

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

21 August 2016

TONE 8—Afterfeast of the Dormition of the Mother of God; Apostle Thaddæus of the Seventy (ca. 44). Martyr Bassa of Edessa and her sons Theogonius, Agapius, and Pistus (2nd c.). Ven. Abramius, Archimandrite and Wonderworker of Smolensk, and his disciple, Ven. Ephraim (13th c.).

FIRST ANTIPHON

Shout with joy to God, all the earth, give thanks unto the Lord and call upon His Name. Declare His works among the nations. Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! In the city of our God, in His holy mountain, His place hath been made in peace, and His dwelling in Zion. (R:) Glory... Now and ever... (R:)

SECOND ANTIPHON

The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, as we chant to Thee: Alleluia! God hath laid her foundation unto eternity. We have thought, O God, of Thy mercy in the midst of Thy people. (R:) The most-high hath hallowed His tabernacle. (R:) Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

TROPARION OF THE DORMITION (see below) with the following verses:

- *Ready is my heart, O God, ready is my heart; I will sing and chant in my glory.*
- *What shall I render to the Lord for all that He hath given me?*
- *I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.*

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 8): From the heights Thou didst descend, O Compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF THE DORMITION (Tone 1): In giving birth thou didst preserve thy virginity; in thy dormition thou didst not forsake the world, O Theotokos! Thou wast translated to life, since thou art the Mother of Life; and by thine intercessions dost thou redeem our souls from death.

KONTAKION OF DORMITION (Tone 2): The grave and death could not hold the Theotokos, who is unsleeping in her intercessions, and an unfailing hope in her mediations. For as the Mother of Life she was translated to life by Him Who dwelt in her ever-Virgin womb.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Make vows to the Lord thy God and perform them. In Judah God is known; His Name is great in Israel.*

The Reading is from Saint Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

(1 Cor 3:9-17) Brethren, we are God's fellow-workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise architect I laid a foundation, and another builds upon it. Let each one take heed how he builds upon it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; everyone's work will become manifest; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire itself will test each one's work of what sort it is. If anyone's work which was built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as by fire. Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, whose temple you are.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew

(Mat 14:22-34) At that time, Jesus made the Disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowds. And after He had dismissed the crowds, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone, but the disciples' boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. But when the Disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately He spoke to them, saying, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear." And Peter answered Him, "Lord, if it is Thee, bid me come to Thee on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out His hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "Truly, Thou art the Son of God." And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

“CO-WORKERS OF GOD” AND IMITATORS OF THE THEOTOKOS

Ἡ ΚΟΙΜΗΣΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ



We are celebrating the Afterfeast of the Dormition; it is fitting, therefore, to continue reflecting on the mystery of God accomplished in Mary the Theotokos. Her status among Christians is unique, as she is the one who gave birth to Christ; and if we believe Christ to be the very Word and Wisdom of God, the Son of God, “true God of true God,” then she is, indeed, “the Birthgiver of God.”

At the same time however, she is *not* an exception to the general purpose that God has established for the church as a whole, and for each Christian in particular. If she humbled herself to become “the place” of God’s dwelling, and if that place was made holy by the presence of God, then we can understand what the Church is. The Apostle Paul writes to us today: **we are God’s fellow-workers, God’s field, God’s building. Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?** In this sense, we are all like the Theotokos.

God seeks reciprocity: He wants to dwell in us so that we can dwell with Him. We see this, too, in the Theotokos. The humility of God, who descends to our lowliness, meets the Virgin’s humble declaration: **“Behold the**

handmaiden of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word”—and so, as “the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin,” Mary becomes the Mother of God. Like her, the saints are “regular Christians” in whom the presence of God is felt as a sweet-smelling imprint of light and beauty and holiness.

