

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

2 December 2012

— TONE 1. Holy Prophet Habakkuk .

FIRST ANTIPHON

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

Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God; God is known in her palaces for a refuge. (R.)

As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God. (R.)

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

SECOND ANTIPHON

The Most High hath sanctified His tabernacle. Holiness and majesty are in His sanctuary. (R.) O
Son of God, Who art risen from the dead: save us who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!

This is the gate of the Lord, by which the righteous shall enter. (R.)

Holy is Thy temple, and wonderful in righteousness. (R.)

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

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Bill, Fran, Sula, Ed and family, Peter and family, Georgia and Scot, Richard (Michaels), Karen (Joanna's mother), Victoria (Frank's mother), Diane, Dollie, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Ignatius and Amy, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka, Jackie (Ed's friend), Leah, Donald, Gregory, Daniel, Nicole, Kera, Julie, Christina, Dustin, Nathan, John, Ryan and Jeremy, Benjamin.

DEPARTED: Lance, Edmund (Ed's uncle), Richard, Dolores Patricia (Thompson), Leatrice (Totin), Ed (Joanna's grandfather), Joseph (Rose's father), Fred (Dollie's uncle), Bob (Diane's father), Michael, Gabriel, Eugenia (Cristina's godmother).

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 RESURRECTION (Tone 1): While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure Body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. Wherefore, the Heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O Giver of life: Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ; Glory to Thy Kingdom; Glory to Thy Providence, O Thou who alone art the Lover of mankind.

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 OF THE PREPARATION FOR NATIVITY (Tone 3): The Virgin cometh today to the cave to give birth, ineffably to bring forth the Word eternal. Therefore, rejoice O earth at the message! The angels and shepherds give glory to Him who shall appear by His own will as a young child: He who is from eternity God.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

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

The Reading is from the Epistle to the Ephesians
(Ephesians 5:8-19)

Brethren: walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

One of the principles of Orthodox theology is that whatever we see in Christ, our Lord, is destined for us, his followers. If He is truly God, we are also called to increasing likeness to God—a process called “deification.” If we hear Christ proclaim, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12), we are also to become and act as “children of the light.”

Today's Epistle reading has a rather lengthy list of *dos* and *don'ts*: not a random list, however, but one that reflects the process of entering and growing in the Christian life. First we hear *Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light!* This is very likely a fragment from a hymn that our Christian ancestors in the first century were using in their services. It speaks of fallen humanity as “dead” and “asleep,” and then summoned back to life by God. He

Who said “let there be light” at Creation now he re-creates us individually, by calling us to turn from darkness to the light of Christ. After this first step follows a “walking” in the light, a separation from the works of darkness, a careful journey fraught with danger. To complete this difficult journey of living in Christ is possible only by being filled with the Holy Spirit. This is why the Apostle urges us to “be filled with the Spirit!”; this is why we begin all our prayers, individual and communal, with “O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth come and abide in us!”

Note also that the presence of the Spirit, Whom we have received at Baptism, is “activated” in us in the Church’s liturgical gathering, with its “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” when we are “singing and making melody to the Lord.” It is in Liturgy that we receive the food and exorcize our behavior for an everyday living as children of the light.

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.

To make this story short and the point of it blunt: *this is the story of the blind man who gave sight to the people around him.* He was blind and poor, a beggar on the roadside. Everyone treated him, of course, as one who could not see, and could therefore not know much of the things going on around him. And yet, it is this blind man who hears from Jesus “**What do you want me to do for you?**” This is a truly amazing question. Think about what it would be for you to meet God, and for God to ask you, “So, what can I do for you? What do you want?”

Note, first, that the blind beggar refuses to miss his chance. Loudly and without any hesitations he cries “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” The people around him are not particularly kind or patient or helpful; first they ignore him (nobody told me why the crowd was in a commotion), then they “rebuked him, telling him to be silent.” Yet, the blind man refuses to miss his encounter with God, and keeps begging for mercy. Perhaps it was his poverty and handicap that had taught him humility and persistence; however it may be, he begs for mercy, while the crowd apparently was there just for the spectacle.

And Christ does not overlook the man. Out of the entire multitude, he singles *him* out, and asks the astonishing question: **What do you want me to do for you?** The blind man, who receives his sight and gives glory to God, becomes a teacher to the others: **when they saw it, they gave praise to God.** Up to that point they were all curious or intrigued or excited; but now they begin to *see*—the faith of the blind man made *him* well, but it also shook the people into the proper state of awe before the presence of God. After all, He came to *give*: to give true life and true fellowship with God to all who ask for it, to all who would receive it. The blind beggar received, because he asked.

In the Church, as the Gospel is proclaimed and the mysteries are celebrated, Christ is always visiting, always present, always passing by. As we prepare for the Nativity—God’s coming to us—let us learn from the blind beggar how to seek God, so that we may also see Him and receive our sight.