Patrick preached this message at the Midnight Divine Liturgy during our first Christmas together in our new church sanctuary at Saint Patrick Orthodox Church in Bealeton, Virginia.

Our new church lent itself to the mystery of the Incarnation during our first Christmas together. Two images come to mind. First and most obvious, and rather humorous, was that of the fattest Christmas tree you have ever seen, reaching up to the ceiling and covering almost a third of the floor space to the left of the altar. In their written reflections about the feast, two of our youth thought like me and readily remembered our “very fat tree.”

The second, more profound image I recall was the many lit candles. Standing serenely in our new sanctuary on

Christmas Eve, I immediately noticed the beautiful light of the many candles proclaiming the First Coming of the Light of the World. What would life be like without this Divine Light? Father Patrick preached at our first Midnight Mass, “He was born in a cave because we were trapped in a darkness, born among beasts because we had become irrational beasts, bound by cloths because we have been bound by sin, laid in a feed trough because His flesh is true food and His blood true drink for the life of the world.”

Our new church building was so beautiful during our first Midnight Mass together. I asked our people what stood out for them during this historic first for our congregation. Mark, an attorney, jumped right to the heart of the matter: “The Eucharist.” Born in the darkness of midnight, we now live in the light of day, because “he who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him” (John 6:56, NASB). The “simplicity” of our first Christmas together stood out for Lisa, a nurse. As Saint Paul struggled to keep the church in Corinth focused on orthodoxy, he spoke about darkness and sin and challenged them to choose light and holiness: “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3, NASB). Leila, creative and artistic, rejoiced at the beauty of the “sound” within our new sanctuary. Moving from the back of a rented antique store to the ceilings of a new sanctuary truly enhanced our worship experience, the “amazing acoustics” giving the singing of Khouria Kerrie and the choir, in Leila’s words, “a richer, deeper sound.” As King David called the people of Israel, so, too, we are en-

couraged, to “sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness” (Psalm 30:4, KJV).

Our youth loved and cherished our first Christmas together as much as their parents. The beautifully rich acoustics touched the heart of Abigail: “The songs we sung, I really thought about it, and I think I really came closer to God.” Elizabeth “felt the Holy Spirit come into me and fill me with the Christmas spirit.” She also loved Luke’s Gospel read by Deacon Douglas: “Just hearing the birth of Jesus made me smile.” Granted our years worshipping at the back of the antique store still were special, but Siena for the first time could joyfully declare, “This Christmas I got to celebrate in a *church*.”

Mary, one of our youth leaders, summarized the myriad feelings within the hearts of both young and old in this our first Christmas together at Saint Patrick Orthodox Church: “Christmas is always such a humbling and serene service. However, as we celebrated the Nativity Feast for the first time in our new building, in our own building, it seemed to rise to an even higher level of spirituality. There was a calm about the nave. The choir sounded especially angelic as their sound echoed through the church. There was a feeling of peace, a sense of belonging that seemed to hang over the building. We know the church is represented by the people and not necessarily the building, but the beauty and serenity of Christmas Mass proved the glory and joy that comes with a holy house of worship.”

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the

Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14, NKJV). Father Patrick's sermon brought us back to the significance of the essential mystery of our Orthodox faith, the Incarnation: "God has become a part of this creation without ceasing to be God and all the world has been changed and made holy. The seas have been delivered of the serpent; blood and breath, and sky and earth have been made new because God has become flesh and has sanctified all flesh. His descent into the watery womb of the Holy Virgin and His descent into the watery tomb of the River Jordan have redeemed the waters themselves. The created and the uncreated have been united in the Virgin's womb and nothing remains the same, all has become sacred, this is what happened when God became man."

Father Patrick's beautiful daughter Olivia Jane was sick at home and missed our first Christmas together. Steeped in the truth of Orthodoxy, she felt deeply saddened knowing what she was missing but celebrated and rejoiced with us nonetheless: "I imagine everything coming together to make a beautiful and memorable first Christmas at St. Patrick Orthodox Church. And most importantly, it showed what Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany are all about: GOD."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Deacon David Lochbihler, J.D., serves at the Holy Altar at Saint Patrick Orthodox Church and teaches Fourth Grade at The Fairfax Christian School in Virginia. After graduating *summa cum laude* from the University of Notre Dame and *cum laude* from the University of Texas School of Law, Deacon David worked as a Chicago attorney for three years before becoming a teacher and coach for three decades. He also earned three Master's degrees in Elementary Education, Biblical Studies, and Orthodox Theology. His varsity high school basketball and soccer teams captured four N.V.I.A.C. conference championships. He authored *Prayers to Our Lady East and West* (2021), *The Joy of Orthodoxy* (2022), *Our Orthodox Holy Family: A Joyful Journey with Jesus and Mary* (2022), and *Joyful Solitude* (2023).



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OUR ORTHODOX HOLY FAMILY:

A JOYFUL JOURNEY WITH JESUS AND MARY

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PRAYERS TO OUR LADY EAST AND WEST

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JOYFUL SOLITUDE

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