

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese  
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## TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

18 October 2015

**TONE 3** —Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke (1st c.). Martyr Marinus the Elder at Anazarbus (4th c.). Ven. Julian the Hermit, of Mesopotamia (4th c.).

### 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 3): Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.

TROPARION FOR THE HOLY APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST LUKE (Tone 3): O holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke, intercede with the merciful God, to grant our souls forgiveness of sins.

TROPARION OF ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT (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

Prokeimenon: *Chant unto our God, clap your hands, all ye nations!*

### *From the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians*

(Gal 1:11-19) **Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.**

Saint Paul was *not* one of the twelve disciples of our Lord. In fact, he never even met Jesus during His earthly ministry. Moreover, in the early years of the Church, Paul (then called Saul) did his best to stop the spreading of the faith, preaching against those who called Jesus “Messiah” (in Greek “Christ”) and “Lord,” and putting all his time and energy into persecuting the Church. When the authorities executed St. Stephen, the first deacon and martyr, Saul was guarding the clothes of those throwing stones!

Although blind, Paul's zeal was genuine. And since God knows the heart of man, and never fails to guide those that search earnestly for His truth, at a certain moment in God's time, something extraordinary happened. In St. Paul's words, God “revealed his Son to him.” Paul *did* meet the Lord—on the way to Damascus, he had a vision, an overwhelming encounter with the resurrected Jesus Christ. And it was this meeting that established him as an apostle, and a divinely authorized preacher of the Gospel.

But many were skeptical about the Gospel preached by this man (now baptized “Paul”). They kept insisting that he had not received a commission from Christ—like the other apostles—or from Peter, the leader of the apostles, or from James, the leader of the Mother-Church in Jerusalem. Yet Paul knew what he had received from Christ: “the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ.”

And this special commissioning of St. Paul has borne rich fruit: it is to him and to his disciple, St. Luke, that we owe most of the New Testament; it is he that showed the importance of sharing the Good News with the pagans; it is he that crisscrossed Europe to found its first Christian communities; and he ended his life in martyrdom together with St. Peter, in 64 C.E., at Rome.

Whether “cradle Orthodox” or converts, we are called, like Paul, to allow Christ to be revealed in us, and to gradually learn how to live as His disciples. Nobody ever said it would be easy; but we can all take the advice that the same Apostle Paul gave to one of his spiritual sons: *Here is a trustworthy saying: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first!* (1 Tim 1:15).

## TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

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

(Luke 8:5-15) **The Lord spoke this parable: A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path and was trampled, and the birds of the sky ate it up. Some seed fell on rocky ground, and when it grew, it withered for lack of moisture. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell on good soil, and when it grew, it produced fruit a hundredfold.** After saying this, he called out, "Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear." Then his disciples asked him what the meaning of this parable might be. He answered, "Knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God has been granted to you; but to the rest, they are made known through parables so that 'they may look but not see, and hear but not understand.'" This is the meaning of the parable. The seed is the word of God. Those on the path are the ones who have heard, but the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts that they may not believe and be saved. Those on rocky ground are the ones who, when they hear, receive the word with joy, but they have no root; they believe only for a time and fall away in time of trial. As for the seed that fell among thorns, they are the ones who have heard, but as they go along, they are choked by the anxieties and riches and pleasures of life, and they fail to produce mature fruit. But as for the seed that fell on rich soil, they are the ones who, when they have heard the word, embrace it with a generous and good heart, and bear fruit in perseverance.

The parable of the sower is well known; it is, however, easily misunderstood. The parable seems, at first sight, to speak of different types of persons: some refuse to hear the Gospel; others hear it but are superficial and lazy; others always seem to put God and their salvation last; and others, again, receive the Gospel like a seed that planted in rich soil, where it continues to grow and to bring forth the fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Let us note that apart from telling us that God (the sower) is “foolishly” generous, even prodigal, and sends His Word (the seed) *everywhere and to everyone*: on good soil but also, no less, on the path, on rocky ground, and among thorns. In fact, we see that most of the effort is in vain, since the majority (75% in the parable) reject or misuse the seed. Still, God continues to sow the Word of God even in this world and in this faithless and adulterous generation. The “soil” that receives the seed is nothing else than our heart. It can be a careless, inhospitable heart (where God’s presence goes unnoticed); a hard heart, which refuses to be pierced through by the Word, and remains shallow, without root; a poisoned heart (“choked by thorns”), where the Word of God is soon overwhelmed by a crowd of other concerns; or, as the Lord explains, the good soil refers to “a good and generous heart.”

So, which type are you? Well, this is a silly question! Our heart is like *all* those types of soil—sometimes like barren ground, oblivious to God and our neighbor, sometimes reducing God to some

shallow feeling or thought, sometimes too anxious about many things and therefore unable to be still in front of God.

To think that “some are just like this – the ‘churchy’ type – and others just aren’t” is simply not Orthodox. It leads to arrogance (remember the Pharisee: “God, I *thank you* that I’m *not like* other people!”) and despair. The point of the parable is rather that we are encountering the very Word of God as a seed that is sown in our hearing, that we are called to receive it, and *to change*, to become good soil. And change begins here and now: the Word of God is sown during Liturgy, read in the Psalm verses, the Epistle, and the Gospel, preached in the sermon, and tasted in the Eucharist.

The Word of God is searching for us and searching out our heart. He calls to us to become ***receptive and hospitable*** (because, “to those that *receive* Him He has given power to be children of God,” John 1:12), but also ***patient and perseverant***. Remember, the good soil (the good heart) “will bring forth fruit ***in patience***”! Or elsewhere, also in the Gospel of Luke: “by your ***endurance*** you will gain your lives” (Luke 21:19).

Finally, laboring for the cultivation of the heart, learning to receive God with an open, patient, and perseverant heart is well worth it. The harvest—the fruit of the Spirit—is rich beyond belief, worthy of God’s generosity: **when it grew, it produced fruit a hundredfold. A hundredfold!**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Next Sunday, 10/25:** Chili Sunday! It’s getting colder and colder, time for some chili. If you can, bring a little bit to share. If not, just come and enjoy! Bring a friend, too.
- **Saturday, 10/7:** Rummage & Cookie Sale at Saint Anthony’s! For info and details contact Seba Michaels.
- **Sunday, 10/ 8:** on the last Sunday before the Nativity Fast, we will gather at Sts. Peter & Paul Ukrainian Church for a **pan-Orthodox Liturgy, followed by potluck.**
- **[orthodoxcranberry.org](http://orthodoxcranberry.org): Thursdays, 7-8 PM, Cranberry Municipal Center (2525 Rochester Rd).** After Compline we will discuss the parables of the seed growing secretly (Mark 4:26-29) and the parable of the budding fig tree (Luke 21:29-33)

### *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).