

Knowing, Praying, Living the Holy Scriptures

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

Numbers 6:24-26

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be merciful to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.” (OSB)

We are so familiar with the practice of asking for and receiving a blessing that it may escape us how serious and substantial an act of faith it is. First, we are assuming that God both *is able* and *wants* to bless us. We are assuming that the God to Whom we are devoted is “good and the lover of mankind,” and that He desires for us to experience the goodness and wholeness that comes from communion with Him. Because “He has made us, and not we ourselves” (Ps 99:3), we confess that He alone knows what we need, and He alone is able to provide for that need. This is blessing.

Second, we are assuming that God uses other humans as instruments and channels of grace. We might wonder, Why would God have Aaron “go through the motions” of actually speaking a blessing? Are not “good thoughts” sufficient? And yet Jesus Himself heals with *word* and *touch*. His eternal priesthood which is seen in the ongoing life of the Church, both in the sacramental priesthood of bishops and priests and the royal priesthood of all Christians is an expression of the reality that God blesses us through others. We are called to be “co-workers” with God in bringing the healing and restoring of all things—the creation blessing (see Genesis 1)—through our lives, our deeds and words. Just as the Priest’s words are *efficacious* in the transformation of the Eucharist, as with the Priestly blessing, so our deeds and words are *efficacious*—they bring about certain states and conditions of being, either for good or for ill.

In Numbers 6:23, in a parenthetical comment, the text says, “My Name shall be put on the children of Israel, and I the Lord shall bless them.” The action of the priest consists of *signing* the people of God with the Name of God, marking them off as His special people and, as the “rainbow” of Gen 9:8-17, “reminding God” (Gen 9:15), as it were, of God’s covenant promises to His people. The Name (YHWH, “He Who Is”) that was revealed to Moses at the Burning Bush (Exod 3:14) and is signed over the Israelites in the priestly blessing is the same “Name which is above every name” which is “given” to Christ Jesus (Phil 2:5-11) upon His completion of the economy of salvation. What a marvelous mystery! He who is eternally divine by nature, condescends to become a bond-servant for our sake, and is “highly exalted” to receive that which was already His, “equality with God.” It is His Name which priests sign over us now, forming the name “Jesus Christ” with their fingers as they bless.

When the Lord lifts up His countenance (Face/Person, *prosōpon*) upon us now, we see Christ Himself, our crucified and resurrected Lord. We know He has given us peace because He Himself is “our peace” (Eph 2:14), having reconciled us to the Father and to one another. And in Him, and His Icon (2 Cor 3:18), we contemplate our calling as priestly servants to one another and to the world—to bring life, peace, healing, and blessing through our participation in Christ’s eternal self-offering.



ST. PHILIP ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the
Antiochian Archdiocese

His Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH



His Grace Bishop THOMAS



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September 8, 2019

FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS

COMMEMORATIONS:

SUNDAY BEFORE THE FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF
THE HOLY CROSS
SOPHRONIOS, BISHOP OF IBERIA

Tone 3 - Eothinon 1

Orthros Gospel: St. Matthew 28:16-20

Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18

Liturgy Gospel: St. John 3:13-17

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!

APOLYTIKION OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS - Tone 4 - Thy nativity, O Theotokos, hath proclaimed joy to the whole universe; for from thee did shine forth the Sun of justice, Christ our God, annulling the curse, and bestowing the blessing, abolishing death and granting us life everlasting.

TODAY: Orthros 8:45 am, Divine Liturgy 10 am
Sunday School begins today!
Catechism, Sunday School, & Teens, 11:45 am
Coffee Hour after Liturgy.
Women of St. Mariamne, 12 noon
Choir Practice, 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 15):
PROSPHORA BREAD:	Carolyn Kaminsky	Gabi & Catalin Tinjala
EPISTLE READER:	Irene Forssen	Raja Kyriakos
USHERS:	Gabe Q. & Sdn. John	Dan M. & Colin M.
ALTAR CANDLES:	----	----
ALTAR BOYS:	“Archangel Michael”	“Archangel Gabriel”
GREETERS:	Don & Maryann Reigle	Michael & Helen Heveran
CLEANING TEAM:	Lasha & Natalia M., John G.	Sdn. John & Maxine; Tatiana Yau
COFFEE HOUR:	Drăghici	----

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:

International Food Festival
September 20-21

Pilgrimage to Holy Protection Monastery
Monday, Sept 30 –
See Sdn. David for details.

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 Missionaries	Liesel, Todd,
	John Moses,
	Virginia
New & Expectant Mothers & children	<u>St. Nina’s List</u> Michael

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)

“Email Listserv”

The purpose of the Email Listserv is to share time-sensitive parish news such as schedule changes, announcements, and prayer requests, weekend service updates, and more. You must subscribe to take advantage of this service! To sign-up for our parish Email Listserv, call the church office at 215-721-4947 or send an email request to office@st-philip.net.

This Week:

- Monday, Sept 9:** **SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon**
- Tues, Sept 10:** **SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon**
Matushka Olga Sewing Club, 11 a.m.
- Wed, Sept 11:** **SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon**
Greek butter braid Prep, 9 a.m.
Vespers, 4 p.m.
Compline & Patristic Reading, 7 p.m.
- Thurs, Sept 12:** **SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon**
Greek butter braid Prep (IF NEEDED), 9 a.m.
Twelve Baskets Full, 6:30 p.m.
- Friday, Sept 13:** **SIXTH HOUR, 12 noon**
Vespers & Artoklasia for the Elevation, 7 p.m.
- Sat, Sept 14:** **FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE CROSS**
Orthros & Cross Procession, 9 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10 a.m., with Fasting Potluck Luncheon to follow
Romanian Food Prep-Cornulete, 12:30 p.m.
Catechism Seminar, 4:30 p.m.
VESPERS 6 p.m., Confession 7 p.m.
Catechumen Blessing (Conor Magerr), 7 p.m.
- Sunday, Sept 15:** **ORTHROS 8:45 a.m., Divine LITURGY 10 a.m.**
Coffee Hour, Catechism, Sunday School, & Teens, 11:45 a.m.
Choir Practice, 12:30 p.m.
Parish Council, 12:45 p.m.

Continuing
...
Vespers
Mini-Homily
Series on
“The Lord’s
Prayer”

OUTREACH COLLECTION:
Cleaning Supplies

EVANGELISM CHALLENGE:

“Deliberately Get to Know & Serve Your Neighbors”

ATTENDANCE: At Vespers on Aug 31: 45 Divine Services on Sept 1: 195
OFFERINGS: Candles, \$260. Collections, \$446. Youth, \$4.
Stewardship, \$5,740. Endowment, \$30. 12 Baskets, \$50. Oasis of Joy, \$100. Calendars, \$520. Total received: \$7,150. Festival Account: \$500.

GOD BLESS YOU FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS & GENEROSITY!