

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

www.orthodoxbutler.org

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

RECTOR: Rev. Bogdan Gabriel Bucur

CONTACT: 724-287-6983 (church); 412.390.8208 (priest);
frbogdan@orthodoxbutler.org

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

31 July 2011

Righteous Joseph of Arimathea; Germanos, bishop of Auxerre (+448)
Eudokimos of Cappadocia (9th c.);

LIVING: We pray for the health and well being of Diane, Abie (Abraham), Sula, Bill, Fran, George (Botsis), Dolores (Sipos), Leatrice (Totin), Josephine, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Brian, Maria, Marius, Justin, Sara, Miguel, Christine.

DEPARTED: Lance, Nancy, Petruța, Peter, Michael, William, Mariana, James, Mary Ann, Joseph, Katherine, Michael.

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! (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 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 hast led 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, Lord, glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF ST. EUDOKIMOS (Tone 4): The One that hath called thee from the earth to heaven to dwell now preserveth thy body incorrupt even after thy death, O saintly Eudokimos. For in living modestly and chastely, O blessed one, thou didst keep thy flesh free of all stain and defilement. With boldness, therefore, pray unto Christ that we may all be saved.

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 TRANSFIGURATION (Tone 7): Thou wast transfigured on the mount, and Thy Disciples, in so far as they were able, beheld Thy glory, O Christ our God; so that, when they should see Thee crucified, they would remember that all Thy suffering was voluntary, and could declare to all the world that Thou art truly the effulgent Splendor of the Father.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon:

*O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance.
Until Thee will I cry, O Lord 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 9:27-35)

At that time, as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud: "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When He entered the house, the blind men came to Him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, "See that no one knows it." But they went away and spread His fame through all that district. As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to Him. And when the demon had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons." And Jesus went about all the cities and

villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity.

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": they deny the obvious work of God, and 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, just maybe, you want to be healed. If so, then follow the blind men who receive their sight, and recognize Christ for who he is; and 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: STUMP THE PRIEST! Instead of a sermon, come prepared with questions (if you would like to ask an anonymous question, leave a note at front St Anthony's icon). We will try to repeat this once a month.

Saturday, 6 August: Feast of Transfiguration. The "Holy Transfiguration" Monastery in Elwood City is celebrating its patronal feast. If you can, please join the pilgrims and participate in the Divine Liturgy there.

Akathist "Glory to God for All Things," 9:15 AM,
Divine Liturgy, 10 AM

Note: Fr. Bogdan is not able to come to Butler at all on Saturday.

Sunday, 6 August: Choir rehearsal and Psalm singing, 9:15AM.
Divine Liturgy 10 AM.