

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

PENTECOST: THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

31 May 2015

FIRST ANTIPHON

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims the work of His hands. THROUGH THE INTERCESSIONS OF THE THEOTOKOS, SAVIOR, SAVE US! Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night proclaims knowledge. (R:) Their proclamation hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. (R:)

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

SECOND ANTIPHON

The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee. Save us, Good Comforter, as we chant to Thee, Alleluia! The Lord send thee help from the sanctuary, and aid thee out of Zion. (R:) The Lord remember all thy sacrifice, and enrich thy whole-burnt-offering. (R:) Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

TROPARION OF PENTECOST (see below) with the following verses:

- *Lord, in Thy strength the king shall be glad, and in Thy salvation shall he rejoice exceedingly.*
- *The desire of his heart hast Thou granted unto him, and hast not denied him the request of his lips. Thou didst go before him with blessings of goodness.*
- *Thou hast set upon his head a crown of precious stones. He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest him length of days unto ages of ages.*

AT THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

Be Thou exalted, O Lord, in Thy strength; we shall praise and sing of Thy mighty acts. Save us, O Good Comforter, who sing unto Thee: Alleluia!

TROPARION OF PENTECOST (Tone 8): Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise, having sent upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them Thou hast fished the universe, O Lover of mankind, glory to Thee.

KONTAKION OF PENTECOST (Tone 8): When the High One descended, confusing tongues, He divided the nations. And when He distributed the fiery tongues He called all to one unity. Wherefore, in unison we glorify the most Holy Spirit.

FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT: THE GIVING OF THE LAW

Exodus 19 "In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai... and there Israel camped in front of the mountain. ... "So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who *were* in the camp trembled. "And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

Jeremiah 31 "Behold, days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, " not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord. " But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days: I will put My Law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

From Jewish Rabbinic lore: Rabi Levi said, The Holy One appeared to them as though He were an icon with faces on every side. A thousand people might be looking at the icon, but it would appear to be looking at each one of them. When the Holy One spoke, each and every person in Israel could say, "The Divine Word is addressing me." Note that Scripture (Exod. 20:2) does not say, "I am the Lord *your* God" [in the plural], but "I am the Lord *thy* God" [in the singular]. R. Yose bar R. Hanina said: The Divine Word spoke to each and every person according to his particular capacity. And do not be surprised at this idea. For when manna came down for Israel, each and every person tasted it in keeping with his own capacity—infants in keeping with their capacity; young men in keeping with their capacity; and the elderly in keeping with their capacity . . . Now what was true about the manna, was equally true about the Divine Word. Each and every person heard it according to his own particular capacity.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth. The heavens declare the glory of God.

The Reading is from the Acts of the Apostles

(Acts 2:1-11) When the day of Pentecost had come, the Disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint John

(John 7:37-52; 8:12) On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now this He said about the Spirit, which those who believed in Him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. When they heard these words, many of the people said, "This is really the prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" So there was a division among the people over Him. Some of them wanted to arrest Him, but no one laid hands on Him. The officers then went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this man!" The Pharisees answered them, "Are you led astray, you also? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd, who do not know the Law, are accursed." Nicodemus, who had gone to Him before, and who was one of them, said to them, "Does our Law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee." Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

PENTECOST: DESCENT OF THE LAW AND DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT

We read today about a large crowd of Jews living in Egypt, in Europe, in Mesopotamia, etc (that is, Jews living in the "diaspora" or "dispersion") who had gathered in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. If Jerusalem was filled with pilgrims, it was obviously not for the Pentecost that we celebrate—the Giving of the Spirit—since that had not yet happened! The "Pentecost" attended by all these locals and visitors in Jerusalem was the *Jewish* feast of the giving of the Law on Sinai; it is called "Shavuot" in Hebrew, and in Greek "Pentecost." Five weeks after the Lord freed His people from Egyptian captivity ("Passover"), Israel came to Mount Sinai, and received the Law through Moses: it was this feast (Jewish Pentecost) that the pilgrims gathered to celebrate.

