

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 15:31

“Thus you shall make the children of Israel cautious about their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they defile My tabernacle among them.” (OSB modified)

As the “Purity Code” (Lev 11-15) reaches completion, and the rites prescribed for Israel’s most solemn feast, the Day of Atonement (Lev 16), are about to be given, God offers this concluding admonition to Israel through Moses. In Leviticus 10, Nadab and Abihu’s “strange fire” led to their swift demise, and so here, with Israel as a whole in view, God emphasizes the importance of Israel’s attention to their “purity” and the Tabernacle’s.

While for us in the New Covenant, much of this code of regulations has been fulfilled and thus transcended in practical terms (cf. Acts 10-11; Rom 14:14), yet even as the Law is raised to a new spiritual level, the pattern of relationships and concerns that God reveals here are not in any way rendered obsolete in the New Covenant. Leviticus 15:31 remains the paradigm of our call to cooperate in our ongoing sanctification as participants in the Temple of Christ’s Body, the Church. While the forms of “uncleanness” that defile now are no longer leprosy, child birth, unclean animals, or bodily fluids, nevertheless there remain “uncleannesses” of a much graver sort which we as the Church must avoid and cleanse ourselves of:

But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. (Eph 5:3-5; cf. 2 Cor 6:16-7:1)

This is a sobering statement, and it compels us to acknowledge the *conditional* nature of the relationship between God and His people, which comes into focus through God’s presence in the Tabernacle. It is simply the reality of the matter that, just as God’s Glory once overshadowed and filled the Tabernacle, it can just as easily leave. Israel’s religious edifices, even God-given ones, did not “confine” God.

This is exactly what we see later in the Prophet Ezekiel’s mystical vision of the Shekinah Glory lifting up from the Jerusalem Temple, and heading east, over the Kidron Valley and the Mount of Olives, toward Babylon, where the exiles from Judah were taken (Ezek 10).

To be sure, none of this is to suggest that God is fickle and unreliable, or that God would renege on His promises. Indeed, “God is not a man such that He should lie” (Num 23:19). In Ezekiel, in fact, the departure of God’s glory from the Temple, while tragic, is actually a note of comfort and confidence: God’s glory is *movable!* Because all of creation is God’s Temple, God’s Presence can go with His people anywhere, even into exile. This, too, is the message of the Suffering Servant of which Isaiah prophesies—God Himself joins His people in their self-imposed sickness and exile to heal and redeem them (Isaiah 53).

What God *is* wanting to communicate, however, is that we must never confuse the blessing and privilege of God’s presence with a “right” of our own, as “leverage” over God based in something we generate on our own, and certainly not as a license to live in ways that flout God’s grace. When St. Paul writes to the Hebrews, he warns them that the consequences for covenant unfaithfulness in the New Covenant are, not less, but *more severe* than under the Old Covenant, to those who would “trample the Son of God under foot, counting the blood of the covenant by which [the Christian] was sanctified a common thing, and insulting the Spirit of grace” (Heb 10:29 par).

There is a tipping point, where God can and will withdraw His presence and/or remove our Lampstand from before the Throne (Rev 2:5)! May that never be the case for us, through the prayers of the Theotokos, St. Philip, and all the Saints!



ST. PHILIP ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the
Antiochian Archdiocese

His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH

◆◆

His Grace Bishop THOMAS

◆◆

Father Noah Bushelli, Pastor

215-954-9286

◆◆

Father James Thayer

215-692-0890

July 7, 2019

GREAT-MARTYR KYRIAKI OF NICOMEDIA & THIRD SUNDAY OF MATTHEW

COMMEMORATIONS:

VENERABLE THOMAS OF MT. MALEON
HIEROMARTYR EVANGELOS, BISHOP OF TOMI
(CONSTANTA) IN ROMANIA
NEW-MARTYR POLYCARP
EUDOKIA, PRINCESS OF MOSCOW

Tone 2 - Eothinon 3

Orthros Gospel: St. Mark 16:9-20

Epistle: Galatians 3:23-4:5

Liturgy Gospel: St. Matthew 6:22-33

RESURRECTION TROPARION - Tone 2 - When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Thou who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee!

