

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 26:27-29

"Now if after all this, you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk in hostility to you; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. Then you shall eat the flesh of your sons and daughters." (OSB)

Leviticus 26 presents what is called the "Blessings and Curses," that is, God telling Israel what good things will come from covenant obedience, and the bad that will come from disobedience. This is the first time they are enumerated; the second listing is near the end of the Book of Deuteronomy, chap. 28.

The "Blessings and Curses" serve at least two important functions. First, they preclude anyone from saying, "We didn't know." God, as a loving Father, tells His children ahead of time what the consequences will be of their free choices: "Do you want the blessings I have promised you? Remain faithful; stay in communion with Me, the Source of Life. But know that if you disobey and go your own way, you will reap the disastrous fruit of self-destruction."

Second, they function within Scripture as prophetic pictures of Israel's future. As the reader of Scripture continues on into Israel's later story, the reader hears and sees the "curses" of the Covenant played out in Israel's historical life. And so we know on our "second reading" of the Bible that Israel will in fact choose "death/cursing," and while we are filled with tension over that, we realize that the question is actually being addressed to us: Which will we choose?

The astute reader might notice that the list of "curses" (Lev 26:14-39) outnumbers the list of "blessings" (Lev 26:3-13) by almost 3 to 1. God is much more specific and descriptive of the bad than of the good! This is the case, of course, because *He loves us*. The blessings of communion with God are infinite and inexpressible: "As it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him' (1 Cor 2:9; Isa 64:4; 65:17). By contrast, as an accommodation to our feeble nature, God must elaborate on the "bad" for us who remain in spiritual infancy, to dissuade us from what is harmful by fear of punishments.

In light of our previous discussions of Leviticus, we might detect a few ironies in the curse mentioned above. In Lev 17:11, we observed that God gave Israel the "life-soul-blood" of the sacrificial animals for the cleansing of the altar and the people. Rather than partaking of the altar, and its sacrifices and atonement, the way of cursing leads to *cannibalism*, to consuming oneself. Israel, who destroyed its own children in pagan sacrifice (Isa 57:5; Jer 32:35; Ezek 16:20; Ps 105:38), will end up *eating* her own children when the siege of the conquering Assyrians and Babylonians is arrayed against them (Jer 19:9). So, "because they treated infants unjustly, they will be slain" (Prov 1:32 LXX).

We see another irony in the character of God's punishment: Israel will refuse to keep the Seventh Day, the Sabbath, and so God "repays" with a sevenfold ("Sabbatical") punishment. Here is an important Scriptural principle, that punishment follows sin: those who worship idols become like them (Ps 113:16). St. Paul talks about this principle in terms of God "handing us over" to our own sins (Rom 1:20ff; cf. Wisdom of Solomon 14:22ff). Again, God does this as a loving Father, desiring us to repent, to turn and be healed.

But Israel, and humanity as a whole, does not turn, and so it falls under the curse of its own way. For this reason, those who are "under the Law" are under the Law's curse that has been activated through our disobedience. Christ becomes a curse for us to redeem us and make a new covenant (Gal 3:10-14)!



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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August 25, 2019

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST

COMMEMORATIONS:

RETURN OF THE BODY OF BARTHOLOMEW THE
GLORIOUS APOSTLE

TITUS THE APOSTLE OF THE 70

JOHN THE CAPPADOCIAN

EPIPHANIUS AND MENAS, PATRIARCHS OF
CONSTANTINOPLE

HOLY FATHER JOHN OF CARPATHIA
EBBA, FIRST ABBESS OF COLDINGHAM

Tone 1 - Eothinon 10

Orthros Gospel: St. John 21:1-14

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16

Liturgy Gospel: St. Matthew 17:14-23

RESURRECTION TROPARION - Tone 1 - While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding thy most pure Body, thou didst arise on the third day, O Saviour, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto thee, O Giver of life: Glory to thy resurrection, O Christ! Glory to thy kingdom! Glory to thy providence, O thou who alone art the Lover of mankind!

KONTAKION OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS - Tone 4 - By thy holy nativity, O pure one, Joachim and Anna were delivered from the reproach of barrenness; and Adam and Eve were delivered from the corruption of death; thy people do celebrate it, having been saved from the stain of iniquity, crying unto thee: The barren doth give birth to the Theotokos, who nourisheth our life.