There is a Jewish Passover, there is also a Christian Passover. Christian Passover, or "Pascha," or "Easter" celebrates greater things than the freedom from Egyptian slavery: we celebrate the Lord leading us "from death to life" and from the captivity of the Fall into the freedom of being once again adopted children of God. Five weeks after Pascha/ Passover, we also celebrate Pentecost: not the giving of the Law through Moses, but the giving of the Holy Spirit through the Messiah.

Pentecost fulfills numerous prophetic announcements of a new covenant. Prophet Jeremiah (chapter 31) announces the coming of a new covenant—written not on tablets of stone, but written on human hearts by the Holy Spirit. The descent of the Holy Spirit makes it possible for the new, resurrected life (the restored and healed humanity that is in the Risen Christ) to also flow into us. Today's Gospel says about those who believe in Christ that "out of their belly shall flow rivers of living water." And immediately the Holy Evangelist explains: now this He said about the Spirit, which those who believed in Him were to receive. The new covenant is not a holy law engraved on stone, an exterior regulation; it is rather a new reality springing up from inside of us: it is the resurrected life of Christ, implanted in us at Baptism like a seed, which we are to cultivate, so that it gradually transforms us into the likeness of our risen Lord.

The New Covenant is not only for the people of Israel, but for anyone who believes in the Messiah, Jew or Gentile: through faith in Jesus Christ anyone can be adopted into the spiritual Israel of God, and be

seated at the table of the Kingdom as a personal friend invited by the Son of God. Pentecost is also the birthday of the Church. In other words, the invitation to join the feast has been launched, and the banquet is already in progress.

THE KNEELING PRAYERS OF PENTECOST

Father Alexander Schmemmann

We are invited to kneel. This is our first kneeling since Easter. It signifies that after these fifty days of Paschal joy and fullness, of experiencing the Kingdom of God, the Church now is about to begin her pilgrimage through time and history. It is evening again, and the night approaches, during which temptations and failures await us, when, more than anything else, we need Divine help, that presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who has already revealed to us the joyful End, who now will help us in our effort towards fulfillment and salvation.

All this is revealed in the three prayers which the celebrant reads now as we all kneel and listen to him. In the first prayer, we bring to God our repentance, our increased appeal for forgiveness of sins, the first condition for entering into the Kingdom of God. In the second prayer, we ask the Holy Spirit to help us, to teach us to pray and to follow the true path in the dark and difficult night of our earthly existence. Finally, in the third prayer, we remember all those who have achieved their earthly journey, but who are united with us in the eternal God of Love. The joy of Easter has been completed and we again have to wait for the dawn of the Eternal Day. Yet, knowing our weakness, humbling ourselves by kneeling, we also know the joy and the power of the Holy Spirit who has come. We know that God is with us, that in Him is our victory.

Thus is completed the feast of Pentecost and we enter "the ordinary time" of the year. Yet, every Sunday now will be called "after Pentecost" — and this means that it is from the power and light of these fifty days that we shall receive our own power, the Divine help in our daily struggle. At Pentecost we decorate our churches with flowers and green branches — for the Church "never grows old, but is always young." It is an evergreen, ever-living Tree of grace and life, of joy and comfort. For the Holy Spirit—"the Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life—comes and abides in us, and cleanses us from all impurity," and fills our life with meaning, love, faith and hope.

- **Today:** installation of the parish council
- **Next Sunday:** No sermon—*stump the priest!*; no Matins—*choir practice*.
- **There is no fasting on the week after Pentecost**
- **Fast of the Apostles:** June 8-29

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, Danny, Cathy (relatives of John and Julie); Diane; Tim and Caroline (Becker).

Ron, catechumen; Shea & Katie, Garrett & Autumn – seeking for the true faith.

DEPARTED: Patrick (Rose's brother); 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.