

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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THIRTEETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

30 August 2015

TONE 4—Sts. Alexander (340), John (595), and Paul the New (784), Patriarchs of Constantinople. Repose of Ven. Alexander, Abbot of Svir (1533). St. Christopher of Palestine (6th c.). St. Fantinus of Calabria (9th c.). Gathering of the Serbian Hierarchs.

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 hath girt Himself! (R.) O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead: save us who sing 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 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 FOR THE BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST (Tone 2): The memory of the righteous is celebrated with songs of praise, but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O Forerunner. Thou wast shown indeed to be the most honorable of the prophets, for in the waters

thou didst baptize Him Who had been proclaimed. After suffering with joy in behalf of the truth, thou didst proclaim even to those in Hades the God Who appeared in the flesh, Who takest away the sin of the world, and granteth us great mercy.

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): O Undisputed intercessor of Christians, the mediatrix who is unrejected by the Creator: turn not away from the voice of our petitions, although 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: *How magnified are Thy works, O Lord; in Wisdom hast Thou made them all. Bless the Lord, O my soul!*

From Saint Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians

(1 Cor 16:13-24) **Brethren: be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and laborer. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicos, because they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men. The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. If anyone has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus, Amen!**

Like any letter, this epistle to the Christians in Corinth shows a number of very personal elements: there are references to specific persons known to the addressee and the addressor (and whom we have no way of knowing), personal greetings are conveyed, and there is even an invitation to acknowledge the authenticity of this letter: **"I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand."**

And yet, there are things in this passage that remain valid over the centuries, even for us today. **"Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong!"** Indeed, an essential part of our Christian life is growing in courage. Already by the end of the first century, in an anonymous writing called "The Shepherd," one finds the following dialogue between a Christian and his guiding angel on the topic of fear and courage: *"Listen to me for a moment. Man is eager to keep the commandments of God, and there is no one who does not ask of the Lord that strength may be given him for these commandments. But the devil is hard, and*

holds sway over them. The angel replied: The devil goes to all the servants of God to try them. As many as are full in the faith resist him strongly, and he withdraws from them, having no way by which he might enter them. He goes to the empty, and finding a way of entrance into them, he produces in them whatever he wishes. But I, the angel of repentance, say to you: Do not fear not the devil; for I was sent to be with you who repent with all your heart, to make you strong in faith. If you return to the Lord with all your heart, and practise righteousness the rest of your days, He will heal your former sins, and you will have power to hold sway over the works of the devil. But as to the threats of the devil, fear them not at all, for he is powerless as the sinews of a dead man. But fear the Lord, for fearing the Lord you will have dominion over the devil."

So, the icy, paralyzing fright and the phantasms sown by the evil one will be driven out by our taking refuge in God, our Maker and Redeemer. We speak of "fear of God" because all the patriarchs and prophets and saints testify to this. "Fear of God" comes from the fact that, like the prodigal son, we have been hiding and running away for such a long time—since Adam! And yet, the fear of God is mixed with a sense of being summoned by Him, called and asked to come and see and touch and taste something truly amazing, truly beautiful and good for us.

Our patron saint, Anthony the Great, teaches (and you can read it on the new icon at the entrance) that fear of God will in due time teach us love. Saint Anthony gave witness: *I no longer fear God, but love Him!*

Above all, let this word from today's Epistle accompany us: **"Let all that you do be done in love."** There are so many reasons and goals for what we do, many of them honorable, justified, important. In Church, however, our actions are measured in this way only: all that we do should be done with love.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

From the Gospel according to Saint Matthew

(Mat 21:33-42) The Lord spoke this parable: "There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. Afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'"

To the hearers of this parable, the meaning of what the Lord said was pretty clear: a few verses after the end of the parable, it says, "Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard

His parables, *they perceived that He was speaking of them.* How was he speaking of them?

In short: the landowner is God, the vineyard is the revelation to the people of Israel, the vinedressers are the religious establishment of Israel, the servants sent out by the landowner are the prophets sent by God to Israel. And the son of the landowner, as you probably guessed, is the Son of God, Jesus himself. Understood in this way, the parable is a strong indictment of the hardheartedness with which Israel's priests and theologians kept opposing the proclamation of the Good News, and their determination to kill the messenger rather than to accept the message and be transformed into children of God.

For us, today, however, the parable is no less relevant. Where are we in this parable? The parable pushes us to determine our place in this story. Are we the servants of God, sent out to extend the Liturgy into our daily lives and our interaction with family, friends, neighbors? Or are we those who fancied themselves owners of the vineyard, and who set themselves against God? We must never forget that the Christian Church—the living organism where we gradually change course, repent, and accept God's work in us—is not something we can take credit for or boast about. If "it is marvelous in our eyes", it is because "this was the Lord's doing"! The cornerstone of the Church is Jesus Christ, his coming from God, his becoming man, his suffering, death, and resurrection.

Everything is here as a gift from God, to be received with open heart, like a child: take, eat, see that the Lord is good; rejoice, and pass it on.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Bill and Ann; pr. Paisius; Stelian (Cezar's father); Seba, Lisa, and Sam (Michaels), Norma, George (Georgiades), Christine (Abraham), Jim, Tony, Samantha, Luke (relatives of Dollie's), Norma, 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, 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: Donald (Norma's brother); Dottie's brother; William (Fr. Paisius's father); Sue (Stacey's mother); Vicki (Frank's mother); Craig (Jean's son-in-law); 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.