

Knowing, Praying, Living the Holy Scriptures

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

Judges 7:2

“And the Lord said to Gideon, ‘The people with you are too numerous; I dare not deliver Midian into their hand, lest otherwise Israel boast against Me, saying, ‘This my own hand, it saved me.’” (OSB)

After the judging of Deborah and Barak, Israel turns back to its former ways, doing “evil before the Lord” (Judg 6:1), so God hands Israel over to the Midianites for seven years. The Midianites are descendants of Abraham from Keturah (Gen 25:2, 4), the same people, it seems, who bought Joseph from his brothers and led him to enslavement in Egypt (Gen 37:28, 36). It is interesting in this regard that **the Midianite oppression is recounted in ways that evoke the plagues of Egypt** (Judg 6:5), as well as the memory of God’s deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Judg 6:8-10).

God hears and responds to Israel’s cry by raising up Gideon to judge Israel. Gideon’s name means “one who hews down,” indicating both his military prowess and foreshadowing his destruction of his father’s “sacred grove” that was dedicated to the worship of Baal, the Canaanite storm god (Judg 6:25-32).

The Church has always heard in the story of Gideon “echoes” of the story of the Theotokos Mary. Both Gideon and Mary are greeted by an angel of the Lord with “The Lord is with you!” (Judg 6:12; Lk 1:28), both “find favor” with God (Judg 6:15; Lk 1:30), are told “Do not fear” (Judg 6:23; Lk 1:30), and both, deeming themselves insignificant (Judg 6:15; Lk 1:29, 38), express surprise at being called to such a great task—to be used as instruments in the salvation of God’s people. Indeed both are visited by the Holy Spirit (Judg 6:34; Lk 1:35)!

This connection between Gideon and Mary is further expressed in **the miracle of the “Dew Fleece”** (Judg 6:36-40) which from at least the time of St. John Chrysostom the Church has contemplated as a type of the Virginal conception: Christ Himself is the heavenly dew (Ps 71:6) that descends upon Mary who is the dry, virginal fleece.

The pattern of salvation seen here is the same as well: synergy. God works in and through his willing and humble servants, those who show themselves worthy of His calling and visitation. Lest, however, we forget that it is *God* who is at work in us to will and to do His good pleasure (Phil 2:13), God deliberately uses paradoxical means of salvation. What military general would ask for *fewer troops* as he heads into battle with the foe? What kind of deity would reveal himself through a lowly handmaiden, a victory procession on a donkey, and death on a cross, rather than in some cosmic Herculean show of force? The God we worship.

In this way we are instructed both in how we are to relate to God—in humility with God alone as our boast, for nothing we are or have comes apart from Him—and in the “remnant” quality of God’s people. Just as Abraham barter with God on behalf of Lot over the destruction of Sodom (Gen 18:22-32), and Elijah laments the seeming total apostasy of Israel, only to have it revealed that there remain 7,000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal (3 Kgdms 19), so here we are shown that, while many are called, only few are chosen (Matt 20:16; 22:14). Of what sort will we be?



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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February 23, 2020

SUNDAY OF THE LAST JUDGMENT (MEATFARE)

COMMEMORATIONS:

POLYCARP THE HOLY MARTYR & BISHOP OF SMYRNA
PROTERIOS, ARCHBISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA
GORGONIA THE RIGHTEOUS, SISTER OF GREGORY THE
THEOLOGIAN

DAMIAN THE NEW MARTYR OF MOUNT ATHOS
BOSWELL, ABBOT OF MELROSE ABBEY

Tone 3 - Eothinon 3

Orthros Gospel: St. Mark 16:9-20

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2

Liturgy Gospel: St. Matthew 25:31-46

RESURRECTION TROPARION - Tone 3 - Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad; for the Lord hath done a mighty act with his own arm. He hath trampled down death by death and become the First-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depth of hades, granting the world the Great Mercy!

KONTAKION FOR THE LAST JUDGMENT - Tone 1 - When Thou comest, O God, to earth with glory, and all creatures tremble before Thee, and the river of fire floweth before the Altar, and the books are opened and sins revealed, deliver me then from that unquenchable fire, and make me worthy to stand at Thy right hand, O righteous Judge.

TODAY: ORTHROS & Confession 8:30 a.m.
Baptismal LITURGY (Stuhltrager) 9:45 a.m.
Meatfare Donation Coffee Hour served by Women of St. Mariame
Catechism, SS, & Teens 11:45 a.m.
Choir Rehearsal, 12:45 p.m.

