

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
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FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 2 October 2016

TONE 6—*Hieromartyr Cyprian, Virgin Martyr Justina, and Martyr Theoctistus, of Nicomedia (304). Blessed Andrew, Fool-for-Christ, at Constantinople (936). Repose of Believing Princess Anna of Kashin (1338). Martyrs David and Constantine, Princes of Georgia (740). Righteous Warrior Theodore Ushakov (1817).*

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 has 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 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 ST. CYPRIAN THE CONFESSOR (Tone 4): By choosing the Apostles' way of life, thou hast succeeded to their throne; inspired by God, thou didst find the way to divine contemplation through the practice of virtue. After teaching the Word of Truth without error thou didst defend the Faith to the very shedding of thy blood. O Hieromartyr Cyprian, entreat the Lord our God to save our souls.

TROPARION OF SAINT ANTHONY THE GREAT (Tone 4, 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: *O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.
Unto Thee have I cried, O Lord my God.*

The Reading is from the Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

2 Cor 4:6-15 Brethren, it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believed, and so we speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

The first sentence in today's Epistle reading speaks about *what* and *how* we Christians believe. To paraphrase the Creed, we believe in one God, the maker of heaven and earth, the almighty Creator. Yet, we know him not only as the God who in the beginning said "let there be light" and it was light: He is also the one who *restores* his fallen creatures, bringing us back into the light when we have fallen away into darkness.

A new act of creation occurs, individually, with anyone who entrust his or her life to God. As St. Paul says, the same God who said "Let light shine out of darkness" also comes and dwells in us and shines in our hearts, so that our darkness is illumined, our sins are wiped out, and our lives made new.

Receiving this divine illumination—the light of God's glory—is possible because the very "light of the holy glory" (as we sing at Vespers) has come into this world in Jesus Christ. In other words, we meet the luminous Face of God when we behold Jesus Christ, "light of light, very God of very God", who for our sake and for our salvation has become one of us, that we may become more and more like Him. The very fact of knowing God, the Creator, as our Father, is possible only in and through Christ.

The end of the reading reminds us of our ultimate goal: God's luminous glory will not cease working in us until it has overcome the last enemy, the last aberration of the Fall: death. Indeed, together with St. Paul and the Corinthians to whom his letter is addressed, we believe that the Creator who said in the beginning "let there be light" (and it was light), and who is now at work in us, to

transform us into children of the light, will eventually also raise us from the darkness of death and take us into the “resurrected life” that we see in Jesus Christ.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

From the Gospel according to Saint Luke

(Luke 6:31-36) The Lord said: “As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”

Our relationship with God and our relationship with fellow-humans are two sides of the same reality. Scripture speaks plainly. In the Old Testament: “I desire mercy, not sacrifice!” (Hosea 6:6); and in the New Testament: “if you don’t love your brother, whom you see, how can you imagine to love God, whom you don’t see?” (1 John 4:20). In today’s Gospel these two dimensions of our Christian life are again brought together. To paraphrase the last line of our text: “Be merciful to your fellow-humans, just as God is a merciful Father to you!” And just how merciful should we be? How merciful should we be? The Gospel calls for a measure of mercy that seems, at first, unreasonable: be merciful like God, forgive like God forgives, love like God loves. Clearly, this is not easy (to put it mildly). In fact, the Gospel does recognize that most of the things that Christ asks of us are impossible for any human being on earth. However, if the standard is so high for Christians, it is because we ought to have learned that God has come to dwell among us, in order to live in us, and make the impossible possible.

We are not called to manufacture and squeeze out some of “our” mercy and love towards others. Rather, we are called to share a Gift that we have ourselves in abundance: to pass on and extend the mercy of God—the mercy received at Baptism, which we continue to receive as our daily bread from God. It is because we have been forgiven that we are able to forgive, it is because God is merciful to us that we become free and able to extend His mercy to others.

“Mercy”: it is hard to find a word more frequently used in our services. If there is anything we ask of God, it surely is mercy. Sometimes we even repeat “Lord, have mercy!” twelve times or forty times—not that God really needs such constant and insistent reminders, but to make sure that we understand how much we are in need of God’s mercy.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: memorial for Mariana (Ileana's sister) and Joseph and David (Dollie's husband and their son)

Please plan on staying for a presentation followed by Q&A

THEOLOGIZING ABOUT DIVINE WRATH AND RETRIBUTION:
INSIGHTS FROM SAINT ISAAC OF NINEVEH

Today, 12:30-1:30 pm.

If all the writings of the Desert Fathers, wherein we are taught about vigil and prayer, were to be lost, and only Avva Isaac's writing survived, these would suffice to teach us, from beginning to end, the life of stillness and prayer. They are the Alpha and Omega of inner life and, even by themselves, they are a sufficient guide from the first step to perfection." (St. Joseph the Hesychast)

Next Sunday, October 9, 3:30 pm, Butler Country Club: Retirement Celebration Banquet for Fr. Joseph Wargo, who ends his 40-year ministry as pastor of St. Andrew Orthodox Church.

Sunday, October 23: our parish is invited for Divine Liturgy at Sts. Peter and Paul (the service will be presided by His Grace Bishop Daniel of the Ukrainian Church). Father Paisius McGrath celebrates his 50th birthday and ten years since his ordination. The Divine Liturgy will be followed by a common meal at the Ukrainian Hall. **Tickets** are \$ 15 for adults, \$ 5 for students; children eat free.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Job; Ann; Mary Ann (Jean's daughter); Stelian (Cezar's father); Seba, Lisa, and Sam (Michaels), Norma; George (Georgiades), Christine (Abraham), Marion and Jim Raimondi (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 (expecting); Christine, Phoebe, 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).