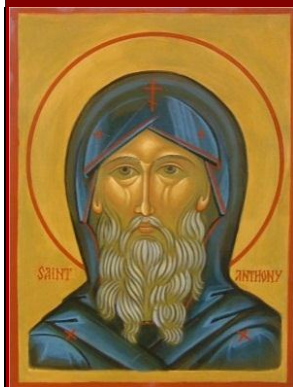


SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
www.orthodoxbutler.org

ADDRESS: 400 S. Sixth Avenue, Butler, PA 16001

PASTOR: Rev. Bogdan Gabriel Bucur

CONTACT: Tel. : 724.287.6893 (church); 412.390.8208 (priest);

E-mail: frbogdan@orthodoxbutler.org

PRESENTATION OF THE LORD IN THE TEMPLE 2 February 2014

FIRST ANTIPHON

My heart overflows with a good word: I speak my poem to the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. (R.:) Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! Grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee forever. (R.:) Glory... Now and ever... (R.:)

SECOND ANTIPHON

Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty. Bend Thy bow, and prosper, and reign. (R.:) O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead: save us who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"! Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; the scepter of Thy kingdom is a righteous scepter. (R.:) Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

TROPARION OF THE PRESENTATION (see below) with Psalm verses:

- *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear.*
- *Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations.*
- *Glory . . . Now and ever . . .*

AT THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

The Lord hath made known His salvation; He hath revealed His justice in the sight of the nations. *O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!*

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 7): Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open Paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy, and didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou art risen O Christ, granting to the world great mercy.

TROPARION OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD (Tone 4): Rejoice thou who art full of grace, O Virgin Theotokos! For from thee hath risen the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those in darkness. Rejoice thou also, O righteous Elder, as thou receivest in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who also granteth to us the Resurrection!

Glory... Now and ever... KONTAKION OF THE PRESENTATION (Tone 1): Thou, who didst sanctify the virginal womb by thy nativity and didst bless the hands of Simeon, hast come this day and saved us, O Christ God. Grant peace and strength to the Orthodox people whom thou hast loved, O only Lover of mankind.

SPECIAL THEOTOKION: *O Theotokos, thou hope of all Christians; keep and shelter and preserve them that set their hope in thee.* Let us magnify, O believers, the first-born Son, the eternal Word of the Father, First-born of a Mother who knew no man; for we have beheld in the shadow of the law and the Scriptures a sign, that every first-born male that openeth the womb is called holy to God.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Miruna, newly baptized; Julie; Dollie and her family, Chris (Abraham), Sam, Richard (Johns), George (Georgiades) and family, Bill, Georgia and Scot, Karyn, Victoria, Sula, Dolores (Bingham), Ignatius and Amy, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka; Abbess Pelagia and the nuns of St Thecla Monastery; Robert Smolen (cousin of John).

DEPARTED: Alex (Julie Smolen's brother), Connie (Svolos), Hilda, Andy (Michaels), Jeannie (Ferver), David (Sipos), Edmund, Richard, Dolores Patricia (Thompson), Leatrice (Totin), Abie, Joseph (Rose's father), Fred (Dollie's uncle), Bob (Diane's father), Eugenia (Cristina's godmother), Faynasia, Niculai, Abie (Abraham), Gregory Sinkevich (cousin of John Smolen), Michael (Gagich), Serbian WWI vet from Butler VA.

FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Exodus 12: The Lord spoke to Moses in that very day on which He led the children of Israel out from the land of Egypt saying: “Sanctify to Me all the first-born, the first-produced opening the womb among the children of Israel.” And Moses went and gathered all the people and said: “Remember this day, in which you came out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, for with a strong hand the Lord led you out from thence; and you shall keep His law. And it shall come to pass when the Lord your God shall bring you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to your fathers: you shall set apart all the first-born, whatever opens the womb, the males for the Lord.

