

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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*The 35th Sunday after Pentecost (23 January 2011)*

## 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 befits 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 2): When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and immortal One, then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy godly power. And when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ, Thou giver of life, glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF ST. CLEMENT (Tone 4): Clement most holy, thou art for the faithful a vineyard of holiness, a rod of valiance, a flower of purity, and a fruit of great delight that God has granted. Since thou didst struggle together with the martyrs and rose to the dignity of a bishop, intercede with Christ God that he may save our souls.

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 FOR THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST (Tone 1): Thou, O Christ God, who by Thy birth, didst sanctify the Virgin's womb, and, as is meet, didst bless Simeon's arms, and didst also come to save us: preserve Thy fold in wars, and confirm them whom Thou didst love, for Thou alone art the lover of mankind.

*Saints commemorated today: Hieromartyr Clement of Ancyra, the deacons Christopher and Chariton with him, and his disciple, the Martyr Agathangelos (3rd century); Paulinus the Merciful, bishop of Nola (+431); St. John Maisuradze (Georgia, +1957).*

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

DEPARTED: **Michael, William, Mariana, James, Mary Ann, Joseph, Katherine.**

## TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon:

*O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance.  
Unto Thee have I cried, O Lord, my God.*

*The Reading is from Saint Paul's First Epistle to Timothy  
(1 Tim 1:15-17)*

Timothy, my son, the saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first; but I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display His perfect patience for an example to those who were to believe in Him for eternal life. To the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory to the ages of ages, Amen!

Saint Paul's letters to various Christian communities, as well as his private messages sent to specific individuals, such as Titus or Timothy, were soon copied and re-copied by Christians who desired to hear the words of the Apostle. By the middle of the second century, the Pauline epistles were already bound together, and circulated alongside the Gospels. Twenty centuries later, we are still reading the words of Saint Paul; and today we even recognize in them our own confession, made before Holy Communion: *I believe, O Lord, and I confess that Thou art truly the Son of God, who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first.*

Saint Paul saw himself as an example for all who would follow him in commending themselves and all their lives to Christ. "Among sinners I am first," he wrote, "so that Christ may display His patience in me as an example for all who will believe." Hearing these words, we are heartened: if Christ had such abundance of patience and mercy for Paul, who started out as a fierce persecutor of the Church, we also have a chance.

The point, however, is not that our sins may be "lighter" than somebody else's; quite the opposite! My only valid concern is *my own state* before the Lord—leave everybody else to God's mercy! Therefore, the gravest sin is always *my sin*. But if, like Paul, I confess myself to be "first among sinners," I can also rejoice with him: *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!*

## TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

*The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke  
(Luke 18:35-43)*

At that time, as Jesus drew near to Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging; and hearing a multitude going by, he inquired what this meant. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." And he cried, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who were in front rebuked him, telling him to be silent; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" And Jesus stopped, and commanded him to be brought to Him; and when he came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Today's Gospel tells of a spectacular conversion to Christ: a man becomes a follower of Jesus after the Lord cures him of his blindness miraculously, in an instant. If the Church has chosen this text for public reading, there is probably much to be learned from the healing of the blind man.

First off, his physical blindness is a reminder that of all of us, fallen humans, are "blind" and "deaf" to God. To be healed and made well (this is what the word "salvation" actually means: healing) is possible only by divine intervention. We cannot cure ourselves of the separation from God. The blind man knew where to go to find healing—Jesus Christ. Since, as Scripture says, "The Lord is the same, yesterday and today" (Hebrews 13:8), then we also know who can heal us.

One impressive feature of this man is his stubborn faith. He cries out to the Lord "**Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!**" Even when some people try to silence him, he does not give up. He knows what he wants, and he has confidence that the Lord is the right one to ask for it: armed with this faith, he bulldozes his way through the hostilities of those around him, and *asks, and does indeed receive.*

Essentially, what is the blind man's faith? He believes it is the Lord—the

God of Israel—who can do anything; but he also believes that this Lord is “the Son of David”—a true human being, one who feels what we feel, one who knows sympathizes with our weakness. This is the faith of the Church.

It is remarkable that the man uses his very “profession” (he is “professional beggar,” one might say, because this is all he does) to gain salvation. The beggar becomes a beggar for Christ, just like the fishermen become fishers of men, and just like the thief on the cross steals Paradise with his confession of faith. Whatever we have and whoever we are can be placed in the service of Christ, so that we, too, can be saved.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SATUDAY VESPERS TIME: 6:30 pm (instead of the usual 6pm)**



*Many thanks to those who helped make the celebration of Saint Anthony such a wonderful success! The time and energy and money you have spent were sacrifices to God, and God will repay. Our guests from St. Andrew's, Sts. Peter and Paul, and St. George in Pittsburgh felt warmly welcome, and appreciated our hospitality. Three hundred dollars were sent to the Holy Transfiguration Monastery as a gift on behalf of all Orthodox in Butler.*



Several families have had their houses blessed between New Year and Theophany. Other house blessings can be scheduled from now until the beginning of Great Lent.