

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

www.orthodoxbutler.org

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The 29th Sunday after Pentecost (12 December 2010)

FIRST ANTIPHON

It is good to give praise unto the Lord, and to chant unto Thy Name, O Most High! Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

To proclaim in the morning Thy mercy, and Thy truth by night! (Refrain)

Upright is the Lord our God and there is no unrighteousness in Him (Refrain)

Glory... Now and ever... (Refrain)

SECOND ANTIPHON

The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength and hath girt Himself! Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!

For He established the world which shall not be shaken! (Refrain)

Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days! (Refrain)

Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son and Word of God ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

Come let us rejoice in the Lord, let us shout with jubilation unto God our Savior! (Ps. 94:1) Troparion of the Resurrection

THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, Tone 4: Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel, the women disciples cast from them their parental condemnation, and proudly broke the news to the disciples, saying, "Death hath been spoiled. Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!"

TROPARION OF THE FOREFATHERS, Tone 2: Thou hast justified by faith the ancient forefathers and through them thou hast gone before and betrothed unto thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the saints, therefore, take pride in glory; for from their seed sprouted forth a noble fruit, and she it was who gave birth to Thee without seed. Wherefore, by their pleadings, O Christ God, save our souls!

TROPARION OF ST. SPYRIDON, Tone 1: Thou didst appear as a contender for the first council and a wonder-worker, O our Father, God-mantled Spyridon. Therefore, thou didst converse with the dead woman in the tomb and didst convert a serpent into gold. And at thy chanting of the holy prayers the angels did accompany thee in the service. O most pure one, glory be to him who glorified thee; glory be to him who crowned thee; glory be to him who worketh healing for all through thee!

TROPARION OF ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT, tone 4 (Russian): Like the zealous Elijah thou didst become, and followed John the Baptist in his upright ways. A dweller in the wilderness, thou didst steady the world by prayer. O Father Anthony, intercede with Christ our God for our souls' salvation.

KONTAKION AT THE PREPARATION FOR THE NATIVITY, Tone 3: Today the Virgin cometh to the cave where she will give birth in an ineffable manner to the Word Who is before all the ages. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when thou hearest it heralded: with the angels and the shepherds, glorify Him Who hath chosen to be seen as a newborn babe: the God Who is before all the ages.

Today is the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers. These are the ancestors of Christ according to the flesh, who lived before the Law and under the Law, especially Patriarch Abraham, to whom God said, "In thy seed shall all of the families of the earth be blessed!"

Saints commemorated today: Hieromartyr Alexander of Jerusalem (mid-3rd c.); Spyridon the Wonder-Worker, bishop of Trimythous in Crete (4th c.); John, Metropolitan of Zichnon (1333).

LIVING: We pray for the health and well being of Sula, Dolores (Sipos), Dolores (Bingham), Angelica (Georgia's mother), Diane, Karyn, Rodolphe, Brian, Maria, Marius, the hieromonk Alexander, and the baby Christina.

DEPARTED: William, Mariana, James, Mary Ann, Joseph, Katherine, Ștefan.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *The saints will rejoice in glory. Sing to the Lord a new song!*

The Reading is from the Epistle to the Ephesians
(Ephesians 5:8-19)

Brethren: walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

One of the principles of Orthodox theology is that whatever we see in Christ, our Lord, is destined for us, his followers. If He is truly God, we are also called to increasing likeness to God—a process called “deification.” If we hear

Christ proclaim, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12), we are also to become and act as “children of the light.”

Today’s Epistle reading has a rather lengthy list of *dos* and *don’ts*: not a random list, however, but one that reflects the process of entering and growing in the Christian life. First we hear *Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light!* This is very likely a fragment from a hymn that our Christian ancestors in the first century were using in their services. It speaks of fallen humanity as “dead” and “asleep,” and then summoned back to life by God. He Who said “let there be light” at Creation now he re-creates us individually, by calling us to turn from darkness to the light of Christ. After this first step follows a “walking” in the light, a separation from the works of darkness, a careful journey fraught with danger. To complete this difficult journey of living in Christ is possible only by being filled with the Holy Spirit. This is why the Apostle urges us to “be filled with the Spirit!”; this is why we begin all our prayers, individual and communal, with an invocation of the Holy Spirit: “O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth come and abide in us!”