Saint Paul explains that this “indwelling” is not a static reality, but something dynamic. **We are God’s fellow-workers:** it takes “work,” effort, movement, a symbolic ascent to the heights. Note also that it is not simply “working” but “co-working” that the Apostle speaks about. Our efforts are aided by grace. The mystery of this collaboration is perhaps difficult to express in words (the Fathers have produced a library of theological writings on this topic!). But we have a vivid image of our journey with God in the Gospel proclaimed today:

- the disciples are sailing on rough waters; **the wind was against them.** But when Christ got into the boat, **the wind ceased.**
- Peter learns his first steps of faith: he got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; **but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and was beginning to sink**—and we read that Jesus *immediately* reached out His hand and caught him.

It is reassuring to see how gentle and loving God’s work with us is. Is this not how we teach our children to stand, to walk, to ride a bicycle, to swim, to write, to speak the truth, to bless themselves with the sign of the Cross, to share with others, to apologize, to forgive, to be caring, courageous, and kind? Now, the two “partners” are even more unequal in our “co-working” with God. He does the heavy lifting (He forgives sins, cleanses the heart, empowers the will), we have to learn to obey, imitate the example He sets, and, generally, ride along without constantly hitting the brakes.

Yet our “co-working” with God is unsettling. We see this, too, in the Gospel: when Jesus approaches the boat walking on water, the disciples react with fear. ***They were terrified ... they cried out for fear. But immediately He spoke to them, saying, “Take heart, it is I; have no fear.”***

The Gospel reading tells us that, once they understood who it was that was visiting them in their boat, and stilled the storm, and gave Peter the ability to walk on water, the disciples were raised to a higher mode of existence. The boat became a temple: **and those in the boat worshiped Him, saying, “Truly, Thou art the Son of God.”** To worship God means to draw your life from God, to be connected. Christ does not need our worship; but for the Church it is a matter of life and death—drawing in the Spirit of Christ’s resurrection and life eternal, or cutting ourselves off from God and measuring our “life” only in terms of surviving for a few years or decades.

The Theotokos was translated from this life to eternal life; and as our fellow “co-worker” she always intercedes that we, too, follow the same path and inherit the same joy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TODAY: OUR PARISH PICNIC!

After Liturgy, Dollie’s place (119 Maple Grove Drive).

The Church provides hot dogs and hamburgers; anyone who desires can bring another dish, drink, or dessert. We hope to have among us some of the believers who have started worshipping in our mission outreach in Cranberry.

Cranberry offering: A basket for freewill offerings to our Cranberry outreach is placed next to “People in Need” box at the entrance to the church. We are trying to offset the 10% loss that the Cranberry group incurs by sending their Sunday collection to St. Anthony’s (we give 10% of all incoming money to the Archdiocese).

Next Sunday: with Cezar still absent next Sunday, we will again have a brief choir practice (9:15), followed by the Akathist of Thanksgiving.

SOON: Byzantine Chant Workshop. Amy Hogg from St. George in Pittsburgh offered to introduce anyone interested and willing to Byzantine chant by using her method of teaching music, which apparently allows for much faster progress. The plan is to begin with a “crash course” for a few hours on a Saturday (date still TBA) and then continue with regular lessons as we can.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Linda (Melissa’s mother – car accident); Job; Tina (John & Julie’s daughter); Ann; Mary Ann (Jean’s daughter); Dottie; 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), Ed, Peter, Georgia and Scot, Sam, Karen (Joanna’s mother), Diane, Sula, Dollie, Karyn, Fr. 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); Tina. Garrett & Autumn, Benjamin – seeking the true faith.

DEPARTED: Iosif (Cristina’s father); Victoria and Susan (mothers of Frank and Stacy); Richard (Minto) from Sts Peter and Paul; Bill; Dolores (Bingham), Diane (Georgia’s sister); Gladys (Smolen); David (Steve’s father-in-law); Donald (Norma’s brother); William (Fr. Paisius’s father); Craig (Jean’s son-in-law); Abie Abraham; Patrick (Rose’s brother); Josephine (Julie’s sister); 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); Lance; Bob (Diane’s father), Michael, Gabriel, Hilda (Chris Abraham’s mother), Alfred, Stormy (friend of Ron’s).