

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese  
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## TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 4 December 2016

*TONE 7—Greatmartyr Barbara and Martyr Juliana, at Heliopolis in Syria (ca. 306). Ven. John of Damascus (776). St. John, Bishop of Polybotum (8th c.). New-hieromartyr Seraphim, bishop of Phanarion in Greece.*

### 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! Refrain: 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 7): Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world great mercy.

TROPARION OF ST. BARBARA (Tone 4, Byzantine): Let us honor the all-revered Saint Barbara; for she demolished the gins of the adversary, and escaped from them like a sparrow by the help and weapon of the Cross.

TROPARION OF ST. JOHN OF DAMASCUS (Tone 3, “Awed by the beauty”): Ye faithful, come let us honor with songs of praise \* the comely sounding and sweet-spoken nightingale, \* who doth adorn and captivate the Church of Christ with his sweet songs: \* John, the all-wise Damascene, \* let us honor resplendently, \* the divine and eloquent, \* and the chief of hymnographers; \* who verily was filled to the utmost \* with every divine and earthly wisdom.

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 THE PREPARATION OF THE NATIVITY (Tone 3): The Virgin cometh today to the cave to give birth, ineffably to bring forth the Word eternal. Therefore, rejoice, O world, at the message; with the angels and shepherds, give glory to Him Who shall appear by His own will as a young child—He Who is from eternity God.

## TODAY’S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *God is wondrous in His saints. Bless God in the congregations*

*The Reading is from the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians*

(Gal 3:23-4:5) **Brethren, before faith came, we were confined under the Law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the Law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise. I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no better than a slave, though he is the owner of all the estate; but he is under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. So with us; when we were children, we were slaves to the elemental spirits of the universe. But when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.**

Today’s reading from the Apostle Paul does not belong to the sequence of Epistle readings appointed on Sundays of the Advent; sometimes a special Epistle text is read in honor of a special saint—and today this reading is appointed in honor of the holy martyr Barbara.

Nevertheless, this passage from the Epistle to the Galatians ends with a sentence that couldn’t be more relevant for our Advent journey: **“when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman ... in order that we might receive the adoption as sons.”** Note that God did not send us an extra-terrestrial, or some heavenly angel—he sent *his Son*: his very own Word, the very Light of his glory, the very light of his Face. Neither did He come in the fullness of His glory: He came to be **born of a woman**. A real human baby, nourished on his mother’s milk; one of us.

And, surely, God became one of us not because *He* needed it; rather **“in order that we might receive the adoption as sons.”** Now, this adoption as sons had, for the first Christians, a very concrete, even “technical” meaning: adoption into the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, grafting into the olive tree of Israel. To be “sons of God” means, in the Bible, to be part of the covenant—the binding mutual agreement—between God and Israel. And with the advent of the Messiah, the Christ, even the Gentiles were invited in, and made “sons.” In the words of the Apostle, **if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, heirs according to promise.**

The Church teaches more on this topic in the Advent Sundays to come, as she reminds us the ancestors of Christ according to flesh.

## TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

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

(Luke 13:10-17) At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your infirmity.” And He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.” Then the Lord answered him, “You hypocrite! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?” As Jesus said this, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by Him.

It is always good to be reminded that Jesus Christ was not a Christian: not only theologically, in the sense that we does not “belong” to us, but we belong to Him, but also in a basic, historical, sense. He was a first-century Jew, who was addressed as “rabbi” by both his disciples and his opponents, who was circumcised (and we still celebrate the Lord’s Circumcision on January 1), who kept the sabbath, went to the Jerusalem Temple and synagogues regularly. Today’s Gospel says that he was **teaching in the synagogue.**

Nevertheless, this rabbi from Nazareth not only teaches the Law, he also heals miraculously; and, through both teaching and healing, claims extraordinary authority in interpreting the Law.

The teaching we receive from today’s Gospel is captured best by the famous phrase in Mark 2:27, “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath!” Evidently, this applies just as much to us, Orthodox Christians. It is quite easy to idolize the externals of our faith—rules of worship, rules of piety, rules of Church discipline—and to treat them as independent realities, venerable in themselves. The Lord reminds the Pharisees (*and us*) that all religious laws and practices are only means to an end: they are meant to shape our awareness of God and to reorder our lives in relation to God. Ultimately, one’s closeness to God is measured in the sensitivity towards all those created in the image of God. All “religion” that renders one callous and inattentive to the fellow human beings is delusion.

As for the miraculous healing—a chronic illness goes away “at once”—the Gospel speaks about more than just this extraordinary incident. We hear that the woman was “crippled *by a spirit*,” so that “she was bent over, completely unable of standing erect,” and then that “*Satan* had her bound for eighteen years.” The crippled state of the woman is an image of fallen humanity: crippled, infirm, hopelessly under the power of the evil one. Like the woman, we receive, with the advent of the Lord, the truly Good News, “you are set free of your infirmity!”

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Nativity Fast: November 15—December 25.** The rule of fasting is to use these 40 days to re-orient ourselves on “the one thing needful”—the presence of God—by a richer prayer life in church and in private, by seeking peace and reconciliation with God and neighbor, by practicing charity, and by simplifying our diet (abstaining from animal products). Clergy and people alike are reminded of the great help we receive in the Mystery of Confession.
- **TODAY:** meeting of the Parish Council, to discuss the state and needs of our Cranberry outreach, and prospects for the months ahead. Meetings of the parish council are open to all parishioners.

**Next Sunday (December 11)**

12:30pm-1:30pm

LEARNING ORTHODOX THEOLOGY  
FROM THE HYMNS OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS  
Presentation followed by Q&A

**Friday, 23 December:**

**10 AM:** Royal Hours of Nativity, followed by confessions and visitations

**6 PM:** Advent Compline, followed by confessions

**Saturday, 24 December:**

**5:30 PM:** Matins and Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Lord's Nativity, potluck dinner.

**Sunday, 1 January:**

**10 AM:** Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Lord's Circumcision and Saint Basil the Great

*Remember in your prayers*

**LIVING:** Mark (Maura's cousin), who is in a coma; following a car accident; Job; Maura; Christi, Janet, Ann; John and Mary Ann (Jean's relatives); 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:** Diane (Georgia's sister); Iosif (Cristina's father); Victoria and Susan (mothers of Frank and Stacy); Richard (Minto) from Sts Peter and Paul; Bill; Dolores (Bingham); 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).