

Knowing, Praying, Living the Holy Scriptures

“How I have loved thy law, O Lord! The whole day it is my meditation.” (Ps 118:97)

Leviticus 18:22-23

“You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination. Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it.” (OSB)

The royal priesthood with which God has blessed His people touches every aspect of their life, calling for holiness and an embodiment of true human life in all areas. This is no less the case for human sexuality, one of the most beautiful, potent, and problematic parts of human existence. In stark contrast to the modern way of handling texts like Lev 18:22-23, which treats them as “cultural artifacts” of a backwards and outdated worldview, we must embrace these texts, like all of Scripture, as God’s loving revelation to us and—very importantly—we must understand the *coherent* portrait of human life that undergirds these texts. Which is to say, Lev 18:22-23 is not an arbitrary “rule/law” which God tyrannically imposes on humanity just because “He says so.” To believe so would be to buy into the Serpent’s lie in the Garden, to put God-given boundaries in opposition to God’s goodness. So, what is the coherent picture here?

We must go back to the accounts of creation in Genesis 1-2 and recall the unique place that God has given humanity in the created order, placed as the mid-point between heaven and earth, partaking of matter and spirit, below the angels yet greater than the angels as co-rulers with God over creation, among the living creatures on earth yet above them all by virtue of the divine Image and Likeness.

And we must recall that the “Original Sin” was that of *Idolatry*, of worshipping the creation rather than the Creator. This is precisely how St. Paul lays out the matter in Romans 1-3: humanity’s idolatrous false worship interrupts the relationship of Image (God/Christ) and image-bearer (humans), which plunges humanity into an ever-descending spiral of chaos and disintegration. In short, disordered sexuality is a product of disordered worship. When we lose the knowledge of who we are as God’s image-bearers, we turn God’s good gifts to us into idols, into ends-in-themselves, and thus we necessarily start to misuse and distort those gifts because they have been removed from the Pattern of the Image in which they were made and given.

Leviticus 18:22-23 is part of a whole series of instructions to Israel, and thus to us, about avoiding what might be called “illicit mixtures.” This simply means that God has set up creation to work in certain ways *naturally*—creation has a “natural grain” to it that can be known and lived out without contrivance or complication. God creates things “according to their kind,” and these “kinds” are real, and involve a distinction that is to be observed. Humans are not irrational beasts, and so we are not to live as if we were: for a human to unite sexually with an animal is an “illicit mixture” for it degrades humans—it effects a communion between two things that are not the same and should not be combined; it lowers humans to animal status, and blasphemously raises animals to level of divine-image bearers.

The issue is the same with intra-human sexual relationships. The homosexual union is an illicit mixture for it involves both a misuse of the God-given faculties intended for the marital union, both in unitive and procreative terms, and it effectively communicates that “male” and “female” are not God-given, ultimate realities that define what it means for humanity to be created in God’s Image. In short, the issue with homosexual practice, as with all sexual sin, indeed *ALL SIN*, is humanity usurping the prerogative of God as Creator. The pastoral questions here are real as relates to each individual person, but we must not be double-minded about the cultural moment we are in: “Equality” has, in most cases, become double-speak for secular Humanity’s declaration of its own emancipation from God.



ST. PHILIP ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the
Antiochian Archdiocese

His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH



His Grace Bishop THOMAS



Father Noah Bushelli, Pastor

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Father James Thayer

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July 28, 2019

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

COMMEMORATIONS:

PROCHORUS, NICANOR, TIMON AND PARMENAS,
DEACONS AND APOSTLES OF THE SEVENTY
VENERABLE PAUL, FOUNDER OF XEROPOTAMOU AND
ST. PAUL MONASTERIES ON ATHOS
VENERABLE IRENE CHRYSOVALANTOU
PITIRIM, BISHOP OF TAMBOV

Tone 5 - Eothinon 6

Orthros Gospel: St. Luke 24:36-53

Epistle: Romans 12:6-14

Liturgy Gospel: St. Matthew 9:1-8

RESURRECTION TROPARION - Tone 5 - Let us believers praise and worship the Word, coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation; for he took pleasure in ascending the cross in the flesh, to suffer death, and to raise the dead by his glorious resurrection.

KONTAKION OF THE TRANSFIGURATION - Tone 7 - Thou wast transfigured on the mount, and Thy Disciples, in so far as they were able, beheld Thy glory, O Christ our God; so that, when they should see Thee crucified, they would remember that all Thy suffering was voluntary, and could declare to all the world that Thou art truly the effulgent Splendor of the Father.

