

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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FIFTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

(Sunday of Saint Mary of Egypt)

29 March 2015

TONE 1— Hieromartyr Mark, Bishop of Arethusa, Martyr Cyril the Deacon, of Heliopolis, and others who suffered under Julian the Apostate (ca. 364). Ven. John, Anchorite, of Egypt (4th c.). St. Eustathius the Confessor, Bishop of Bithynia (9th c.).

FIRST ANTIPHON

The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength and hath girt Himself! He established the world which shall not be shaken!

(R.) Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can cause all his praises to be heard? Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy. (R.)

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

SECOND ANTIPHON

Let them praise the Lord for His mercies, and for His wonderful works to the children of men. (R.) Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, as we chant to Thee, "Alleluia"! Let them exalt Him in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the seat of the elders. (R.) The eyes of the Lord are upon those that fear Him, upon those that hope in His mercy, to hear the groaning of the prisoners, to loose the sons of the slain. (R.) Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son ...)

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 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. For which cause 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!"

TROPARION FOR SAINT MARY OF EGYPT (Tone 8): In thee the image was preserved with exactness, O Mother; for taking up thy cross, thou didst follow Christ, and by thy deeds thou didst teach us to overlook the flesh, for it passeth away, but to attend to the souls since it is immortal. Wherefore, O righteous Mary, thy spirit rejoiceth with the Angels.

TROPARION OF SAINT 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 ORDINARY SUNDAYS (Tone 2): 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: *Make your vows to the Lord our God, and perform them.
God is known in Judah; His Name is great in Israel.*

The Reading from the Epistle to the Hebrews

(Heb 9:11-14) **BRETHREN:** when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, then through a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands (that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Over the past few Sundays we have been reading about the Old Testament temple as foreshadowing the new covenant in Christ: He is both fully man and fully God, and as such is our perfect “bridge” to God, our true High Priest. Today we hear about the type of sacrifice He brought.

Like our churches, the Temple had two rooms: a larger one—the outer chamber or “holy place”— and a smaller one behind it—the inner chamber or “holy of holies” (similar to our altar room). The inner chamber was separated from the outer chamber through a heavy curtain (similar to our iconostasis). This structure of the Temple had deep symbolic meaning. The inner chamber, or “holy of holies,” represented the Glory of God, inaccessible to fallen humanity. However, at the time of Christ’s death on the cross, the curtain guarding the entrance to the inner chamber was torn from top to bottom. In short, we now have access to God (symbolically, we have gained admission into the inner chamber) because Jesus our high priest has entered into the presence of God *on our behalf*.

But the high priest, who entered the inner chamber once a year, on the Day of Atonement, would bring an animal sacrifice. What sort of sacrifice did Christ bring? Well, the answer to this question was given centuries before it actually happened by the prophet Isaiah: *All of us had wandered off like sheep; each of us had strayed off on his own path. But the Lord laid upon him [Christ] the sin of us all. Like a lamb led to the slaughter, like a sheep silent before the shearers, he*

was silent and opened not his mouth. He poured out his soul to death, he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for sinners.

Our high priest comes before God on behalf of all humanity, just as the high priests of old would intercede for Israel; but rather than sacrifice a lamb—as a sign of repentance—our high priest offers *Himself* up; he pours *Himself* out, as He is the Lamb of God. At the Divine Liturgy, while the people are singing the Cherubic Hymn, the priest prays a long prayer that ends with these words: *O Christ our God, You are the one who offers and the one who is offered, the one who receives and the one who is distributed ...*

And Christ did not enter the Jerusalem Temple for a ritual offering, but entered “**a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands**”: He entered heaven (the very reality that the temple symbolized!) and opened for us direct access to God himself. That is why we can call God “Father,” counting ourselves children of God.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading from the Gospel according to Saint Mark

(Mk 10:32-45) At that time Jesus took the twelve aside, and he began to tell them what was to happen to him, saying, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; and they will mock him, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise." And James and John, the sons of Zebedee came forward and said to him, "Master, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." But Jesus, said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are supposed to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be the slave of all. For the Son of man himself came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Today's Gospel offers a very unflattering portrait of the disciples of our Lord. James and John (two of the three closest disciples—the third one being Peter) decide to “cash in” on their status as friends of the Lord. “**We want you to do for us whatever we ask of you!**” More specifically, they want to share his divine glory. The problem with their request was that they imagined it to be about power and honor, about ruling over the entire world. And the other disciples, as soon as they find out, are immediately angry at the two. Why should James and John get ahead of everyone else?

