

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

25 September 2011

Martyr Paphnutius and 546 companions in Egypt (3rd c.); Ven. Euphrosyne of Alexandria (5th c.); Ven. Euphrosyne of Suzdal (1250); Ven. Sergius, Abbot and Wonderworker of Rádonezh (+1392).

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

DEPARTED: priest James, 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 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 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, O Lord, glory to Thee.

TROPARION OF ST. EUPHROSYNE (Tone 8): In thee, O Mother Euphrosyne, the divine likeness was securely preserved; for thou didst carry the cross and follow Christ. By example and precept thou didst teach us to ignore the body, because it is perishable, and to attend to the concerns of the undying soul. Therefore, doth thy soul rejoice with the angels.

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, though 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: *O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.
To Thee, O Lord, have I cried, O my God!*

The Reading is from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians
(2 Cor 4:6-15)

Brethren, it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believed, and so we speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

The first sentence of today's Apostle reading speaks about *what* and *how* we Christians believe. To paraphrase the Creed, we believe in one God, the maker of heaven and earth, the almighty Creator. Yet, we know him not only as the God who in the beginning said "let there be light" and it was light: He is also the one who *restores* his fallen creatures, bringing us back into the light when we have fallen away into darkness.

A new act of creation occurs, individually, with anyone who entrust his or her life to God. As St. Paul says, the same God who said, "Let light shine

out of darkness," also comes and dwells in us and shines in our hearts, so that our darkness is illumined, our sins are wiped out, and our lives made new.

Receiving this divine illumination—the light of God’s glory—is possible because the very “light of the holy glory” (as we sing at Vespers) has come into this world in Jesus Christ. In other words, we meet the luminous Face of God when we behold Jesus Christ, “light of light, very God of very God”, who for our sake and for our salvation has become one of us, that we may become more and more like Him. The very fact of knowing God, the Creator, as our Father, is possible only in and through Christ.

The end of the reading reminds us of our ultimate goal: God’s luminous glory will not cease working in us until it has overcome the last enemy, the last aberration of the Fall: death. Indeed, together with St. Paul and the Corinthians to whom his letter is addressed, we believe that the Creator who said in the beginning “let there be light” (and it was light), and who is now at work in us, to transform us into children of the light, will eventually also raise us from the darkness of death and take us into the “resurrected life” that we see in Jesus Christ.

TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Mark

(Luke 5:1-11)

At that time, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, Jesus asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when Jesus had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they

had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zeb'edee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

The fishermen kindly allowed Jesus to use one of their boats for his preaching; however, when he asked Simon Peter to go fishing, they must have thought to themselves that this stranger had overstepped the boundaries of his authority and competence. It is apparently easier to fish at night, when the fish move up shallower. **"We toiled all night and took nothing!"**: a very polite way of suggesting that the preacher should perhaps confine himself to his preaching, since he obviously didn't know much about fishing.

Nevertheless, Peter is willing to do what the Lord says. And his humility is recompensed beyond expectation. The catch is so rich that the boats are close to sinking. This is when Peter, in a flash of insight, understands that in his poor fishing boat he has come face to face with the Lord—He who commanded and it came to be; the maker and sustainer of all creation.

We can learn quite a few things from this Gospel. First, that we should allow God to "borrow" this and that and the other part of our life, just as Peter allowed Christ to use his boat. Second, that God is always going to ask for increasingly more control over one's life, just as he went from using Peter's boat to telling him when and where and how to do his job. In the end, one comes to realize, as the saying goes, "if God is your copilot, switch seats!" Faith and humility—that is, ceding increasingly more room for God to work in us—is not about some cultish self-annihilation of personality. In small and in great things, living with God yields rich fruit: in the midst of trials and tribulations, in this our valley of tears, the fruit we are craving: peace, joy, love, and the beauty of knowing that our existence is truly meaningful.

The heart of our Gospel, however, are Saint Peter's words to the Lord: **"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."** It is only in this way that our journey can truly begin. The prophet Micah (6:8) wrote in this respect, "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and *to walk humbly with your God?*" *To walk humbly with God* means that we always remember just *who* it is that stands before us. When we pray, we learn from the very words of prayer: **"with boldness and without condemnation we dare to call upon You, the heavenly God as Father."** The more difficult part is to know that at all time it is no less than God, the Lord, who stands in front of us.

As for Peter, the presence of the Lord, is overwhelming, awe-inspiring, fearsome. We are all, without a single exception, broken vessels, sinful people, surely not a “fitting” place for the Lord to visit. Yet, this is precisely why our faith is called the Gospel, that is “the Good News”: the Lord has come to be with us, has mingled God’s holiness with our very lowliness, has truly come to seek us out.

Simon Peter and the others **left everything and followed Him**, and have also brought this Good News to many others. Today, it has reached us. Will we allow our lives to be touched and changed by the Lord’s visitation? Will we at least lend him our hearing?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: meeting of the parish council.

Fr. Joseph Wargo celebrates his 35th year as a priest. May God grant him and our brothers and sisters at St. Andrew’s many years and blessings upon blessings!

Donations for the Chalice: We need to replating our larger chalice, in preparation for our patronal feast of St. Anthony (Jan 17). This is our common cup, to which we are all called to “draw near in fear of God, with faith and love.” As a symbol of that unity and equality, we are collecting no more than 5 dollars per person.