✦ **Preparation for Communion Booklets are available in the Narthex—please take one per family.**

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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 (Mar 1):
PROSPHORA BREAD:	MaryLynne Black	Kristi Moore
EPISTLE READER:	Sdn. Luke Carpenter	Terry Kaminsky
USHERS:	Colin M. & Dan M.	Steve K. & Rdr Nick Muzekari
ALTAR CANDLES:	----	Ibrahim & Habib Family In loving memory of Najib & Hertanse Ibrahim, ad Mary & Albert Habib
ALTAR BOYS:	“Archangel Michael”	“Archangel Gabriel”
GREETERS:	Michael & Helen Heveran	Angie Drăghici
CLEANING TEAM:	Olena, Alemash, & Zerfenesh	Ministry Reading Group
COFFEE HOUR:	Women of St. Mariamne	Ibrahim Family

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

Mark Your Calendar:

Pan-Orthodox Lenten Vespers @ St. Philip

Sunday, March 15, 4 p.m.

LENTEN REREAT – March 28, 2020

“Recollecting Glory: Orthodox Education for Wisdom, Virtue, and Joy”
w/ Dr. John Mark Reynolds

Mark your calendar!

We live Pascha to Pascha!
April 19, 2020

Pray For:

Living	Departed
Newly-illuminated Zach (James) Cecilia	Thomas Julie Fr. Patrick Fr. Theodore Anthony
Doris John Lasha B Otari B Daniel H John Zerfenesh Tsighe Maximos	<u>Catechumens</u> Evan, Tina, Robert, Michael, Todd, Kendra, Liesel, Todd, John Moses, Virginia, Conor
Thomas, Elizabeth & all Missionaries	<u>St. Nina's List</u> Andrea, Valerie, Derek, Adam & Maria
New & Expectant Mothers & children	

OUTREACH COLLECTION: Paper Products

EVANGELISM CHALLENGE:

“Pray for open doors to the Gospel in closed countries”

SAINT PHILIP'S is a place of prayer and repentance and a “Pan-Orthodox” parish of the Antiochian Archdiocese, serving Orthodox Christians of all backgrounds in the English language. If you are a newcomer to our community, please sign our guest book, and stay with us for the Coffee Hour today. AND, WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU AGAIN!

PLEASE NOTE: Holy Communion is only for practicing Orthodox Christians who are following the commandments, have prepared themselves through fasting, prayer, and recent confession, who are dressed modestly, and have arrived on time for the Liturgy. All are welcome to kiss the Cross and receive Blessed Bread at the end of the Liturgy.

This Week:

Cheese Week



Mon, Feb 24: SIXTH HOUR, 12 p.m.

Tues, Feb 25: Matushka Olga Sewing Club, 11 a.m.
SIXTH HOUR, 12 p.m.

Wed, Feb 26: SIXTH HOUR, 12 p.m.
Compline & Spiritual Reading
7 p.m.

Thu, Feb 27: SIXTH HOUR, 12 p.m.

Fri, Feb 28: SIXTH HOUR, 12 p.m.

Sat, Feb 29: Catechism Seminar, 4:30 p.m.
Youth Choir rehearsal, 5 p.m.
VESPERS 6 p.m.
Confession 7 p.m.

Sun, Mar 1: SUNDAY OF FORGIVENESS (Cheesefare)
ORTHROS & Confession 8:45 a.m.
Divine LITURGY 10 a.m.
Coffee Hour, Catechism, SS, & Teens 11:45 a.m.
Forgiveness Vespers 1 p.m.

**THE DOORS!
THE DOORS!**
Please note the change in church access on Sunday: **AFTER 10 am, all doors will be locked except the Narthex entrance.** If you arrive after 10 am, please plan to enter through the Narthex.

Preparation for Confession Third Commandment

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

Have I profaned the holy name of God in any way? Have I cursed anyone or anything, or sworn a false oath? Have I failed to give proper reverence to holy persons and things? Have I had due respect for the clergy of the Church or hindered them in performing God's work? Have I broken any solemn vow or promise? Have I entered into any unlawful contract or made an unlawful promise?

ATTENDANCE: At Vespers Feb 15: 54 Divine Services on Feb 16: 181
OFFERINGS: Candles, \$184. Collections, \$299. Youth, \$1. Book Shelf Ministry, \$35. Camping Fund, \$250. Land Acquisition, \$270. Sunday School, \$54. Stewardship, \$8,596. Total received: \$9,689.

GOD BLESS YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS & GENEROSITY!