

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

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PASCHA

("The Samaritan Woman")

10 May 2015

TONE 4—*Apostle Simeon the Zealot (1st c.). The 14 Sicilian Martyrs (3rd c.). Martyr Hesychius of Antioch (4th c.). Blessed Isidora the Fool, of Egypt (4th c.). Blessed Thaisia of Egypt (5th c.).*

FIRST ANTIPHON

Shout with joy to God, all the earth; sing to His Name, give glory to His praises.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

Say to God: How awesome are Thy works; let all the earth worship Thee, and sing to Thee. (R:) Glory ... Now and ever ... (R:)

SECOND ANTIPHON

May God have mercy upon us, and bless us, and may He cause His face to shine upon us, and have mercy upon us. *Save us, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, as we chant to Thee, Alleluia!* That Thy way may be known on earth, Thy salvation among all nations. (R:) Let the people give thanks to Thee, O God, let all peoples give thanks to Thee. (R:) May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear Him. (R:)

Glory ... Now and ever... *O Only-Begotten Son and Word of God ...*

THIRD ANTIPHON

Christ is risen ... (English, Greek, Romanian, Slavonic) with the following verses:

- Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered, let those who hate Him flee from before His Face.
- As smoke vanishes, so let them vanish; as wax melts before the fire.
- So let sinners perish before the Face of God, but let the righteous be glad.
- This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!

AT THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

In the gathering places bless ye God the Lord from the springs of Israel. Son of God, who art risen from the dead, save us who sing unto Thee: Alleluia!

TROPARION OF RESURRECTION (Tone 4): Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel, the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying, "Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!"

TROPARION OF MID-PENTECOST (Tone 8): In the midst of this Feast, O Savior, give Thou my thirsty soul to drink of the waters of true worship; for Thou didst call out to all, saying: "Whosoever is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink!" Wherefore, O Christ our God, Fountain of life, glory to Thee.

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 OF PASCHA (Tone 8): O Christ God, though Thou didst descend into the grave, yet didst Thou overthrow the power of Hades, and rise as an Immortal Conqueror. Thou didst greet the myrrh-bearing women with joy, and to Thine Apostles Thou didst send Thy peace, and to the fallen O Lord, Thou didst bring resurrection.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all. Bless the Lord, O my soul!*

The Reading is from the Acts of the Apostles

(Acts 11:19-30) In those days, when the apostles were scattered because of the tribulation that arose over Stephen, they traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one, except to Jews only. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who upon coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number that believed turned to the Lord. The report concerning them reached the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas, to go as far out as Antioch. When he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they should cleave to the Lord; for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great multitude was added unto the Lord. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul; and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they were gathered together in the church, and taught a great multitude of people, and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. Now in those days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabos stood up and signified by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over the whole world; and this took place in the days of Claudius Caesar. And the disciples, everyone according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren who dwelt in Judaea, and they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint John

(John 4:5-42) At that time, Jesus came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and so Jesus, wearied as He was with his journey, sat down beside the well. It was about the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His Disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to Him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and Who it is that is saying to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." The woman said to Him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; where do you get that living water? Are you perhaps

greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst forever; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered Him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and he whom you now have is not your husband; this you said truly." The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain; and you say that the place where men ought to worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming [He Who is called Christ]; when He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I Who speak to you am He." Just then His Disciples came. They marveled that He was talking with a woman, but none said, "What do you wish?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" So the woman left her water jar, and went away into the city, and said to the people, "Come, see a man Who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" They went out of the city and were coming to Him. Meanwhile the Disciples besought Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." So the Disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him food?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me, and to accomplish His work. Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see how the fields are already white for harvest. He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." Many Samaritans from that city believed in Him because of the woman's testimony, "He said to me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to Him, they asked Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His words. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of your words that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

A WORD ON "MID-PENTECOST"

Today's Gospel speaks clearly about one thing: spiritual thirst! The Samaritan woman belonged to a "heretical" segment of Judaism, and personal life was far from ideal—yet, *she thirsted for God*. In God's providence it cannot have been accidental that the Samaritan woman encounters Christ. Will He, the true Water of Life not provide for one who thirsts? Because of her thirst for the Living God, the woman immediately senses Who it is that is speaking to her; the disciples, by contrast, are still full of misunderstanding when the Lord speaks to them about the food of eternal life.

