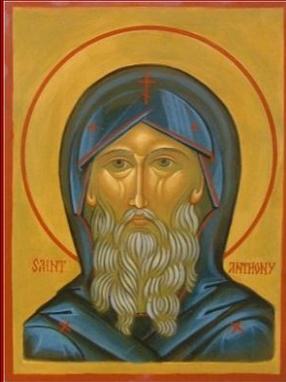


SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

11 August 2013

TONE 6—Afterfeast of the Lord's Transfiguration; Martyr and Archdeacon Euplus of Catania (304); Martyrs Basil and Theodore of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—1098); Virgin Martyr Susanna and those with her (295-296); Niphon, Patriarch of Constantinople (Mt. Athos—1515).

FIRST ANTIPHON

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, in His holy mountain. Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

Thou art girt about with power, and Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment. (R.:)

The mountains shall rejoice at the presence of the Lord, for He cometh; yea, He is come to judge the earth. (R.:)

Glory... Now and ever... (R.:)

SECOND ANTIPHON

His foundations are in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Refrain: O Son of God, Who wast transfigured on Mount Tabor: save us, who sing to Thee: "Alleluia!"

Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. (R.:)

Zion is our mother, a man shall say, and such a man was born in her; and the Most High Himself hath established her. (R.)

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

THIRD ANTIPHON

TROPARION OF THE TRANSFIGURATION with the following verses:

Of Thy mercies, O Lord, will I sing for ever.

The heavens shall confess Thy wonders, O Lord, and Thy truth in the congregation of saints.

Blessed is the people that knows jubilation, O Lord; in the light of Thy countenance shall they walk, and in Thy Name shall they rejoice all the day long.

AT THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

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

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 6): When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb, and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou didst lead Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby; Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world. O Thou who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF THE TRANSFIGURATION (Tone 7): Thou wast transfigured on the Mount, O Christ our God, revealing Thy glory to Thy disciples as far as they could bear it. Let Thine everlasting light shine also upon us sinners; through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Giver of Light, glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF SAINT 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 THE TRANSFIGURATION (Tone 7): Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, O Christ God, and thy disciples beheld thy glory as far as they could bear it; so that when they would behold thee crucified, they would understand that thy passion was voluntary and would proclaim to the world that thou art truly the Radiance of the Father.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. Unto Thee, O Lord, will I cry, O my God!

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans

(Rom 15:1-7)

Brethren: we who are strong ought to bear with the failings of those who are weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult Thee fell on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together, with one voice, you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you into the glory of God.

Saint Paul was a realistic teacher and pastor. He knew well how weak his disciples were. Above all, he knew that by ourselves, without being part of a living community, our life in Christ is near impossible: we are in danger of forgetting why we are on the way, of losing sight of where the road is leading us, and of losing the hope and the joy that sustain us on our journey in Christ. Saint Paul speaks of the Church as "Body of Christ": members of the Body need each other and must care for each other.

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of those who are weak—especially since those who today are "strong" may be "weak" tomorrow! And "live in harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus:" note that Saint Paul mentions "accord" with Christ in the same breath as "harmony" with one another. We are, in a way, like the spokes of a wheel: the closer the spokes come to the axis of the wheel, the closer they are to each other.

Finally, a very weighty statement: Welcome one another, as Christ has welcomed you into the glory of God! The key lies in the second half of the sentence, so let's read it as follows: "Since Christ has welcomed you into the glory of God, welcome also each other!" This "glory" is more than some vague

“honor”: “the glory of God” is Scripture’s language for the presence of God in creation—God’s grace, God’s light, God’s energy, God’s creative and sanctifying power.

Saint Paul says that we have been received into the glory of God. How did we get there? We didn’t “get there” ourselves, we didn’t “make it”: *we were received*. Remember: no one has ascended to heaven; the only one who knows the way from earth to heaven and into the presence of God, knows how to guided and care for his followers and friends, the only one who has the keys to open for them the gates of the Kingdom, is the one who humbled himself to make the journey from there to here, from heaven to earth, from the glory of God into the mortal human existence.

