

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese  
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## EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 4 October 2015

**TONE 1**— Hieromartyr Hierotheus, Bishop of Athens (1st c.). Martyrs Gaius, Faustus, Eusebius, and Chæremon, of Alexandria (3rd c.). Martyr Peter of Capetolis (3rd-4th c.). Martyrs Domnina and her daughters, in Syria (305-306). Ven. Ammon (ca. 350) and Paul the Simple (4th c.), of Egypt. Martyr Adautus and his daughter, St. Callisthene, of Ephesus (4th c.). St. Stephen Stiljjanovich of Serbia (1515); Gurias, First Archbishop of Kazan, and Barsanuphius, Bishop of Tver' (1595).

### 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:) 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 1): While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of life. Glory to Thy Resurrection O Christ, glory to Thy kingdom, glory to Thy providence, O Thou Who alone art the lover of mankind.

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 FOR ORDINARY SUNDAYS (Tone 4): O protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the Creator most constant, O despise not the suppliant voices of those who have sinned; but be thou quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession, and speed thou to make supplication, thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.

## TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

*Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous!*

*From the Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*

(2 Cor 9:6-11) Brethren, this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

Saint Paul was not only a holy apostle, the early Church's most effective missionary, a loving spiritual father and guide to so many, and a man blessed to have heavenly visions and revelations from the Lord—he was also a very practical person. Although he wrote and preached so often about the Church as a mystical, divine-human reality—"the body of Christ"—he also knew that the survival and thriving of the early Christian communities depended in significant measure on good stewardship of their earthly resources. Indeed, money is always part of what makes any human institution work; and the holy Apostle was a very good organizer on this front. We would do well to listen to his words, and think seriously about taking his advice.

Saint Paul assumes we already know that the model for everything we are called to do is God. God is abundantly rich and abundantly generous, and He shares his gifts with creation freely, **not grudgingly, nor out of any necessity**. The love that God is *in Himself*, as relation between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, overflows towards creation, so that we experience God as Giver and as Gift. This is why Orthodox theology speaks about the *personal* character of our relation to God (He is the Giver) and about how God's interaction with us is experienced concretely as *divine energies* (He is also the Gift). What, then, about money and other resources?

**He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.** "Sowing bountifully" is true of God first. And it must become true of the Church, as a whole, and of every disciple of Christ, individually. Imitate God by *giving*.

**God loves a cheerful giver.** Giving is God's manner of existence; naturally, then, *it is good to give*. To us, *giving* is part of healing our terrible state of separation from God. Therefore, we should realize that giving is, first of all, an opportunity for us. Giving is first of all good *for us!* Why? Because it returns us to the pattern of existence that God Himself has inscribed in us from the beginning. And since by giving we are returning to our proper "functioning" as sons and daughters of God, let us *be cheerful in giving*.

Saint Paul goes on to quote from Psalm 112: "**He has given to the poor, His righteousness endures forever.**" Again, the first one to fit the description is God. But the Psalm is a recommendation for us: if you want "righteousness" (the kind of intimacy with God that befits a human being), then *practice giving*.

Finally, the Apostle assures us, God is not standing by and watching from a distance: as you give, rest assured that He will supply you with **sufficiency in all things, that you may have an abundance for every good work.** And what is more, He will also **increase the fruits of your righteousness.** In other words, as we practice God's generous mode of existence, God is at work in us, transforming us. With every act by which we extend ourselves to others, we are being renewed and made *ever more capable* of tasting God's grace and sharing it with others.

## TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

### *From the Gospel according to Saint Luke*

(Luke 6:31-36) The Lord said: "As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."

We are not called to manufacture and squeeze out some of "our" mercy and love towards others. Rather, we are called to share a Gift that we have ourselves in abundance: to pass on and extend the mercy of God—the mercy received at Baptism, which we continue to receive as our daily bread from God. It is because we have been forgiven that we are able to forgive, it is because God is merciful to us that we become free and able to extend His mercy to others.

"Mercy": it is hard to find a word more frequently used in our services. If there is anything we ask of God, it surely is mercy. Sometimes we even repeat "Lord, have mercy!" twelve times or forty times—not that God really needs such constant and insistent reminders, but to make sure that we understand how much we are in need of God's mercy.

Our relationship with God and our relationship with fellow-humans are two sides of the same reality. Scripture speaks plainly. In the Old Testament: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice!" (Hosea 6:6); and in the New Testament: "if you don't love your brother, whom you see, how can you imagine to love God, whom you don't see?" (1 John 4:20). In today's Gospel these two dimensions our Christian life are again brought together. To paraphrase the last line of our text: "**Be merciful to your fellow-humans, just as God is a merciful Father to you!**"

And just how merciful should we be?

How merciful should we be? The Gospel calls for a measure of mercy that seems, at first, unreasonable: be merciful like God, forgive like God forgives, love like God loves. Clearly, this is not easy (to put it mildly). In fact, the Gospel does recognize that most of the things that Christ asks of us are impossible for any human being on earth. However, if the standard is so high for Christians, it is because we ought to have learned that God has come to dwell among us, in order to live in us, and make the impossible possible.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Today:** one-year memorial for Angeliki Steriopulos (Georgia's mom)
- **SUNDAY SCHOOL** begins today.
- **[orthodoxcranberry.org](http://orthodoxcranberry.org):** Cranberry is home to many Orthodox Christians and to many who seek for the fulness of the Christian faith. There are also many who, for whatever reason, are not attending church. With the blessing of His Grace Bishop Thomas, our parish is starting a missionary and pastoral outreach which aims to extend the presence of Orthodoxy into Cranberry. We are meeting **on Thursdays, 7-8 PM, in the Cranberry Municipal Center (2525 Rochester Rd)**. Join us (and bring a friend) to pray and to learn about the Orthodox faith, to ask questions, and to cultivate friendship with God.

### *Remember in your prayers*

LIVING: Bill and Ann; pr. Paisius; Dottie; Bernard (Dottie's brother); 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 and Christine – seeking for the true faith.

DEPARTED: David (Steve's father-in-law); Donald (Norma'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, Stormy (friend of Ron's).