

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
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TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

1 November 2015

TONE 5—Holy Wonderworkers and unmercenary healers Cosmas and Damian of Mesopotamia, and their mother, St. Theodota. Hieromartyrs John the Bishop and Jacob (James) the Presbyter, of Persia (ca. 345). Martyrs Cyrenia and Juliana in Cilicia (4th c.). Martyr Hermenegild the Goth of Spain (586). Martyrs Cæsarius, Dacius, Sabbas, Sabinian, Agrippa, Adrian, and Thomas, at Damascus (7th c.). Monk Martyrs Jacob, Jacob the Deacon, and Dionysius, of Prodromou (Mt. Athos—1520).

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 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.

TROPARION FOR STS COSMAS AND DAMIAN (Tone 8): O holy unmercenarys and wonderworkers, visit our infirmities; freely you received, freely give to us.

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: 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: *In the saints that are in His earth has the Lord been wondrous.
I beheld the Lord ever before me.*

From the First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

(1 Cor 12:27-13:8) Brethren, you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

What can one add after these words coming from Saint Paul, the great theologian, missionary, and administrator of the Apostolic church? Simply repeating his famous “hymn on love” helps us get a feeling of these divine heights. **Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude; love is not irritable or resentful; love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.**

“Love never ends”?! What about feelings that lose their freshness, what of broken friendships, divorce, death—are these not instances in which whatever we mean by “love” is lost, or betrayed, or falsified, or taken from us? But the Church learns its language from the deeds of God. When the Church speaks about love it starts with how God loves us. And we see that whatever God’s love touches is made eternal: He established his creation in love, and it shall never be undone; He made each one of us by speaking a creative word, a word of love, which is the root of our very being—and we are thereby called to enter an eternal dialogue of love with Him, with our fellow humans, and with all creation. **Love stands at our beginning.**

Even as we look at our brokenness—the brokenness of fallen creatures in a fallen world—we believe that God is at work to heal this wound, and are awaiting “the age to come.” This “age to come,” the “Kingdom of God,” is not some other time and some other place; it is rather a mode of

existence in which we are attuned to God, healed, and restored to live in God. And **love is the substance of the Kingdom to come.**

Between our origin and our destination, Saint Paul speaks about love as the way on which we travel. It is **“the more excellent way”**: more excellent, of course, than food and drink and money and power and glory; but more excellent also than all miracles and spiritual “superpowers” one may think of. All are *at best* means to an end; but love is the end, the goal, the fulfilment. We are made by God in love and destined for love; without love we *are nothing* (“**a noisy gong, a clanging cymbal**”) and *have nothing*; and it is only through love that we understand anything.

All this lofty theologizing about love might leave us impressed but confused. Where do we get a taste of that? Where do we begin? Saint Paul was also a practical man. If you want to begin, he says, start here: **you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.** In Church we are bound to Christ and bound to each other, like the various members of a body; and we are given a place to start and to practice, a place to “taste” the realities of heaven right here and now.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke

(Luke 16:19-31) The Lord said: "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.'"

It is easy to blame the rich man in this story: he shares nothing with poor Lazarus, he does not care for his sick and dying fellow-human, he is a monster! And yet, judging things on a strictly social and political level, the rich man may have some sort of justification. After all, some would say, the rich man was not responsible for the poverty and sickness of Lazarus; besides, Lazarus should be grateful for the crumbs he is getting! But the story requires us to approach it differently, so that we understand why the rich man is used as a warning *not* to do like he did.

As always with parables in the Gospel, we are called to ask ourselves: who are *we* in this story? The answer has nothing to do with the amount of money one has accumulated, or one's social status. Theologically speaking, *all of us*—rich and poor, men and women, citizens and

foreigners, etc— are Lazarus. In relation to God, we are all a Lazarus, suffering from the incurable sickness of mortality, covered with the boils of sinful and destructive habits, barely alive through our own choice of separating ourselves from the divine source of life. Now, since God is not responsible for our fallen state, could he not "just tolerate" us, the way the rich man tolerates the poor who eats crumbs from his table?

But God shows us a different way. He does not ask whether we "truly deserve" a better state; in dealing with our shortcomings, as the Psalmist says, He does not keep score: "If You should mark our iniquities, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness." And, unlike the rich man in the parable, God does not feed us mere crumbs. Remember the invitation addressed to us on Pascha night: *"You that have kept the fast, and you that have not, rejoice today, for the table is richly laden! The calf is a fatted one, let no one go away hungry! Enjoy all the riches of His goodness! Let no one grieve at his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave."*

God's mode of existence—generous and forgiving—is what is asked of us. It is not only asked of us, but it is offered to us in Christ: if we embrace Christ and the risen life that flows from Him, then we are given the power to live out a truly Christian life, a life in which God's abundant generosity is manifested here and now, towards our neighbor. If we refuse to be like God, we automatically separate ourselves from Him, and choose the same miserable hell as the foolish rich man. God does not wish for this; therefore He sets before us many opportunities to share with others the gifts that we ourselves have so richly received from Him. Let us not neglect the opportunities that lie before our very eyes!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Friday, 11/6, starting 6pm:** the myrrh-streaming Icon of the Theotokos will be at St. Nicholas Church in Homestead, PA (903 Ann Street). Let's not miss this extraordinary opportunity!
- **Saturday, 11/7: Rummage & Cookie Sale!** For info and details contact Seba Michaels.
- **Sunday, 11/8:** 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: Thursday 11/5, 7-8 PM, Cranberry Municipal Center.** After Compline we will discuss the parable of the workers in the vineyard.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Diane (Georgia's sister); Bill and Ann; 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, John, Janet, Christy (relatives of Jean); John and Julie (Smolen); Dennis, Vincent, Roy and Laura, Danny, Danny, Cathy (relatives of John and Julie); Diane; Shea and Katie; Tim and Caroline (Becker).

Ron, catechumen; Garrett & Autumn, Benjamin, Christine – seeking for the true faith.

DEPARTED: Gladys (Smolen); 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).