In short: It is Christ who grants us access into the glory of God. But how do we go about following him and entering? There is one condition: that we should welcome others, just as we have been welcome. In doing so, we actually begin to enter ourselves.

TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew
(Mat 9:1-8)

At that time, Jesus got into a boat, crossed over and came to His own city. And behold, they brought to Him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith He said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He then said to the paralytic—“Rise, take up your bed and go home.” And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they marveled, and they glorified God, Who had given such authority to men.

It is striking, in today’s Gospel, even in the presence of obvious encounters with God, people are still able to play blind, deaf, and dumb. The Lord heals two blind men and a mute. The reaction of the “professional theologians” is really stunning: they deny the obvious work of God, and they accuse Jesus of

being in league with evil spirits. More important is the reaction of Christ: he went on teaching, preaching, and healing every disease.

As always, the Gospel reading calls for us to place ourselves in the story: do we want to be like the blind men, who beg for and receive their healing? Are we like crowd, cheering on whatever and whomever has power and success? (the crowds are amazed now, when he is “impressive” because of his miracles, but as soon as he starts to look weak, they will abandon him and ask for his crucifixion).

The question is: what do we want? If you want, you can find much to criticize about the bishops, the priests, the monks, the nuns, the Church administration, the hymns, the books, the music, the length of the services, etc, etc, etc. But maybe you want to be healed. If so, then follow the blind men who receive their sight, and recognize Christ for who He is; imitate the dumb man, who is freed from dark oppression, and can speak. We are even given the words to express ourselves: “Have mercy on me, Son of David!”

All of this is available to us—if that is what we are seeking. The Gospel of the Kingdom, the good news that God is with us with his grace and love for mankind, is still being preached. And Christ does not disdain our diseases or infirmities; it is up to us, however, to acknowledge them and ask for healing.

Please remember in your prayers

LIVING: pr. Joseph, Richard, Sam, Lisa, Richard (Johns), George (Georgiades), Bill, Ed, Peter, Georgia and Scot, Karen, Victoria, Diane, Sula, Dollie, Dolores, Angelica, Karyn, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka, Ignatius and Amy, Benjamin, John.

DEPARTED: Alex (Julie Smolen's brother), Demetra (Connie) Svolos, Hilda (Chris Abraham's mother), Helen (Fr. Wargo's mother), Andy (Michaels), Jeannie (Ferver), Edmund, Richard, Dolores Patricia, Leatrice, Ed, Joseph, Fred (Dollie's uncle), Bob, Michael, Gabriel, Eugenia, Trevor, Faynasia.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Wednesday, August 14, 6:30 pm:** Vesperal Liturgy for the Dormition of the Theotokos. Join us also in welcoming Melissa Sweetapple, who will be chrismated and received into the Orthodox Church.
 - Please bring a dish to share after the service.
- **Supporting our Seminarian:** We hope to continue our monthly support for Ignatius and Amy, who are now beginning their second year at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary. If you would like to renew (or increase or decrease) your pledge, please talk to Seraphim (Leigh) ASAP.
- **Ladies retreat:** from Thursday 8/22, for 2 nights, at Bear Run campground in Portersville—same as last year. Open to all females, of all ages. Bear Run has a nice swimming pool, video arcade, general store, kayak rental and hot showers. If you are not interested in camping, please come during the day and stay for dinner (St. Anthony's style potluck). Bring your folding chair (if you don't have one, we have extras) and join us at the campfire for good conversation. Last year Diane led us in prayer and a beautiful talk about the Theotokos. If you have a suggestion for this year's topic, please let us know.
- **Sunday, September 15: Pan-Orthodox Liturgy and Picnic.** We have been invited by the other two Orthodox parishes to join them for Liturgy outdoors, followed by the picnic.

Location: Butler Township Park Building (468 Duffy Road). There is ample parking, and a comfortable, air-conditioned building. The picnic will have **live music by the Jack Tady Band**. Also planned is a Steelers Tickets Raffle, Chinese Auction, and 50/50 raffle. There will be **games for the kids**, and the park has play areas, basketball courts, etc. 10 dollars/ adult, 6 dollars/ child, 0-6 free.