

# SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH + YORKVILLE

July 21, 2024

Newsletter no. 227

Since early June we have been discussing the Bible from various angles, and in last week's newsletter we turned to the central issue of biblical interpretation. There we touched upon the two methods of interpreting the Bible—literally and spiritually—in which the Church has engaged over the centuries. A given passage in the Bible is interpreted literally when it is understood to be true exactly as it is written; in that case the interpreter would want to know the historical details of the passage, when and where the events that it describes occurred, who was involved, and so forth. A spiritual interpretation, on the other hand, would seek for a deeper, spiritual, meaning than a given passage might yield on its surface.

One major category of spiritual interpretation was known as typology. In typology someone or something from the Old Testament (OT) was seen as an image or a foreshadowing of someone or something from the New Testament (NT). The OT person or thing was called the type, whereas the NT person or thing was called the antitype—in other words, the fulfillment of the type. Thus, to give examples of the most famous type-antitype pairs, Adam was the type and Christ was the antitype, Eve was the type and Mary was the antitype, the crossing of the Red Sea was the type and baptism was the antitype, the manna from heaven was the type and the Eucharist was the antitype, the synagogue was the type and the Church was the antitype. Many more examples could be given, especially in terms of baptism.

Interpreting Scripture spiritually was by far the most important way of approaching the Bible until fairly recently. It was as fertile as it was because there was no real limit to the possible spiritual meanings that a text could yield. Indeed, many early Christian writers declared that all of Scripture was susceptible to spiritual interpretation, although not all was susceptible to literal interpretation.

By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, however, a new approach was emerging that would have appalled those early Christian authors. This approach, which came to be known as the historical-critical method, is not interested in the Bible's spiritual meaning, and it does not treat the Bible as an inspired and authoritative work. It claims to make no judgment on such matters as spiritual meaning, inspiration and authority, and hence a biblical scholar could just as well be an atheist as a believer. Instead, the historical-critical method is concerned with the text of the Bible in the same way as it might be concerned with any other text. It wants to know how a text came to be, for whom it was written, the conditions out of which it arose, the influences that were at work on it, how the biblical text was related to other texts that originated in the same era, how it was transmitted over time, whether in its transmission it was changed from what it originally was to something different, whether the biblical text was supported by archaeological evidence, and so forth. Whereas, for example, earlier authors took the account of the Egyptian captivity of the Israelites and the Exodus for granted, just as it was written, exponents of the historical-critical method point out that there is no archeological evidence that the Israelites had ever been in Egypt, never mind escaped from it through the parting of the waters of the Red Sea. Particularly unsettling is the indifference or even skepticism that historical-critical interpreters often display to such Christian beliefs as the divinity of Christ, his virgin birth, his miracles, and the perpetual virginity of Mary.

The historical-critical method of interpreting the Bible—in other words, seeking to understand the text without reference to Jewish or Christian beliefs—would have been incomprehensible to the Christian writers of the first few centuries. Their method was to begin not with historical facts (as they knew them) but with faith, to interpret everything in the light of faith, and to find reasons based on faith for the inconsistencies and errors that occasionally surfaced in the biblical text. Their understanding of biblical inspiration did not allow them to think differently. But we know, many centuries later, that it is possible both to accept the Bible as the Word of God and to accept it as the product of a particular time and place in human history. Could there be such a person as Jesus, for example, apart from the particularities of Nazareth and Galilee and Jerusalem in the first century? And, in order to know him better, wouldn't we want to know more not only about his teachings but also about the world in which he lived? The historical-critical method has opened the door to that world.

Father Boniface

## Mass intentions for the period from July 20<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>

### Saturday-Sunday, July 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>

4:00 pm: Dorothea Slapikas (D)  
8:00 am: Benito Fernando Murillo (D)  
10:00 am: Patrick Keller (D)  
12:00 noon: Anne Magelinski (D)  
2:00 pm (Hungarian): Deceased Members of the Geosits Family  
6:00 pm: St. Joseph's Parishioners

### Monday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>

7:00 am: Eleanor Curran (L)  
12:15 pm:

### Tuesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>

7:00 am: Michael Healy (D)  
12:15 pm: Richard Phillips (D)

### Wednesday, July 24<sup>th</sup>

7:00 am: Michael Eich (L)  
12:15 pm: Sean T. Keane (D)

### Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup>

7:00 am: Barbara Moynihan (L)  
12:15 pm: Vicky Thacke (D)

### Friday, July 26<sup>th</sup>

7:00 am: Anna Wojtak (D)  
12:15 pm: Dariusz Dziedzic (L)

### Saturday, July 27<sup>th</sup>

8:00 am:  
12:15 pm: Jim Chambers (D)  
4:00 pm: In Thanksgiving and Gratitude to God

### Sunday, July 28<sup>th</sup>

8:00 am: Bridie Miskell (D)  
10:00 am: Patrick Keller (D)  
12:00 noon: St. Joseph's Parishioners  
2:00 pm (Hungarian): Alajos Nemeth (D)  
6:00 pm: The Family of John Philips (L)