

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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THIRTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — *Tone 5.*

8 January 2011

Sunday after the Theophany; Ven. Domnica of Constantinople (474); Ven. George the Chozebite, Abbot (6th c.); Martyr Abo the Perfumer, of Georgia (790); St. Emilian the Confessor, Bishop of Cyzicus (9th c.).

FIRST ANTIPHON

When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah was in his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion! Refrain:

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

The sea saw Thee and fled: Jordan was driven back. What ailed thee, O sea, that thou fleddest, and thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? (Refrain)

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

SECOND ANTIPHON

I am well pleased for the Lord will hear the voice of my prayer. He hath inclined His ear unto me; therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live!

Refrain: O Son of God, Who art baptized in the Jordan, save us who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!

The sorrows of death encompassed me, and the pains of hell took hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow, and called upon the Name of the Lord. (Refrain)

Gracious is the Lord and righteous; yea, our God is merciful! (Refrain)

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

THIRD ANTIPHON

Troparion of the Theophany introduced by the following verses:

*O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever!
Let the house of Israel confess that He is good, for His mercy endureth
forever!*

*Let all who fear the Lord confess that He is good, for His mercy endureth
forever!*

THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord. The Lord is God and hath appeared unto us. *O Son of God, Who art baptized in the Jordan, save us who sing unto Thee, "Alleluia"!*

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 5): Let us believers praise and worship the Word coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death; and to raise the dead by His glorious resurrection.

TROPARION OF THEOPHANY (Tone 1): When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity wast made manifest. For the voice of the Father bore witness unto Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son; and the Spirit in the likeness of a dove confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God, Who hath appeared and enlightened the world, glory to 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 OF THEOPHANY (Tone 4): Today Thou hast appeared to the universe, Lord, and Thy light hath been shed upon us, who praise Thee with knowledge, saying, "Thou hast come and appeared, O unapproachable Light!"

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us.
Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous!*

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians
(Eph 4:7-13)

Brethren: grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unit of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Today's epistle echoes something that we confess in the Creed: that Christ died, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven *for us and for our salvation*. He is not the Messiah (Hebrew for "the anointed one") to impress us with His wisdom and power, to parade God's glory before our eyes without benefiting us in the least. Quite the contrary is true: **"grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift."** In other words, whatever He has, he gives to us. As we hear in the many parables about God's generosity, He does not hold back from us the fatted calf, the best wine, the finest robe—the full measure of Christ's gift is a grace *for us*.

If God comes to be with us in the flesh (as we have just celebrated at Christmas), he does so in order to take up before God the very human nature he had taken on: **"He who descended is the same who also ascended far above the heavens."** Whatever He touches, He sanctifies; therefore, if he came to be one of us, he also made it possible for us to be like Him: "as many as received the Son of God, He gave the power to become sons of God" (John 1:12).

It is on the basis of this theology that Saint Paul speaks of the grace given to all believers in Christ. The Giver is one, yet the gifts are many and

of many kinds: “**some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers**” (and, in fact, we can add many more and varied gifts).

Note, however, that these gifts from God have a definite purpose. They are not the enjoyment of those who receive them, they are not some magical powers, so that we feel good about ourselves and become puffed up. The grace of God is not some “cosmic energy” that we can tap into to boost our well-being, and Christians are not in the business of “white magic”! Rather, the gifts are “**for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain ... to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.**” In other words, the many kinds of gifts are given *for our brothers and sisters*, and they serve our individual and communal common spiritual growth in the Spirit.

As we read from the Epistle to the Ephesians, let us keep in mind that the events we have just celebrated—the birth, circumcision, and baptism of our Lord—are the beginning of our salvation, the door through which “**grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.**”

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew

(Matt 4:12-17)

At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulon and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Today is the Sunday after Theophany—we are, in other words, still under the light of the celebration of Christ's Baptism. The Gospel text selected for today speaks of the transition between the Baptist and the Lord.

Christ continues the proclamation of the Baptist: “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!**” Even though the words of Christ's proclamation are the same ones that John the Baptist had used before, there

is now also a sense of fulfillment, because the prophecies announcing that God *would come* have now been fulfilled: the One so long awaited has arrived!

The Gospel (or “Good News”) is indeed *good* news, and it concerns every one of us: **“the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.”**

The words of the proclamation (“repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand”) mean something like “Change your life, be transformed: God's kingdom is here!” The good news is, first, that God has come to be with us, and, second, that we can, therefore, change our life and turn around to meet Him. But can we really change our lives? We “can” just as we “can” received Baptism: that is, we can entrust ourselves and our whole life to God, who is the one doing the baptizing and making the change. Our part, as we hear, is to “repent,” to stop preventing God from doing His holy work in us.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

LIVING: Abie and Chris, Victoria (Frank’s mother), Diane, Sula, Bill, Norm, Fran, Dolores (Sipos), Leatrice (Totin), Ed, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Brian, Justin, Sara, Jeaneen, Lorine, Ignatius and Amy, Jonathan and Joanna.

DEPARTED: Joseph (Rose’s father), Fred (Dollie’s uncle), Bob (Diane’s father), George (Botsis), Michael, priest James, Gabriel, Eduard, Lance, Nancy, Peter, Michael, William, James, Mary Ann, Mariana, Michael.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Today:** parish council meeting.
- **Holy Water.** If you haven't done so already, please make sure to take home a bottle of blessed water. The custom is to take a sip in the morning, before eating or drinking anything else.
- **House blessings.** If you wish to receive the blessing of Theophany in your homes, Fr. Bogdan will be available on Saturdays and Sundays afternoons and evenings from now until the beginning of Great Lent (Feb. 19). Please put your name on the sign-up sheet.
- **Vespers** on Saturdays, 6:30 PM; **Matins** on Sundays 9:15 AM.

NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 15: Celebration of Saint Anthony the Great!

To celebrate our patron saint, we will be joined by the sisters at Holy Transfiguration Monastery and by our fellow Orthodox at Sts Peter & Paul and St. Andrew. We will start Matins at 9 AM, Divine Liturgy at 10 AM, and Mother Christophora will speak to us at the end of the service.

“Mary” and “Martha” will have to work together. That is, we have the opportunity to celebrate Saint Anthony and to receive a word of teaching from Mother Christophora. And we have the opportunity to extend our hospitality by **cleaning, cooking, setting up the hall, welcoming our guests, and cleaning up.**