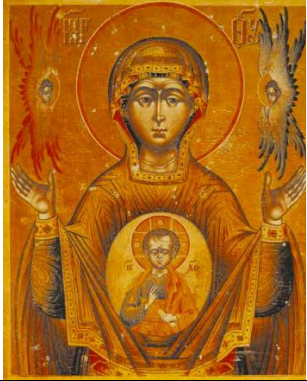


SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

23 October 2011

On this day, we commemorate the Apostle James (Jacob), the Brother of the Lord (+ ca. 63 A.D.); Ignatius, Patriarch of Constantinople (+877).

LIVING: Diane, Abie (Abraham), Sula, Bill, Norm, Fran, Dolores (Sipos), Leatrice (Totin), Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Brian, Maria, Marius, Justin, Sara, Miguel, Christine, Lorine.

DEPARTED: priest James, George (Botsis), Eduard, Lance, Nancy, Petruța, Peter, Michael, William, Mariana, James, Mary Ann, Michael.

FIRST ANTIPHON

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

*To proclaim in the morning Thy mercy, and Thy truth by night! **(R.:)***

*Upright is the Lord our God and there is no unrighteousness in Him **(R.:)***

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

SECOND ANTIPHON

The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength and hath girt Himself! (R.:) 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! (R.:)

Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days! (R.:)

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

AT 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 God, Thou Giver of life, glory to Thee!"

TROPARION FOR THE APOSTLE JAMES (Tone 4): As a disciple of the Lord, O righteous one, thou hast received the Gospel. As a Martyr thou art never turned away. As the Brother of God thou hast boldness. As a hierarch thou canst intercede. Do thou intercede with Christ God that He save our souls!

Glory...

TROPARION OF SAINT ANTHONY (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.

Now and ever ...

KONTAKION FOR ORDINARY SUNDAYS (Tone 4): O undisputed intercessor of Christians, the mediatrix who is unrejected by the Creator, turn not away from the voice of our petitions, although we be sinners. Come to us in time with aid, as we cry unto thee in faith; for thou art good. Hasten to us with intercessions O Theotokos, who dost ever intercede for those who honor thee.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Sing praises to our God, sing praises!
Clap your hands, all you nations!*

The Reading is from the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians
(Galatians 1:11-19)

Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

Saint Paul was *not* one of the twelve disciples of our Lord. In fact, he never even met Jesus during His earthly ministry. Moreover, in the early years of the Church, Paul (then called Saul) did his best to stop the spreading of the faith, preaching against those who called Jesus "Messiah" (in Greek "Christ") and "Lord," and putting all his time and energy into persecuting the Church. When the authorities executed St. Stephen, the first deacon and martyr, Saul was guarding the clothes of those throwing stones!

Although blind, Paul's zeal was genuine. And since God knows the heart of man, and never fails to guide those that search earnestly for His truth, at a certain moment in God's time, something extraordinary happened. In St. Paul's words, God "revealed his Son to him." Paul *did* meet the Lord—on the way to Damascus, he had a vision, an overwhelming encounter with the resurrected Jesus Christ. And it was this meeting that established him as an apostle, and a divinely authorized preacher of the Gospel.

But many were skeptical about the Gospel preached by this man (now baptized “Paul”). They kept insisting that he had not received a commission from Christ—like the other apostles—or from Peter, the leader of the apostles, or from James, the leader of the Mother-Church in Jerusalem. Yet Paul knew what he had received from Christ: “the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”

And this special commissioning of St. Paul has borne rich fruit: it is to him and to his disciple, St. Luke, that we owe most of the New Testament; it is he that showed the importance of sharing the Good News with the pagans; it is he that crisscrossed Europe to found its first Christian communities; and he ended his life in martyrdom together with St. Peter, in 64 C.E., at Rome.

Whether “cradle Orthodox” or converts to the faith, we are called, like St. Paul, to allow Christ to be revealed in us, and to gradually learn how to live as His disciples. Nobody ever said it is easy; but we can all take the advice that the same Apostle Paul gave to one of his spiritual sons: *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first!* (1 Tim 1:15)

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke

(Luke 8:26-39)

At that time, as Jesus arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, there met him a man from the city who had demons; for a long time he had worn no clothes and he lived not in a house but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech you, do not torment me." For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him; he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters, but he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the desert.) Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside; and they begged him to let them enter these. So

he gave them leave. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. When the herdsmen saw what happened, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country. Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. And those who had seen it told them how he who had been possessed with demons was healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gadarenes asked him to depart from them; for they were seized with great fear; so he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but he sent him away, saying, "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

The healing of the possessed man from Gadara is a frightening story. At the very beginning, we learn that this person, although alive, was spending his tormented existence "not in a house but among the tombs": a "dead life," haunted by nightmarish frights. The man was out of his mind: his mind, that is, was the playground of a legion of spirits; and, just as sleepwalkers play out their dreams by moving about physically, at the risk of gravely injuring themselves, so also was this man's body wounded by being dragged along as the demons were harassing his spirit. This is indeed disturbing to any reader or hearer of the Gospel, because we have here an appropriate image of the fallen existence that Adam chose by trusting the evil one rather than God.

When the Lord meets him and heals him, he decides to bring the evil out in a spectacular display, so that people see and understand the extent of this man's torment: he sends the legion of demons into a herd of swine. The resulting stampede, with the swine rushing headlong off a cliff to a miserable drowning, gives us frightening insight into the kind of dark and destructive force had been ravaging the man from Gadara. The account is frightening, especially bearing in mind that, according to Scripture, "the world lies under the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). Most frightening, however, is what follows after the demons are banished and the man restored to health. Instead of giving thanks for the healing and perhaps throwing a feast, the Gadarenes are "seized with great fear" and ask Jesus to leave the area at once! They are afraid, indeed, but not of the demons. They are afraid that God is coming into their lives, and are unwilling

to welcome into their homes a guest that disrupts the status quo by bringing in a new kind of life. Frightening indeed it is to note that the Gadarenes are not speaking with complete freedom, but are in fact mouthing the words of the demons: "What have you to do with us, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?" As for us, we are called to move in the other direction: "With fear of God, faith, and love *draw near!*"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Saturday: Vespers 6pm, followed by Chant practice.

Sunday November 13, 10 AM: Pan-orthodox Divine Liturgy at Sts. Peter and Paul (Ukrainian Church). This being the Sunday before the beginning of the Nativity Fast, there will also be a luncheon, starting 12:00. Prices: \$10 for adults, \$5 for children ages 6-12, and children under age 6 free. The deadline for purchasing of the tickets is Sunday, November 6.

Saturday, November 19: *3 ON 3 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT.* Open to boys and girls, two age divisions (8-10 and 11-13 years old). Fee: \$30 per team. Ukrainian Hall (21 Evergreen Street Lyndora, PA 16045). Team Registration Deadline: Saturday, November 12.

Adult Education Day: November 12, 1-6 pm

While teaching our children, we should also be mindful of the fact that grown ups are also in need of learning more about Orthodoxy. We will have two "lectures" of sorts, with a break in between, and then questions and answers. The day will end with the service of Vespers. The point is that we all make some progress in our understanding of the faith. [To those of us have children: let us find a common solution, so that all adults can participate for the entire length of the afternoon].