TODAY: Orthros 8:45 am; Divine Liturgy 10 am
Catechism Orientation immediately following Liturgy
Coffee Hour
SS Teacher Meeting, 12:30 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 (Sept 1): |
|------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| PROSPHORA BREAD: | MaryLynne Black | Kristi Moore |
| EPISTLE READER: | Jennifer Howanetz | Irene Forssen |
| USHERS: | Peter C. & Steve K. | Dan M. & Colin M. |
| ALTAR CANDLES: | ---- | ---- |
| ALTAR BOYS: | All | All |
| GREETERS: | Justin & Kate Gohl | Todd & Kristi Moore |
| CLEANING TEAM: | Jamil & Nicole Kyriakos family | Jordan & Natalie; Zell & Redeat |
| COFFEE HOUR: | Potluck | Tinjala & Nicholson |

EVERYONE is invited to stay for refreshments after the Divine Liturgy. Your assistance in cleanup is appreciated. **COFFEE HOUR SPONSORS NEEDED!** Many upcoming weeks do not have sponsors - can you take a turn?

Mark Your Calendar:

Nativity of the Theotokos

*Sunday, September 8
& First Day of Sunday School*

Elevation of the Holy Cross (Strict Fast)

Friday, Sept 13

Vespers & Artoklasia, 7 pm

Saturday, Sept 14

Orthros & Cross Procession 9 am,

Divine Liturgy 10 am

w/ Fasting Potluck to follow

International Food Festival

September 20-21

Pilgrimage to Holy Protection Monastery

Monday, Sept 30

Women's Heart Health Presentation

Saturday, Oct 5, 2 pm

Pray For:

| Living | Departed |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Archimandrite David (Griffeth) | |
| Sharon-Elizabeth | |
| Laurence | |
| Lasha B | |
| Otari B | |
| Daniel H | <u>Catechumens</u> |
| John | Zachary, |
| Doris | Evan, Tina, |
| Nancy | Robert, |
| | Michael, |
| Thomas, | Todd, Kendra, |
| Elizabeth & all | Liesel, Todd, |
| Missionaries | John Moses, |
| | Virginia |
| New & Expectant Mothers & children | <u>St. Nina's List</u> |
| | Michael |

OUTREACH COLLECTION:

Paper Products

SPIRITUAL WARFARE: "Destroy"

Taking Every Thought Captive to Christ

The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch (Acts 11:26)

This Week:

Monday, Aug 26: SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon

Tuesday, Aug 27: SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon
Matushka Olga Sewing Club, 11 am

Wed, August 28: SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon
Byzantine Chant Workshop, 6 p.m.
Compline & Patristic Reading, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Aug 29: Beheading of St. John the Baptist
– Strict Fast
Orthros 9 am; Liturgy 10 am
Fasting Potluck to follow

Friday, August 30: Office closed.

Saturday, Aug 31: VESPERS 6 p.m., Confession 7 p.m.

Sunday, Sept 1: Ecclesiastical New Year
ORTHROS 8:45 a.m.,
Divine LITURGY & New Year Blessing 10 a.m.
Altar Boy & Parents Meeting, 11:45 a.m.
Coffee Hour after Liturgy.

Starting on
Sept 7 ...

Vespers
Mini-Homily
Series on
"The Lord's
Prayer"

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)

"St. Boniface Catechetical School"

The purpose of the St. Boniface Catechetical School is to prepare catechumens to be received into the Holy Orthodox Church through an alignment of faith and practice so that they live a solid and fruitful Christian life in the Church. The school is directed by the parish priest who is assisted by lay catechists. The completion of the catechism program will not guarantee entrance into the Church, which is at the sole discretion of the pastor. For more information about the St. Boniface Catechetical School, or to inquire about becoming a catechumen contact Fr. Noah Bushelli (nbushelli@st-philip.net) or Reader Nicholas Muzekari - Lead Catechist (nmuzekari@gmail.com).

ATTENDANCE: At Vespers on Aug 17: 39 Divine Services on Aug 18: 176
OFFERINGS: Candles, \$302. Collections, \$329.01. Youth, \$5. Book Shelf Ministry, \$15. Camping Fund, \$250. Land Acquisition, \$5,100. FOCUS Backpacks, \$20. Stewardship, \$7,754. Total received: \$13,775.01. Festival Account: \$2,000.

GOD BLESS YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS & GENEROSITY!