Leviticus 12: And it shall be for a sign, set firmly before your eyes. For thus says the Lord God Almighty: “The first-born of your sons you shall give to Me. And it shall be that a woman who bears a male child, on the eighth day shall circumcise the flesh of his foreskin. ... And after this she shall bring to the Lord an unblemished lamb one year old, as a whole-burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove, to the doors of the tent of witness, to the priest. Or, instead of these she shall bring before the Lord two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and the priest shall pray for her.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden!*

The Reading is from the Epistle to the Hebrews

(Heb 7:7-17)

Brethren, it is beyond any dispute that the lesser is blessed by the better. And here mortal men receive tithes; but over there, by the One of Whom it is testified that He lives. It could also be said, that Levi, the recipient of tithes, pays tithes through Abraham, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. Now if there was perfection through the Levitical priesthood (for under it people received the Law), what further need would there have been for another priest to arise “according to the order of Melchizedek,” and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For when

there is a change in the priesthood, there is of necessity a change made also to the law. But as it is, the One of Whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has ever served the altar. For it is evidence that our Lord has dawned forth from Judah, a tribe which Moses spoke nothing concerning the priesthood. And this becomes even more evidence when another Priest arises in the likeness of Melchizedek, who has become a priest, not according to the law of a carnal commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For it is witnessed of Him, "Thou art a Priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke

(Luke 2:22-40)

In those days, the parents of Jesus brought Him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Thy people Israel." And His father and his mother marveled at what was said about Him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, and as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of Him to

all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon Him.

A WORD FROM THE PASTOR

Today we celebrate a feast known as the “Meeting” or “Presentation” of the Lord. It is one of the most ancient feasts of the Christian Church. We have sermons on the Feast by the holy bishops Methodius of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilocius of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407). Church hymnographers have adorned this Feast with their hymns: St Andrew of Crete in the seventh century; St Cosmas Bishop of Maium, St John of Damascus, and St Germanus Patriarch of Constantinople in the eighth century; and St Joseph, Archbishop of Thessalonica in the ninth century.

Who is presented? The Lord—Jesus Christ—as a baby, only 40 days old. According to the Law of Moses, each family had to “present” its first-born son to the Temple: that is, the child was consecrated to God, in the same way that the first yield of the crop was presented to God—a solemn way of thanking God for His gifts, and for asking His blessing upon one's efforts. But that which has been offered up to God has thereby been made sacred (it is “consecrated”) and fit to remain there, in the holy place. How can a consecrated offering—the child—be returned to “regular” life, outside the Temple? Parents would “buy it back” by offering instead a young lamb, or, for people who could not afford it, two turtledoves. And this is precisely what Mary the Theotokos and the Righteous Joseph did (incidentally, they were quite poor, so they brought turtledoves).

All of this explains the name of “Presentation”; but the feast is also called “Meeting of the Lord.” Who “meets” Him? Symeon, an old priest, and the old prophetess Anna. It is on this occasion that Symeon bursts out in Spirit-inspired song, with words that the Church has retained for its prayer: *Lord, let now Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word. For my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people: a light to enlighten the gentiles and the Glory of Thy people Israel.*

The old man had received a promise from God, that he would not die before seeing with his very eyes, the One who bring “salvation.” And, indeed, he confesses: “my eyes have seen” ... Seen what? God’s salvation, namely the Glory of God, the object of Israel’s worship. “The Glory” is God’s living manifestation

to the patriarchs and prophets of old—the fiery cloud that called Moses from the bush, and led Israel out of Egypt, and covered the mountain at the giving of the Law ... But what Symeon saw was more astonishing: God’s Glory *in-the-flesh*, under the humble appearance of a little baby! And the prophetess Anna also, “spoke of Him to all those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38) because she understood the same. The icon of the Feast shows her holding a scroll which reads: “This Child has established Heaven and earth.”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Sunday: we have as special guests Fr. Claudiu and Oana Bazavan, godparents of Miruna and wedding sponsors to Fr. Bogdan and Cristina. They have flown in from Romania especially for the baptism! We also welcome Fr. Silviu Bunta—a Romanian by birth, now professor of Theology at the University of Dayton and a priest in the OCA.

Next Sunday (February 9)

- memorial Trisagion for departed members of the Șerbănescu family
- Sunday school resumes. Teens are asked to read the Thanksgiving Prayers after Communion, and then meet (shortly) with Fr. Bogdan.
- meeting of the parish council

Sunday, February 23 (Sunday of the Last Judgment— "Meatfare"): Pan-Orthodox Divine Liturgy and Pre-Lenten Luncheon at St. Andrew Orthodox Church , 10 AM

House blessings. Fr. Bogdan is available on Saturdays and Sundays afternoons and evenings.