APOLYTIKION OF ST. KYRIAKI - Tone 5 - Thou didst prove an auspicious and pleasing sacrifice, * a holy off’ring, O valiant prizewinner Kyriaki, * when thou broughtest thy Creator thine own spotless soul; * which Christ in turn hath glorified, * for through thee, He poureth forth divine gifts and endless graces * upon the faithful who praise thee, since He is the Friend of man.

TODAY: Orthros 8:45 am; Divine Liturgy 10 am
Trisagion (Hulik) – Memory Eternal!
Coffee Hour 11:45 am
Women of St. Mariamne, 12 noon
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 (July 14):
PROSPHORA BREAD:	Carolyn Kaminsky	Kristi Moore
EPISTLE READER:	Brian Fitzgerald	Catalin Tinjala
USHERS:	Gabe Q. & Sdn. John	Steve K. & Colin M.
ALTAR CANDLES:	----	Michael & Marcia Ibrahim In Memory of Alees, Isaac, & Najib
GREETERS:	Angie Drăghici	Jim & Dorris Eggers
CLEANING TEAM:	Natalia M., John G., & Moody family	Sdn. John & Maxine and Tatiana Y.
COFFEE HOUR:	Val & Nina Hulik In Memory of Lida & Iwan Hulik and Maria & Iwan Sowerschennyl	Alemash & Tsegereda

Mark Your Calendar:

- VCS Volunteer Meeting
Sunday, July 21, after Liturgy
- Vacation Church School
July 29–August 2
- Dormition Fast - August 1-14
Daily Paraklesis
Holy Unction, Aug 7, 4 pm
- Liturgy w/ Youth Choir
Sunday, August 4
- Transfiguration
Monday, August 5
Vespers & Artoklasia, 6 pm
Orthros, 7 pm
- Tuesday, August 6
Divine Liturgy, 9 am
Blessing of Fruit & Produce, 10:30 am
- International Food Festival
September 20-21

Pray For:

Living	Departed
Fr. Julian	Elder
Daniella-Gabriela	Amelianos
Laurence	Alees
John	Isaac
Child Gregory & family	Najib
Lasha B	
Otari B	
Daniel H	
John	<u>Catechumens</u>
Doris	Zachary, Evan,
Christiana	Tina, Robert, &
Nancy	Michael
Karen, Alice,	
Blake, Valerie	
Ted & family	<u>St. Nina's List</u>
	Andrea
Thomas, Elizabeth	Jeremy
& all Missionaries	Michael
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)

"FOCUS Backpack Program"

The purpose of the FOCUS Backpack Program is to assist families-in-need with school supplies by filling brand-new backpacks (provided by FOCUS North America) with school supplies that will be donated to students at EM Crouthamel Elementary School in Souderton, PA. The backpacks need to be filled and returned to church by July 28th along with a donation of \$10 to FOCUS. For more information contact Naomi Cardell, Project Coordinator (nschair58@live.com or 215-285-7830).

SPECIAL APPEAL for VCS

Three ways you can help as we are gearing up for another **Vacation Church School**, of growth in faith and love for God: 1) See Kate Gohl about volunteering; 2) Pray for Fr. Noah, leaders, and students; 3) Consider offering a financial gift to cover expenses.

This Week:

- Monday, July 8:** SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon
- Tuesday, July 9:** Matushka Olga Sewing Club, 11 a.m.
SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon
- Wed, July 10:** SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon
Compline & Patristic Reading, 7 p.m.
- Thursday, July 11:** SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon
Twelve Baskets Full, 6:30 p.m.
- Friday, July 12:** SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon
- Saturday, July 13:** VESPERS 6 p.m.; Confession 7 p.m.
- Sunday, July 14:** ORTHROS 8:45 a.m., Divine LITURGY 10 a.m.
Coffee Hour after Liturgy.
Ethnic Dance Practice, 1 p.m.

OUTREACH COLLECTION:

Oral Care Products

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

ATTENDANCE: At Vespers on Jun 29: 31 Divine Services on Jun 30: 193

OFFERINGS: Candles, \$544. Collections, \$535. Vacation Church School, \$100. Stewardship, \$5,330. Total received: \$6,509.

GOD BLESS YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS & GENEROSITY!

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