

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

12 July 2015

TONE 5 — Martyrs Proclus and Hilary of Ancyra (2nd c.). Martyr Golinduc (in Baptism Mary), of Persia (591). Ven. John (998) and Gabriel, of the Holy Mountain (Georgian). Ven. Michael of Maleinus (962). Martyrs Theodore and his son, John, of Kiev (983). Ven Paisios the New of Athos.

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 5): Let us believers praise and worship the Word coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation; for He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death; and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

Glory ...

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.

Now and ever ...

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: *Thou, O Lord, wilt preserve us and keep us from this generation. Save me, O Lord, for the godly one have vanished.*

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans

(Rom 12:6-14) Brethren, having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; he who teaches, in his teaching; he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who contributes, in liberality; he who gives aid, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal, be aglow with the Spirit, and serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

Saint Paul often speaks about the community of disciples of Jesus Christ as forming the Body of Christ. We can think of Christ as being the head, or perhaps better, the heart of this organism. If, then, we are all members of the Body of Christ, it means that, at the same time, (1) we are all nourished and kept together by the same life-giving presence of God, and yet (2) each one of us remains uniquely distinct. Just as the same blood pumped by the heart nourishes all members and organs in our body, so also does the same Spirit flow through the "body" of Christ-believers, the Church, and enliven each and every one of its members. And just as each member of our body is different from other members, so also does each one of us receive the work of the Holy Spirit as a personal and intimate gift, so that *all of us, together*, are disciples of Christ, yet each one of us is uniquely precious to Him.

Whatever gifts we have received also become a responsibility. We are all called to put to work the manifold abilities we have received. Yet the Church is not a "pious club" that gathers periodically to perform worthy activities—such associations already exist in society, and they do a better job than we do. Yes, of course, Christians are involved in works of charity, laboring to improve the realities around them. But this is not "the point" of it all! "The heart" of the Church is the risen Christ and the new life that is in Him. When we speak of the various "virtues" we

understand this to mean a gradually tasting and embodying that new life. And the medium where such tasting of the Resurrection is possible is the grace of the Holy Spirit.

The point, according to Saint Paul, is to be **“aglow with the Spirit”**: the Spirit who reminds us of the hope we have as disciples of the Lord, so that we can complete our journey joyously; the Spirit who comforts us in our afflictions, so that we can bear our cross with patience; the Spirit who gently nudges us to present our hearts to the Lord in prayer; the Spirit who opens us up to feel the needs of others, and who empowers us to welcome one another, that is, to be hospitable to the presence of each other without judgment.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew

(Mat 9:1-8) **At that time, Jesus got into a boat, crossed over and came to His own city. And behold, they brought to Him a paralytic, lying on his bed; and when Jesus saw their faith He said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—He then said to the paralytic—“Rise, take up your bed and go home.” And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they marveled, and they glorified God, Who had given such authority to men.**

A well-known Gospel story is recounted here: a paralytic is brought to Jesus and receives his healing *instantaneously*, in a spectacular manner. The crowds are right to marvel, for they see a man who seems to have as much authority over creation as God. Indeed, we read that God said, “Let there be light” and it was light; “let the dry land come forth” and dry land came forth; “let it be!” and whatever his command was, it came to be. So also now: **He said to the paralytic, “Rise, take up your bed and go home.” And the paralytic rose and went home.**

No less impressive is the fact that the Lord also has immediate knowledge of what people are thinking to themselves—**“knowing their thoughts, he said”** . . .

The first lesson we draw from today's Gospel is that Jesus Christ heals and forgives because He is truly God. And it is also God alone who knows our heart, our hidden inner selves, more intimately than we know it ourselves.

But it is also important to pay attention to another very significant detail of the story: the beautiful relationship between the paralytic and the four men who bring him in on a pallet. Undoubtedly, these are real friends. They have not left their paralyzed friend behind, so that they could meet God; and this is why, in the very dedication with which they take their paralytic friend to Jesus, they also find God. The Evangelist writes: **“when Jesus saw their faith He said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son”**” Note: **“when Jesus saw *their* faith”!** The Lord always emphasizes the importance of faith; only this time it is the faith of the others that saves the paralytic.

Christianity “by oneself” is a fiction, and can be a dangerous delusion. If we are to be saved, we are saved by cooperating with God's grace and in relation to others; it is only in our

sins that we are separating ourselves from the Church (which is why, one of the prayers at Confession says, "unite and reconcile him/her with Thy holy Church").

Indeed, the Church strives to embody the model set forth in today's Gospel. Through fasts and feasts, we are journeying, we praise God, we commit to God ourselves and each other, we give thanks, we draw near the chalice in faith and love—a love that also binds us together and even vanquishes the horror of death. In short, we are exercising ourselves into becoming "we": the Body of Christ made up of many members, and are learning to call God not only "my God" but "our Father."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Today:** reception into Orthodoxy of Shea and Katie Cole, and their little one, Judson. Their sponsors and godparents are Steve (for Shea), Jean (for Katie), and Frank (for Judson). God grant them a fruitful life, growth in the Spirit, and furtherance in all good things!
- **Today** is also Marni's last Sunday at St. Anthony's. She is leaving for Hershey, PA, where she will attend the Milton Hershey School. Congratulations, Marni, and may God keep you in the palm of His hand!
- **Today:** meeting of the parish council.
- **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: Shea & Katie, newly chrismated; 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; 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.