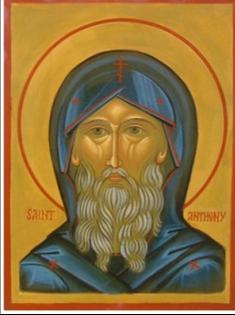


SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
www.orthodoxbutler.org

ADDRESS: 400 S. Sixth Avenue, Butler, PA 16001

RECTOR: Rev. Bogdan Gabriel Bucur

CONTACT: 724.287.6893 (church); 412.390.8208 (priest);
frbogdan@orthodoxbutler.org

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

15 November 2015

TONE 7— Holy Martyrs and Confessors Gurias, Samonas, and Abibus, of Edessa (299-306). Martyrs Elpidius, Marcellus, and Eustochius, who suffered under Julian the Apostate (4th c.). Martyr Demetrius of Thrace (ca. 307). Ven. Paisii (Paisius) Velichkovsky (1794).

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 OF SAINT ANTHONY THE GREAT: 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 THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS IN THE TEMPLE (Tone 4): The all-pure temple of the Savior, the most precious bridal chamber and Virgin, the treasure-house of the glory of God, today enters the Temple of the Lord, bringing with her the grace which is in the divine Spirit: whom also the angels of God do celebrate in song; for she is the heavenly tabernacle.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *The Lord will give strength to his people.
Ascribe to the Lord, O sons of God, ascribe to the Lord honor and glory.*

From the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

(Ephesians 2:14-22) **Brethren:** Christ is our peace, He who made both groups one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through His flesh, abolishing the Law with its commandments and legal claims, in order to create in Himself one new person in place of the two, thus establishing peace, and to reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it. He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone. Through Him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord; in Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

The two groups that are mentioned in this text are the people of Israel and the Gentiles. For the longest time God had been erecting a fence around Israel, to keep them as his “treasured possession” (Exod 19:5), as the people chosen to know God and bear witness to him before all the families of the earth. With the advent of Christ, however, the dividing wall is abolished, and both groups are joined into the One Church: both Jews and Gentiles, all those who confess that God has visited His people, becoming flesh for our sake. Saint Paul does not insist on the newness that this tearing down of the wall brought *to Israel*; since he is writing to a community of Gentile Christians in Asia Minor, his message is tailored primarily *for us*, former pagans.

We were “far off” from God, and are given most intimate “access to the Father”; we were “strangers and sojourners,” and are now counted as “fellow citizens with the holy ones.” In short, we have been taken in, adopted into Israel, and God no longer differentiates between Israel, his first born, and the Gentiles: as long as any Jews or Gentiles are “in Christ,” they are equally part of the people of God.

Of course, the gate of Baptism through which one enters “in one Spirit” into the new reality of the One Church, is merely the beginning. Our calling is to become “a temple sacred in the Lord,” to “grow into a dwelling place of God.” In other words, Jews and Gentiles alike are called to be, individually, what the ancient Temple was: a receptacle and abode of the divine Glory; called to be, individually, what the Theotokos is: a Christ-bearer; or, like the bread and the wine that we bring to the altar, called to be transformed by the Holy Spirit, Who does not shy away from descending upon us and our gifts.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

From the Gospel according to Saint Luke

(Luke 10:25-37) At that time, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered right; do this, and you will live." But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion, and went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; then he set him on his own beast and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed mercy on him." And Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise!"

From very early on, the Fathers of the Church have interpreted the parable of the Good Samaritan in a spiritual key: the man who fell among robbers and is found wounded, barely alive, is fallen humankind; the priest and the Levite who come by but do not help signify the Old Testament Law, which pointed out sin but was not able to heal it; the Good Samaritan is the Saviour Jesus Christ, who came to raise the fallen, to heal the sick, to restore humankind to its lost Paradise glory; water, oil, and wine stand for the sacraments of the Church. This is not just fanciful allegory. It is not difficult to see that the first one to be our neighbor, by showing mercy, is precisely God! Indeed, this is the content of the Gospel, the Good News: God has come searching for us, fallen and wounded as we were, has come bearing healing and restoration.

Let us remember, however, that the Lord is perfectly clear about what we, the hearers, have to do: "go and do likewise!" To do so, we have quite a few pointers from the Good Samaritan. The Samaritan does not (not for an instance) ask whether the man is "worthy" of his attention or help. He also does not enquire about what got the poor man into his predicament: was the man perhaps drunk? Did he congregate with the wrong sort of people? Was he putting on a show, pretending to be wounded, so as to trick naïve passers-by? The Good Samaritan also did not mind forsaking his own interests for as much time as was necessary to help, he did not limit the extent of his expenses, and he made sure that he would remain anonymous to the one he saved. We are called to do likewise: to work together with the Good Samaritan—Christ—and extend His presence and work to others here and now, so that our fellowship with Him would extend into eternity.

Like the religious scholar in this text (the "lawyer" wasn't really a lawyer, but a specialist of the divine Law), we may think that "to love God" is a pretty clear command: it means thinking of God, reading Scripture, worshipping God in Church and in private prayer, and keeping the commandments of God. By contrast, to love our neighbor can seem less clear: should we love those outside our circle of family and friends? Should we love those who are against us, our enemies and

persecutors? And if we don't go as far as that, how exactly should we love our "neighbor"? Who exactly is our neighbor?

The fact is that people are often deluded in our claims to love God; and atheists *do* have a point when they note that deeply religious folks are often unpleasant, judgmental, self-righteous, pompous, vain, and even ready to kill those who disagree with them. It is not easy to say, even among those who claim to worship the God we believe in, just what kind of "god" it is that they believe in? Our neighbor, by contrast, should be a reality easier to spot just by looking around.

Christ turns these considerations upside down. The Gospel of the Good Samaritan contains two crucial questions—"what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" and "who is my neighbor. The answer unites, in one breath, *two* commandments from the Old Testament: **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind"** (Deuteronomy 6:5) and **"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"** (Leviticus 19:18). Moreover, the second command—love of our fellow man—is introduced, in the Gospel of Matthew, with these words: **"And a second [command] is like it [the first]."** In other words, love of God and love of our fellow man are like the two bars of the cross, never to be separated. Saint John, the beloved disciple of the Lord, expresses this very, very clearly: **"Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. If a man says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar"** (2 John 4:20).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **November 15-December 25:** the Nativity Fast, our preparation for Christmas.
- **Next weekend: Fr. Bogdan will be out of town for a scholarly conference.** Please attend Divine Liturgy at either St. Andrew or Sts. Peter and Paul. (To the parish council: please post an announcement on both church doors on Sunday). In situations of emergency, contact Fr. Paisius McGrath (724.549.6651) or Fr. Joseph Wargo (724.789.7660).
- **orthodoxcranberry.org: Thursday 11/19, 7-8 PM, Cranberry Municipal Center.** After Compline we will discuss the parable of the wicked vinedressers (Luke 20:9-16)

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: 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: Diane (Georgia's sister); 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).