

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese  
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## THE CIRCUMCISION OF THE LORD

### FIRST ANTIPHON

*Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye earth. Sing unto His Name; make His praise glorious. (R.):* Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! *Say to God, "How wondrous are Thy works! Through the greatness of Thy power shall Thine enemies be proved false before Thee." (R.):* Glory... Now and ever... (R.)

### SECOND ANTIPHON

*Let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad. O sing unto the Lord a new song. (R.):* Save us, O Son of God Who wast circumcised in the flesh, as we chant to Thee, "Alleluia"! *Out of Zion cometh the excellence of His beauty. (R.):* Our God is in heaven and on earth; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. (R.) Glory... Now and ever...  
(Only begotten Son and Word of God ...)

### THIRD ANTIPHON

TROPARION OF THE LORD'S CIRCUMCISION (see below), preceded by the following Psalm verses:

- *I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever.*
- *With my mouth will I tell of Thy truth.*
- *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity.*

### AT THE 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 6): When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

TROPARION OF THE LORD'S CIRCUMCISION (Tone 1): Our human form hast Thou taken on Thyself without change, O greatly compassionate Master, though being God by nature; fulfilling the Law, Thou willingly receivest circumcision in the flesh that Thou mightest end the shadow and roll away the veil of our sinful passions. Glory be to Thy goodness unto us; glory be to Thy compassion; Glory, O Word, to Thine inexpressible condescension!

TROPARION OF 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 OF THE FOREFEAST OF THEOPHANY (special melody): Today the Lord appeared in the courses of the Jordan, crying to John and saying, "Be not dismayed at my Baptism; for I have verily come to save Adam, the first to be created!"

## TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding. Hear this, all ye people.*

*From Saint Paul's Epistle to the Colossians.*

(Col 2:8-12) Brethren, see to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in Him the whole fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in Him, Who is the head of all rule and authority. In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead.

## TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

*The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke*

(Luke 2:20-21; 40-52) And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom; and when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company they went a day's journey, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been

looking for you anxiously.” And he said to them, “How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature,[c] and in favor with God and man.

## ON THE CIRCUMCISION OF THE LORD

Theologically speaking, Christ is not “ours” and unconditionally blessing whatever we think is right; rather, it is we who are called to be “His,” to align and adapt our way of living to His presence and Kingdom. But even in a very basic way, it is sometimes good to remember and repeat that Jesus Christ was not a Christian, that He was not fair-skinned and blue-eyed (and that, contrary to what movies show, He did not speak English with a British accent). He was a Jew in first-century Palestine; He was circumcised, like all Jews, on the eighth day; He kept the Sabbath, went to synagogue, and most people called him *rabbi*. Among His words recorded in the Gospels, let us note the following: “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mat 15:24); “salvation is from the Jews” (John 4:22).

On January 1, the Church celebrates as a major feast the Circumcision of the Lord. Even though Christians are not circumcised—the mark of our covenant, the New Covenant, with God in Christ is Baptism—we do remember and celebrate our roots going back to Abraham. By calling of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and making a covenant with them, and by extending the revelation too all Israel on Mount Sinai, God made Israel into His “treasured possession out of all the peoples” (Exod 19:5). The covenant with God obliged Israel to be the people that would know God, and, at the appointed time, bear witness about Him to all the families of the earth. The binding agreement with God—the “covenant”—expressed in the Law of Moses also had an exterior sign: the mark by which the Israelites confessed their belonging to God was circumcision. Naturally, Jesus of Nazareth was circumcised.

That wall of separation between Israel and the other nations was abolished only when, after the Resurrection of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit, both groups are joined into One: both Jews and Gentiles, all those who confess that God has visited His people, becoming flesh for our sake. The Epistle to the Ephesians insists upon this new reality for those disciples of Christ who coming from the nations: those who were “far off” from God, have been given most intimate “access to the Father”; those who once were “strangers and sojourners” are now counted as “fellow citizens with the holy ones.” In short, the nations 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. We were *adopted* into Israel, as Saint Paul writes to the Romans (Rom 11:17-18), we are the prodigal son received by the Father.

By celebrating the Lord’s circumcision, we remember that we, the Gentiles, have been adopted into Israel, “grafted” as a wild olive shoot into the root of the good olive tree, Israel (Romans 11:17). But there is more: we are also confessing, in awe, that it is the Lawgiver Himself, the one who imposed circumcision on Israel, who came in the flesh as a newborn baby (December 25, the Nativity), who received circumcision as a Jew (January 1, the Circumcision), who was presented at the Temple, as a first-born child (February 2, the Presentation). We confess Jesus Christ as true God of true God, of one essence with the Father, but also flesh of our flesh and of one essence with us.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Next Sunday, 1/10, 1:30 pm: Outdoor Blessing of the Waters.** After Divine Liturgy, we will gather at Lake Arthur in Moraine State Park, joining the parishes of Sts Peter and Paul and St Andrew, as well as the nuns at Transfiguration Monastery.
  - **Where?** Moraine State Park, South Shore of Lake Arthur, Bear Run boat launch. We will gather at the Bear Run Launch parking area (see directions below), then together make a procession to the fishing pier for the service.
  - **Directions:** from Butler take Route 422 W to the South Shore exit of Moraine State Park and turn right. Turn left at the sign for Bear Run Launch (at the corner where you see the State Park office) and go up the hill. At the top of the hill turn left following the sign for Bear Run Launch and go down the hill to the parking area.
- **Saturday and Sunday, 1/ 16-17: Pastoral visit from Bishop Thomas and Feast of Anthony the Great.** Bishop Thomas will be with us Saturday evening (Vespers and meeting with the parish council). On Sunday we will be hosting our brothers and sisters from the other two Orthodox parishes, donate the collection to a monastic community (since they are the followers of Saint Anthony, “the father of monasticism”). Our guest and speaker will be **Archbishop Melchizedek**, who will speak about the place and mission of monasticism in the Church.

### *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, Karyn, Ignatius and Amy, John, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei, 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:** Dolores (Bingham), 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); Cristian (Andronic); Rick, Phyllis (Seba’s husband and sister), Angeliki, Joe and David Sipos; Glenn (Jean’s grandson); Stella, Edmund (Ed’s uncle), Richard, 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).