The Scriptures speak in words we can understand: "Blessed are those who thirst and hunger for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied!"; "I am the bread of life!"; "To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment"; "Take, eat ... Drink of this all of you!" Paradoxically, although God is willing to feed his children abundantly, His children often prefer greed, power, lust, malice, and all the glories of this world that can never satisfy the deep longing we carry within ourselves. The Church is

the radical alternative to all of that: let us, then, join the richly laden table, let us feast on truth and beauty and goodness, let us receive the True Life that comes from God.

We read this Gospel immediately after having reached the midpoint between the feasts of the Lord's Resurrection (Pascha) and the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost). The Orthodox Church calls this "Mid-Pentecost," and gives it great importance. Why? Remember that Christ's Resurrection is meaningful *for us* only if it is "extended" into our lives through the work of the Holy Spirit. It is only "in the Spirit" that we can taste of the resurrected life that is in Christ. So, the transition between Pascha and Pentecost is, on a deeper level, the very condition of our Christian existence. We are constantly striving to draw the new life, the risen life, into our fallen existence. This is "the life in Christ" as experienced by the followers of our Lord from the time of the Apostles until today. It is a constant process of "stretching" ourselves towards God, a never-ending process of transformation, by which God refashions us into likenesses of Christ.

The reading from the Acts of the Apostles shows us the disciples' striving to embody the life in Christ. We see, of course, their devotion, their love for each other, their zeal for the faith. Yet, the apostles are at first preaching the Gospel only to Jews. Still, even with this partial blindness, the Apostles are growing in Christ, and "**the hand of the Lord was with them**"—that is, God is at work among them. They experience visions and prophecies, they preach the Gospel and make disciples, they care for those who are in need. And soon their understanding will be healed and broadened, to receive the news that nobody is "unclean" any more, since God has called even pagans to hear the Gospel and become children of God.

Today's Gospel depicts the same transition from things that are certainly true, but not complete, towards the fuller revelation of God's love in Christ. Yes, "**salvation is from the Jews**" (the Lord says so)—but Christ is a light even to "outsiders" such as the Samaritan (traditionally, her name is "Photeini"—that is, "luminous"). True, God spoke to Jacob and the other patriarchs; but the fullness of the godhead took on flesh in Christ. Yes, Jesus was a prophet—but more than a prophet, the very Lord of the prophets!

The interval between Pascha and Pentecost is a good image for the Church's effervescent state of constantly being born and renewed from the very life of Christ. This applies both to the individual Christian and to the community of believers. The truth of the Christian life is not a set of "true sentences"; the purpose of the Christian life is not for us to "have the truth" and "be right." It is, rather, an abundant and ever-renewing flow of divine life in us, like water of which one never tires to drink. What is more, a water that makes us, marvelously, into well-springs of water for others.

Like the Samaritan woman we are to be mindful of the thirst that nothing can satisfy apart from God. And we are called, at Mid-Pentecost, to "cleave to the Lord" and to allow Him to do His work in us through the Holy Spirit. The truth and whole point of the Christian life is our own transformation.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: pr. Paisius; Stelian (Cezar's father); 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); John and Julie (Smolen); Dennis, Vincent, Roy and Laura, Danny, Cathy (relatives of John and Julie); Diane; Tim and Caroline (Becker). Ron, catechumen; Shea & Katie, Garrett & Autumn – seeking for the true faith.

DEPARTED: hieromonk Roman (Braga); priest Thomas (Hopko); Emil (Cristina's uncle), Cristian (Andronic); Timothy (John and Julie Smolen's nephew); 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.

- **Today:** crowning in marriage of Calin and Lydia, immediately following Divine Liturgy.
- **Nest Sunday (May 17):** memorial for Subdeacon Lance Shaeffer
- Some of the Bucurs (Cristina, Andrei, and Miruna) as well as Cezar and Roxana Cisloiu are leaving for Romania in just a few days. The Cisloius are returning in two weeks, Cristina only in August.