Note also that the presence of the Spirit, Whom we have received at Baptism, is “activated” in us in the Church’s liturgical gathering, with its “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” when we are “singing and making melody to the Lord.” It is in Liturgy that we are receive the food and exercise our behavior for an everyday living as children of the light.

TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke

(Luke 14:16-24)

Then Jesus said to him, “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.’ So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house

became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, 'none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

The Church uses the image of a rich banquet, with food and drink and much rejoicing, to convey God's generous call addressed to all of us. As we hear on Pascha night: *Rejoice today for the Table is richly laden! Feast royally on it, the calf is a fatted one. Let no one go away hungry. Partake, all, of the cup of faith. Enjoy all the riches of His goodness!* Let us recapitulate: a "great dinner" is organized; the dinner is free; "everything is ready," we hear; "many" are invited (and it turns out, in the end, that *everyone* is invited).

The parable also portrays the petty excuses that humanity makes when receiving this call. By contrast with the greatness of the person organizing the banquet (Matthew 22 speaks of a king and a kingly banquet!), the magnitude of the celebration, and the attention devoted to sending out the invitations you, the response is embarrassing. People make their excuses arguing (unconvincingly) that they have to attend to various less pressing and much less important duties.

In its original context, those who first receive the invitation represent the people of Israel; the second group—the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame—to whom the call goes out afterwards, are the nations, the pagans. In the life of the Church, however, the parable also speaks about the ongoing practice of receiving God in our lives, individually, by responding to the invitation to join the banquet of the Church. *With fear of God, with faith and love, draw near!*

How do we respond to such an invitation? If we did take the first step, some of us by our baptism as children, others by joining the Orthodox Church later in life, how do we live out this fellowship with Christ? We remember today's Epistle, exhorting us to live as children of the light, and to take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness. A Christian life is not easy, the journey is hard, the world is full of snares, and we are flawed creatures. And yet, we draw strength by reminding ourselves that we are at the Lord's Table, called by a good and generous Lord to share in the light of His goodness. *Christ is among us! He is and ever shall be!*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- FRI, 12/24: 5PM - Ninth Royal Hour;
6PM - Vespers Liturgy followed by Potluck Christmas Dinner
- SAT, 12/25: Note: no services.
- SUN, 12/26: *Second Day of Christmas*
9:30AM - Choir practice; 10AM Divine Liturgy
3PM - Christmas Concert at Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian
Orthodox Church. Admission is free.
- FRI, 12/31: 6PM - Vespers Liturgy (*St Basil & Circumcision of the Lord*)
- SAT, 1/1: Note: no Vespers!
- SUN, 1/2: 9:30AM - Choir practice; 10AM Divine Liturgy
- WED, 1/5: 6:30PM - Vespers Liturgy (*Theophany: Baptism of the Lord*)

HOUSE BLESSINGS: Sunday, 1/2, Monday 1/3, Tuesday 1/4, Wednesday 1/5

- **SUNDAY, JANUARY 16:** For the celebration of our patron saint, the members of the Byzantine choir in Pittsburgh, as well as our fellow Orthodox at Sts Peter & Paul and St. Andrew will be with us for a glorious Matins (9 AM) followed by Divine Liturgy (10 AM). We can probably count on 80-100 persons, so please bring lots of food!
- **FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE:** We continue to collect non-perishable items (cans, etc), which will be distributed to the needy persons of Butler on Christmas. There is no better way of celebrating the Birth of our Lord.



VATICAN SPLENDORS: A JOURNEY THROUGH 2000 YEARS OF FAITH AND ART *Heinz History Center, October 2, 2010 – January 9, 2011*

The exhibit features 170 works of art, many of which have never left the Vatican. See objects dating back to the first century, Michelangelo items, works by Bernini, Giotto, and others.

For tickets and information, call 1-888-582-8422
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CHRISTMAS CONCERTS
Koliadky, Shchedrivky



Ss. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Orthodox Church
Arbor Street and Evergreen Drive, Lyndora
Sunday December 26, 2010 3:00 PM



St. Demetrius Ukrainian Catholic Church
1015 Gaskill Avenue, Jeanette, PA
Sunday January 2, 2011 3:00 PM



Refreshments

No Admission Fee