

**The Orthodox Parish
of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
Lancaster, U.K.**

The Stavronian

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*The Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
belongs to the Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the United Kingdom and Ireland,
which is part of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Europe.
The Patriarchate of Antioch is third senior of the Orthodox Churches.
The Patriarch is His Beatitude John X.*

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

PLENITUDE, PREFIGUREMENT AND PROPHECY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT – Part II

The Story of Naboth's Vineyard: 3 Kings 21 (1 Kings 21)

The story gives us an insight into the abuse of power, the sin of greed, the corruption of wealth and conspiracy against the will of God. Naboth the Jezreelite owned a plot of land which had long been in his family's ownership. The Vineyard was coveted by King Ahab who saw in the proximity of this real estate, adjacent to the palace, a useful acquisition to suit his purposes. He wanted to convert it from a Vineyard to a garden of herbs which some see as a ceremonial garden for Baal, one of the Canaanite gods. The king offers compensation but Naboth refuses to sell his inheritance.

Dejected and sulking on his bed at his offer being rejected, the King's wife Jezebel learning at the reason for her husband's depression, decides on a conspiracy to obtain the desired land. Her attitude to her husband's "weakness" and her disdain for God's law and authority is expressed in her mocking words: "*Are you the king or not?*"

She plots to kill Naboth by false testimony and mock trial. She employs two scoundrels whose false evidence convicts Naboth, he is executed and his land is taken into the King's possession.

The prophet Elijah being informed of this web of deceit and falsehood confronts the king with his sins. The king is brought before the heavenly King to meet divine justice; recognising his own guilt he humbles himself before the prophet's condemnation and is spared God's judgment. The lesson not being learned how-

ever God brings the penalty during the king's son's generation.

Lord Acton's words come to mind "*Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.*" In much the same manner, Shakespeare's portrayal of the power of evil envelops and entwines itself with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. The repeated thought works on the flawed character and the impulse to take matters into your own hands drives the immoral conduct. Interestingly, we find the same spiraling psychological descent in both King Ahab (20:4 *So Ahab's spirit was disturbed*) and Lord Macbeth brought about by ambition, frustrated desire, anger and the interference of others.



Handmade cross at Mt. Athos

We see a number of universal human traits in this story, quite apart from any prefigured reference there may be to modern global political exploitation and corporate financial hegemony. First, there is that rather basic desire to want more - the sin of greed. The powerful and rich are rarely content with what they have - there is a rapacious appetite to those whose sole god is wealth for self. Christ had much to say on the problem of

wealth and power as do the Church Fathers.

“The love for wealth is an unnatural passion,” St John Chrysostom writes. “The desire for wealth is neither natural nor necessary. It is superfluous. Wealth is harmful for you not because it arms thieves against you, nor because it completely darkens your mind but because it makes you the captives of soulless possessions and distracts you from the service of God.”

It is also significant that the Vineyard became a symbol of Israel and Christ Himself assumes the imagery of the Vine for the model and obligations attached to discipleship, growth and sharing.

In Jezebel’s intervention, we are also reminded of Adam listening to his wife’s prompting to eat of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:17; To Adam He (God) said, *“Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.”*

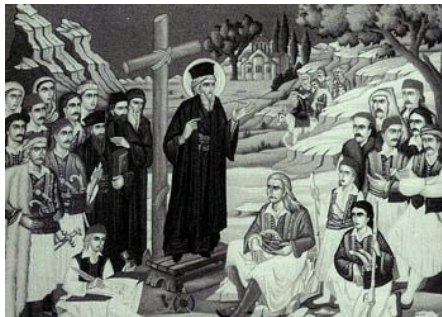
We sometimes do what is wrong, even when we know it to be so, at the promptings of others, who giving opportunity to the evil one, exercise either their need to share guilt or find a convenient excuse for their own desire.

In the end King Ahab, like the Prodigal son, is brought to a right mind and repents of that in which he has been complicit: but perhaps the overarching concern in the story encompasses spiritual obedience, moral rectitude, the need of authentic authority and social justice.

Fr. Jonathan

Footnote: When I taught in schools, looking at the types of literature found in the Old Testament, I often offered a challenge to the pupils when considering this

story. How many of the Ten Commandments were broken in the story of Naboth’s Vineyard? You may wish to try the exercise? The Ten Commandments may be found in Exodus 20:1-17. N.B. Read the whole of the I Kings 21!



St. Cosmas of Aetolia

GLOSSARY OF ORTHODOX TERMS: -X-

XP the Chi-Rho is one of the earliest forms of Christogram and it is formed by superimposing the first two capital letters chi and rho (XP) of the Greek word **XPICTOC** (*Christós*) which means Christ. Constantine the Great adapted it into the Roman imperial labarum together with the inscription “**Εν Τούτω Νίκα**” (*en touto neka*) which means “in this sign, conquer” after the divine vision he witnessed. As a new focal point for unity in the now Christian Roman empire (which later survived into the Eastern Roman Empire or Byzantine Empire), the name of Christ in the monogram also appeared on coins, shields, and later public buildings and churches. Monograms are still used today to signify the importance of God and the Saints, for example **MP ΘΥ** from Greek “**ΜΗΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΥ**” (Mother of God) and **IC XC ΝΙΚΑ** from Greek

“IHCOYC XPICTOC NIKA” (Jesus Christ victorious) on the Lamb.



Dinner before the departure of Iryna and Bart from Lancaster.

PARISH NEWS

Fr. Jonathan has received a thank-you email from the Institute of Orthodox Christian Studies (IOCS) in Cambridge as the Parish has made a donation via IOCS's building and development appeal "Small change makes BIG CHANGES". You can see the poster [here](#) and read the email below:

Dear Father Jonathan,

I am writing to thank you warmly for the generous donation which you kindly sent to us by cheque, on behalf of the Parish of the Holy Cross Lancaster.

The contribution of your Parish is of enormous importance to us, both as a crucial step toward raising money for the Institute, but also as an encouragement for us all in our work for the Church. It is with your support and that of generous donors like yourself that our future development and expansion will be made possible.

With our thanks and best wishes,
Razvan Porumb

*Assistant Lecturer and Development Officer
The Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies
www.iocs.cam.ac.uk*

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

6th Aug: The Holy Transfiguration of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

13th Aug: St. Tikhon, Bishop of Voronezh, Wonderworker of Zadonsk and All Russia

15th Aug: **The Dormition of our Most-Holy Theotokos**

16th Aug: St. Gerasimus, Wonderworker of Cephalonia

20th Aug: St. Oswin, King and Martyr (†651)

22nd Aug: St. Sigfrid, Abbot of Wearmouth (†688)

24th Aug: St. Cosmas of Aetolia, equal-to-the-Apostles

27th Aug: Martyr Phanourius

29th Aug: Beheading of the Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John

31st Aug: The Placing of the Cincture of the Most Holy Theotokos in the Church of Chalkoprateia / St. Aidan, Bishop of Lindisfarne (†651).

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: www.calendar.goarch.org





Services during August*

Sat. 3 rd	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 10 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Thrs. 15 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C. (Feast of the Dormition)
Sat. 17 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sun. 25 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in Q.R. followed by Parish lunch

*Help setting up the church is greatly appreciated and starts from 9:15 a.m.

“God cares for everyone. Despair is in effect a lack of faith”
- St. George Karslides -



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