

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

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

5 July 2015

TONE 4 — Ven. Athanasius, Founder of monasticism on Mt. Athos (1000); Martyr Anna at Rome (304) and Martyr Cyrilla, of Cyrene in Libya, a widow (304); Ven. Lampadus of Hirenopolis (10th c.); Hieromartyr Cyprian of Mt. Athos (1679).

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 has girt Himself! (R.) Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, as we chant 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 ...)

LITTLE ENTRANCE

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ! O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, save us who sing to Thee: "Alleluia"!

TROPARION OF THE 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 ATHANASIUS THE ATHONITE (Tone 3): The Angels' ranks were awed by thy life in the flesh, how, though corporeal, and clad with earthly clay, thou didst set forth with courage to invisible wars and wrestlings and didst boldly smite the hordes of the demons with mortal wounds. Wherefore, Christ rewarded thee * with abundant gifts in return. Entreat Him that our souls find salvation, O most renowned Father Athanasius.

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 ORDINARY SUNDAYS (Tone 4): 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: The saints shall boast in glory, and they shall rejoice upon their beds.
Sing unto the Lord a new song; His praise is in the church of the saints.*

The Reading is from the Epistle to the Galatians

(Galatians 5:22-6:2) **Brethren: The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit. Let us not be conceited, provoking one another, envious of one another. Brothers, even if a person is caught in some transgression, you who are spiritual should correct that one in a gentle spirit, looking to yourself, so that you also may not be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so you will fulfill the law of Christ.**

To be a Christian is to be a disciple of Christ; to be disciple of Christ means, in Saint Paul's language, to be "a new creation"—no longer a descendant of Adam, determined exclusively by the Fall, but one born of Jesus Christ, emerging out of the waters of Baptism cleansed and reshaped by the Holy Spirit. Descending in the waters of Baptism (just as, in Genesis, over the waters of creation), descending over the gifts of wine and bread, the Holy Spirit "comes and abides in us" and reshapes our entire being in the image of Christ, the Son of God; the Spirit enables those who believe in Jesus as Lord and God become children of God (John 1:12). Just as dough is transformed by the active presence of yeast, so also do Christians grow and mature through the mysterious presence of the Holy Spirit. In short, the Holy Spirit works out a "spiritual leavening" of the entire person.

If all of this sounds abstract, let us remember that theology is verified in practice. As Saint Paul writes to us today, the real test comes when we examine how we "walk the Spirit." Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control: this is how being

Christian should look like. As Orthodox, if we believe that we enjoy the fullness of the Christian faith and the fullness of grace, we are held to unique standards. Rather than patting ourselves on the back for “having” the true faith— self-conceit is one of the greatest temptations for us!—we must walk the walk: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Our relation with others, including non-Orthodox and especially those who work against us, must always be governed by “a spirit of gentleness.” It is noteworthy that correcting others, even when we are called to do so, implies some sort of judgment, and therefore always puts us at risk. This is why the Apostle warns: “if someone falls into sin, correct him in a gentle spirit. *And look to yourself: you might be needing forgiveness before the day's out.*”

The spiritual treasure we are entrusted with is not ours. And, as the Apostles states elsewhere, we carry this treasure in earthen vessels. Hence the admonition: *If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit!*

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew

(Mat 8:28-9:1) At that time, when Jesus came to the country of the Gergesenes, two demoniacs met Him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. And behold, they cried out, “What have we to do to Thee, O Son of God? Art Thou come here to torment us before the time?” Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged Him, “If Thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine.” And He said to them, “Go.” So they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they begged Him to leave their neighborhood. And getting into a boat He crossed over and came to His own city.

It is frightening to imagine a human life that has become the playground of demons. We know how painful it is to walk around plagued by a mere headache, or how terrible it is to be haunted by regrets and painful memories, and how guilt over things past or anxiety over things future can rob you of your peace and of the ability to enjoy anything in the present. How much worse, then, for the two demoniacs of today's Gospel reading! Although alive, they spend their tortured existence in tombs, haunted by nightmarish frights; they are “fierce” and nobody can pass by without being deeply affected.

It is not so much their apparition and their antics that frighten, as it is the insight that we, “normal” ones, are only a hair's breadth away from their state and not safe at all. Indeed, according to Scripture, “the world lies under the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19), so that we have here an appropriate image of the fallen existence that Adam chose by trusting the evil one rather than God.

The Lord decides to heal the demoniacs in such a way that people would see and understand the depth of this man's torment: he sends the legion of demons into a herd of

swine. The resulting stampede, with the swine rushing headlong off a cliff to a miserable drowning, gives us frightening insight into the kind of dark and destructive force had been ravaging the two demoniacs.

Most frightening, however, is what follows after the demons are banished and the two restored to health. Instead of giving thanks for the healing and perhaps throwing a feast, the Gergesenes **begged Him to leave their neighborhood**. They are afraid, it seems, not of the demons *but of God!* Their situation so far was, in a way, settled and satisfying: the two demoniacs allowed the other inhabitants to view themselves as "good" by imagining that all evil was *elsewhere*—namely *there*, in the tombs, in the two demoniacs. Jesus disrupts this arrangement and now the Gergesenes are afraid that God is coming into their lives. They are unwilling to welcome into their homes a guest that disrupts the status quo by bringing in a new kind of life.

As for us, we are called to move in the opposite direction. The Bible ends with these words: "Come Jesus Christ!" And we train ourselves for that coming when we respond to the call issued at Liturgy: "With fear of God, faith, and love *draw near!*"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **We have received the new antimimension from Metropolitan Joseph.** This piece of cloth bearing an image of the Lord's burial and containing a small piece of relics, is placed on the altar table or, if need be, is used "in-place-of-the-table" (anti-mension); it is signed by the metropolitan, which thereby gives confirms this parish community and its priest as part of the Orthodox Church.
- **Parish picnic:** August 23 after Liturgy, Dollie's place;
- **Women's retreat:** August 28-29 (Fri-Sat)
- **Sunday, 9/20: Pan-Orthodox Liturgy and picnic.** A planning meeting will take place on Wednesday, 7/8, at 7 pm, at Saint Andrew's. We need a representative of St Anthony's for that meeting.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: pr. Paisius; Sue (Stacey's mother); 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: Abie Abraham; Patrick (Rose's brother); Josephine (Julie's sister); 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.