TODAY: Orthros 8:45 am; Divine Liturgy 10 am
Coffee Hour after Liturgy.
Festival Kick-off Meeting, 12:30 p.m.
Ethnic Dance Practice, 1 pm

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Office Hours: Monday through Friday 10:00 - 3:00

Fr Noah & Fr James are available for hospital visits. If you or anyone you know is in the hospital or homebound and would like a visit, please call the church office.

Weekly Ministries & Stewards:

	This Week:	Next Week (Aug 4):
PROSPHORA BREAD:	MaryLynne Black	Kristi Moore
EPISTLE READER:	Terry Kaminsky	Greg Howanetz
USHERS:	Peter C. & Gabe Q.	Steve K. & Colin M.
ALTAR CANDLES:	Jordan & Natalie Gamble Celebration of 1st Wedding Anniversary	----
GREETERS:	Celia-Marie & Sharon	Nick & Martha Morelli
CLEANING TEAM:	Kim B.; Todd & Kristi M.	Teens w/ Nathan & Rebecca
COFFEE HOUR:	Donation – Ukrainian Orphanage	Khalifa Family

EVERYONE is invited to stay for refreshments after the Divine Liturgy. Your assistance in cleanup is appreciated.

Mark Your Calendar:

Dormition Fast - August 1-14
Holy Unction, Aug 7, 4 pm

Feast of the Dormition
Wednesday, August 14

Vespers, Artoklasia, & Lamentations 7 pm
Blessing of Herbs & Flowers 8 pm

Thursday, August 15

Orthros 9 am, Liturgy 10 am
Blessing of Herbs & Flowers 11:30 am

Behheading of the Forerunner (Strict Fast)
Wednesday, August 28
Vespers 7 pm

Thursday, August 29
Orthros 9 am, Liturgy 10 am

International Food Festival
September 20-21

Pray For:

Living	Departed
Archimandrite David (Griffeth)	Masresha Alees
Fr. Julian Daniella-Gabriela	Isaac Najib
Laurence John	
Child Gregory & family	
Lasha B Otari B	<u>Catechumens</u>
Daniel H John	Zachary, Evan, Tina, Robert, Michael, & Connor
Doris Christiana Nancy	
Philip & Family	<u>St. Nina's List</u>
Thomas, Elizabeth & all Missionaries	Andrea Jeremy Michael Bailey
New & Expectant Mothers & children	

Ministry Highlights

"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (1 Peter 4:10)

"International Food Festival"

The purpose of the International Food Festival is to introduce our community to the Orthodox Christian faith through the celebration of the many cultures represented within our parish. This two-day festival offers international fare, ethnic dancing, gift bazaar, live music, iconography display, children's activities, Church tours, Sacred music concerts. The Festival also serves as an outreach to the community, by welcoming the community into our church "home" and raising funds for local charities, as well as contributing to needs and special projects of the parish, and bonding our parish family together in cooperation. Everyone in the parish is needed to make this year's festival a success, Sept 21 & 22 - 12 noon to 8 pm.

This Week:

Vacation Church School – Mon-Fri, 9 am -12 noon

Monday, July 29: SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon

Tuesday, July 30: Matushka Olga Sewing Club, 11 a.m.
SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon

Wed, July 31: SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon
Byzantine Chant Workshop, 6 p.m.
Compline & Patristic Reading, 7 p.m.

DORMITION FAST—August 1-14

Thursday, Aug 1: SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon
Paraklesis, 7 p.m.

Friday, Aug 2: SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon
Paraklesis, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Aug 3: VESPERS 6 p.m.; Confession 7 p.m.

Sunday, Aug 4: ORTHROS 8:45 a.m.,
Divine LITURGY w/ Youth Choir 10 a.m.
Coffee Hour after Liturgy.
Ethnic Dance Practice, 1 p.m.
Paraklesis, 2 p.m.

OUTREACH COLLECTION: Oral Care Products

SPIRITUAL WARFARE: "Displace"
Taking Every Thought Captive to Christ

ATTENDANCE: At Vespers on July 20: 43 Divine Services on July 21: 198
OFFERINGS: Candles, \$242.25. Collections, \$170.75. Youth, \$6. Land Acquisition Fund, \$30,336.12. FOCUS Backpacks, \$190. Stewardship, \$3,309. Total received: \$34,254.12.

GOD BLESS YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS & GENEROSITY!

The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch (Acts II:26)