



**Nativity of Our Lord Orthodox Church**

<http://nativityorthodox.com/>

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*Let all who enter our Holy Church heed the words of the Cherubic Hymn:  
“Let us now lay aside all earthy cares”*

*The reason why God has accorded us this present life is to give us a place for repentance.  
Were this not the case,  
a person who sinned would at once be deprived of this life.  
For otherwise of what use would it be to him?  
St. Gregory Palamas*

DAILY SCRIPTURE READING &  
LIVES OF THE SAINTS  
SAINTS AND FEASTS  
11th Sunday of Matthew

Samuel the Prophet

Holy Martyr Luke of Bouleutos

Afterfeast of the Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary

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**Prayers & Readings**

**Prayer Before Reading Holy Scripture**

O Master Who loves mankind, illuminate our hearts with the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our mind to understand the teachings of Your Gospel. Instill in us also the fear of Your blessed commandments, that we may overcome all carnal desires, entering upon a spiritual life and understanding and acting in all things according to Your holy will. For You are the enlightenment of our

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souls and bodies, O Christ God, and to You we give glory together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, gracious and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

### **Epistle Reading**

The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 9:2-12

Brethren, you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a sister as wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

### **Gospel Reading**

The Gospel According to Matthew 18:23-35

The Lord said this parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the torturers, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

#### 1. THE HOLY PROPHET SAMUEL

Samuel was the fifteenth and last judge of Israel. He lived eleven hundred years before Christ. Samuel was born of the tribe of Levi of the parents Elkanah and Hannah in a place called Ramatha or Arimathea where the noble Joseph was born [Joseph of Arimathea]. The barren Hannah besought Samuel from God through weeping and dedicated him to God when he was three years of age. Living in Shiloh near the Ark of the Covenant, Samuel, in his twelfth year, had a true revelation from God concerning the punishments which were pending before the house of the high priest Eli because of the immorality of his sons Hophni and Phineas. That revelation soon materialized: the Philistines defeated the Israelites, slew both of Eli's sons and captured the Ark of the Covenant. When the messenger informed Eli of this tragedy, he fell dead to the ground and expired in the ninety-eighth year of his life. The same thing occurred to his daughter-in-

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law, the wife of Phineas. From then on and for twenty years the Israelites were the slaves of the Philistines. After this period of time, God sent Samuel to the people to preach repentance if they wished to be saved from their enemies. The people repented and rejected the foreign idols that they served and recognized Samuel as a prophet, priest and judge. Then Samuel set out with an army against the Philistines and with God's help confused and defeated them and liberated the land and the people. After that, Samuel peacefully judged his people until old age. Seeing him in old age, the people asked him to install a king for them in his place. In vain Samuel tried to turn the people away from this, saying to them that God is their only King but the people stood by their demands. Even though this demand was not pleasing to God, God commanded Samuel to anoint Saul, the son of Kish from the tribe of Benjamin, as their king. Saul reigned for a short time only and God rejected Saul because of his impudence and disobedience and then commanded Samuel to anoint Jesse's son David as king in Saul's place. Before his death, Samuel gathered the entire people and bid them farewell. When Samuel died all of Israel mourned for him and they buried him honorably in his house at Ramatha.

## 2. THE PRIESTLY-MARTYR PHILIP, BISHOP OF HERAKLION, WITH SEVERUS, THE PRESBYTER, AND HERMES, THE DEACON

According to all probability, it appears that they were Slavs. They served God in Thrace and there were first handed over to tortures for Christ. When the pagans rushed to set fire to a Christian church, the brave Philip said to their elder: "Do you think that God is enclosed in these walls? He lives in our hearts." The church was destroyed, all the books burned and these priests were taken to Jedrene where, after imprisonment and tortures, were thrown half burned into the Maritsa river. Thirty-eight more Christians also died with them as martyrs. It is thought that they suffered and died during the reign of Diocletian.

### HYMN OF PRAISE THE HOLY PROPHET SAMUEL

Samuel the righteous, servant of the Living God,  
Of his people, beloved judge,  
He respected God; God above all,  
The will of God, for him, was a commandment,  
By the will of God, the will of the people he corrected  
And for the people's sins, before God repented.  
Priest and prophet and a righteous judge,  
In three ways, Samuel glorified God.  
With his every word, with his every deed,  
Through labor and prayer and sacrifices and food  
With his entire being, God he served,  
To the rulers of the world, this example he offered:  
For his people, no one is going to do good,  
One who from the law of God departs  
Who, to himself and to the people listen and not God,  
Into the depth of the bottomless abyss will fall.  
As Saul fell and others with him  
All accomplices of the sin of the people.  
Only a slave of God can a ruler be  
And benefit his people eternally  
This Samuel teaches in deeds and in words,

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Throughout the many centuries, this teaching echoes.

## REFLECTION

Repent before death closes the door of your life and opens the door of judgement. Repent before death and since you do not know the hour of death, repent today, even now, and cease to repeat your sin. Thus, St. Ephrem the Syrian prays:

Before the wheel of time stops in my life, have mercy on me;  
Before the wind of death blows and diseases, the heralds of death,  
appear on my body, have mercy on me;  
Before the majestic sun in the heights becomes darkened for me,  
Have mercy on me; and may Your light shine for me from on high  
and disperse the dreadful darkness of my mind;  
Before the earth returns to earth and becomes decay and before  
the destruction of all the features of its beauty, have mercy;  
Before my sins deceive me at the judgment and shame me before  
The Judge, have mercy O Lord, filled with gentleness;  
Before the hosts come forth, preceding the Son of the King to  
assemble our miserable race before the throne of the Judge, have mercy,  
Before the voice of the trumpet sounds before Your coming, spare  
Your servants and have mercy, O Lord our Jesus;  
Before You lock Your door before me, O Son of God, and before  
I become food for the unquenchable fires of Gehenna, have mercy on me."

## CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the wondrous victory of David over Goliath (1 Samuel 17 1 Kings 17):

1. How Goliath, frightful in body, armor and weapon defied the entire army of Israel;
2. How David, with hope in God, came with a slingshot and stones and slew Goliath;
3. How David was victorious for he believed "the battle is the Lord's" (1 Samuel 17:47 1 Kings 17:47), a battle of believers against unbelievers.

## HOMILY

About Egypt's conversion to the Lord

"And the Lord shall be known to Egypt and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yes, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord and perform it" (Isaiah 19:21).

O how changeable is the heart of man! But, of all of his changes, one is more shameful than the most shameful and that is: when a believer becomes an unbeliever. Of all his changes, one is more glorious than the most glorious and that is: when the unbeliever converts and becomes a believer. The first change occurred with the Israelites who killed Christ and the other occurred with the Egyptians who believed in Christ. At one time, Egypt was the greatest persecutor of those who believed in the one, living God, for at one time, the Egyptians had many lifeless gods, idols and things that they worshipped, fables and soothsayers by which they were deceived. But behold what the prophet foretells! What a wonderful vision!

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The Egyptians will recognize the one and the living Lord at the time when the Lord appears in the flesh among mankind. Idols will be destroyed, the temples of the demons and animals will be overthrown and the altar of oblation of the Living and one God will be established and raised up. The Bloodless Sacrifice will be offered in place of the bloody sacrifice and the rational in place of the irrational. Hundreds and thousands of monks will take upon themselves the vows of poverty, obedience, fasting, and prayer out of love for the Lord. The greatest ascetics will appear in this once darkened Egypt; the bravest martyrs for Christ the Lord; the most enlightened minds; the most discerning miracle-workers. O, what a wonderful vision! And how wonderful is the realization of that vision! St. Chrysostom writes: "Neither the sun, with its multitude of stars, is not as glowing as much as the wilderness of Egypt with all of its monks." All was realized in truth, that was foreseen and foretold by Isaiah, the son of Amos, the discerning and true prophet.

O compassionate Lord who showed mercy on Egypt, the one time persecutor of Your faithful, and illumined it with the light of truth, illumine us also and strengthen us by Your Holy Spirit and by the example of the great Christians of Egypt.

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.

### **Post-Communion Prayer**

Prayer Of Saint Basil

I thank you, Christ and Master our God, King of the ages and Creator of all things, for all the good gifts you have given me, and especially for the participation in your pure and life-giving mysteries. I, therefore, pray to you, good and loving Lord: keep me under your protection and under the shadow of your wings. Grant that to my last breath I may with a pure conscience partake worthily of your gifts for the forgiveness of sins and for eternal life. For you are the bread of life, the source of holiness, the giver of all good things, and to you we give glory, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

### **Sixth Hour Prayers**

O You Who on the sixth day and hour nailed to the cross the sin which rebellious Adam committed in Paradise, Tear asunder also the bond of our iniquities, O Christ our God, and save us.

### **Prayer of St. Basil**

God, Lord of hosts and Maker of all creation, who in Your great compassion and mercy sent down Your Only-Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the redemption of mankind and by His precious Cross destroyed the record of our sins, triumphing over the source and power of darkness: O Lord and Lover of mankind, accept also the thanksgiving and fervent prayers of us sinners. Deliver us from every dark and harmful transgression and from all the visible and invisible enemies that seek to destroy us. Nail our flesh to the fear of You, and do not incline our hearts to deceitful words or thoughts, but wound our souls with love for You, that always looking to You, guided by Your light, and seeing You, the eternal and ineffable Light, we may give You unceasing praise and thanksgiving: to the Father without beginning, with Your Only-Begotten Son and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*O LORD, SAVE THY PEOPLE AND BLESS THINE INHERITANCE.  
GRANT VICTORY OVER THEIR ENEMIES TO ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS,  
AND PROTECT THY PEOPLE WITH THY CROSS.*

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**DIVINE LITURGIES**

Wednesday – 10:00 A.M.

Spanish Liturgy – Saturday – 6:30 P.M.

Sunday Matins – 9:00 A.M.

Sunday English Divine Liturgy – 10:00 A.M.

**VESPERS**

Saturday – 5:00 P.M.

**CONFESSIONS**

Monday-Friday, 4:00-6:00 P.M.

By appointment

Before Sunday Divine Liturgy (during Matins)

**ORTHODOX WORKER MEALS**

FRIDAYS – 11:30 A.M TO 1:00

P.M

*Either the demons tempt us themselves or they equip those who do not fear the Lord to act against us: themselves, when we are alone, away from others, just as they tempted the Lord in the desert; through others, when we associate with them, as they tempted the Lord through the Pharisees. It is for us to look to our model and beat them back on both fronts.*

*St. Maximus the Confessor*

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For all that we have –  
That so many nations and people do not have...  
We should all say...

**GOD BLESS AMERICA**

**&**

**GOD BLESS HIS GRACE BISHOP GREGORY**

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# MIND THE SPIRITUAL GAP!

WHEN DID YOU LAST  
INITIATE THE HOLY MYSTERY  
OF REPENTANCE?

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IF YOU WANT TO KNOW  
WHAT IS OCCURRING IN  
GOD'S CHURCH, ATTEND AND  
PARTICIPATE IN HIS CHURCH.

**“Only two kinds of men publicly admit to doing evil: those who repent of their deeds and are willing to accept the consequences for having acted wrongly, and those who are comfortable with their conduct and believe that no serious consequences will come from divulging it”**