The Gospel makes it clear that the demand and the entire disagreement is childish and embarrassing for the disciples. The Lord Himself very firmly chastises them: “**it shall not be so among you! Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and**

whoever would be first among you must be the slave of all. For the Son of man himself came not to be served but to serve!" The glory of the Kingdom is not about ruling over others, but about service. The model is Christ himself.

Yet we should not oppose the Cross and the Glory: the Cross is the face of God's Glory in this world. In the Bible, "the Glory of God" refers to the very reality of the Living God as He makes Himself manifest in creation. And we know that, as fallen creatures, we have all sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God (Rom 3:23); we are all outside reality, pale shadows inhabiting a self-styled "reality" and "life" outside the only truly Existing One. Christ, the true Life and Lord of Glory, has come into this world to accomplish our restoration, our return into the fullness of divine Glory. Yet, in this fallen world, the Glory of God is wrapped in humility, dwells in poverty, suffers all manner of indignity, takes on the form of a slave and chooses freely to die our very death, and to descend into the utmost estrangement from God that we have devised for ourselves. The Passion of the Lord and His Cross: this is the face of God's Glory in this world. How foolish, then, to expect the Glory of God to manifest itself as political, military, or economic might.

Why does Saint Mark tell us this story about the disciples? Obviously, because the lesson Christ gave to James and John still applies to his readers. Think of the many times when appeal to God and faith is used to gain and exercise power, to coerce or manipulate others into submission. Note also that James and John make their move immediately after the Lord foretells His impending Passion ("Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; ... they will mock the Son of man, and spit upon him, and scourge him, and kill him"). The lesson to take with us, as we are approach Holy Week, is that the way to the glory of God is through the humility of the Cross.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Today:** Trisagion for Emil (Cristina's uncle) and Cristian (Andronic)
12:30 PM: Presentation by Fr. Damaskinos Issa ("My Muslim Neighbor: A Conqueror and Citizen in a Christian Land")
- **Wednesday, 4/1, 6 PM:** Our parish is hosting the last Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts!
- **Next Saturday, 4/4, 10 AM:** "Saturday of Lazarus" / **General commemoration of the departed.** On the day that Church remembers the rising of Lazarus, the friend of Christ, we commemorate all former parishioners, and our departed family members and friends.
Please come to remember and to pray for your dear ones.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Seba, Lisa, and Sam (Michaels), Norma, Bill and Ann, George (Georgiades), Christine (Abraham), Jim, Tony, Samantha, Luke (relatives of Dollie's), Norma, Victoria (Frank's mother), Richard (Johns), Bill, Ed, Peter, Georgia and Scot, Sam, Karen (Joanna's mother), Diane, Sula, Dollie, Dolores (Bingham), Karyn, Ignatius and Amy, John, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka, Benjamin, John, Janet, Craig, Christy (relatives of Jean); Yvonne (Ben's mother); Josephine, Timothy, Olga, Wesley, Christina and Dustin (relatives of John and Julie Smolen); Diane; the Beckers, newly chrismated. Ron, catechumen; Shea & Katie – seeking for the true faith.

DEPARTED: Metropolitan Philip; priest Thomas (Hopko); Emil (Cristina's uncle), Cristian (Andronic); Rick, Phyllis (Seba's husband and sister), Angeliki, Joe and David Sipos; Bill (Georgia's father-in-law), Glenn (Jean's grandson); Stella, 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, Hilda (Chris Abraham's mother), Alfred.