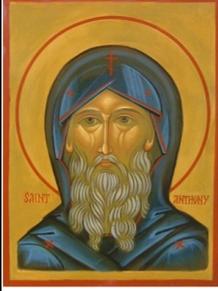


SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



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TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 15 January 2017

TONE 5—*Ven. Paul of Thebes (341) and John “the Hut-dweller” (5th c.). Ven. Martyr Pansophius of Alexandria (ca. 249-251). Ven. Gabriel of Lesnovo Monastery in Bulgaria (11th c.).*

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 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 ST. PAUL OF THEBES (Tone 8): The barren wilderness thou didst make fertile with the streams of thy tears; and by thy deep sighing thou hast given fruit through thy struggles a hundredfold. Accordingly, thou hast become a star for the universe, sparkling with miracles. Therefore, O righteous Father Paul, intercede with Christ God to save our souls!

TROPARION OF ST. JOHN THE HUT-DWELLER (Tone 4): Since thou hadst with fervor longed after the Lord from thy youth, thou leftest the world with its delights and nobly didst strive in valiant ascetic deeds. Thou didst pitch thy hut before the gates of thy parents; thou didst break the demons' snares, O all-blessed Father. And therefore, as is meet, hath Christ God glorified thee, O John.

KONTAKION OF THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST (Tone 1): Thou, O Christ God, Who by Thy Birth, didst sanctify the Virgin's womb, and, as is meet, didst bless Simeon's arms, and didst also come to save us; preserve Thy fold in wars, and confirm them whom Thou didst love, for Thou alone art the Lover of mankind.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *How magnified are Thy works, O Lord; in wisdom hast Thou made them all.
Bless the Lord, O my soul!*

The Reading is from the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Colosians

(Col 3:4-11) Brethren, when Christ, Who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.

Today's Epistle speaks about cutting out anger, malice, lies, slander, foul talk, all manner of sexual impurity, and greed. We all know pretty well that these vices estrange us from God and His Kingdom. If there is something surprising, it is that Saint Paul adds a special note to greed or covetousness: he says that it is a form of idolatry. *Idolatry?* Indeed! Greed is idolatry because it is a twisted emotional attachment—an addiction—to material possessions.

It is natural to seek personal security and a place, a status, in society. But *covetousness* means that we abandon ourselves and our aspirations for trust and security to "having" all kinds of earthly possessions. In short, it means believing that security and "being someone" comes from *having stuff*, and lots of it. With this attitude we make money into a god and sell ourselves into slavery to this god. And Christ warns us at: "**No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and money!**" (Mat 6:24). The same applies to all other vices. Therefore, Saint Paul writes, we must put away all these evil masters: anger, wrath, malice, slander, foul talk, and all the rest.

Let us now turn to what being a Christian means, according to the Apostle. It is not simply doing certain things and abstaining from others. If we avoid cursing, lying, and slandering, it is not merely because they are "not nice" or "bad for society." Christian morality is not about keeping a certain set of rules, but about exercising here and now "the life of the age to come" that we confess in the Creed. The life of the age to come is, in fact, communion with Christ Himself. That is why, being with Christ in the age to come is possible only if we practice living "in Christ" *in this age*.

Note the wording of the Apostle: "**when Christ *who is our life* appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.**" In other words, when Christ appears in glory, either He will be the very content of our lives, or we will find ourselves outside of the life of the Kingdom. It is for this reason that our day-to-day existence matters tremendously: either we struggle to make Christ's life our own, anticipating the full glory of the Kingdom to come, or we are increasingly sabotaging our chances in the age to come.

Our life in Christ is a return to true humanity. With his becoming man, the Word of God has taken on our human nature and healed it. What is more, this renewed humanity is not His personal privilege, but a gift He shares with us: "**Christ *in all!***" Christian morality means, therefore, to give

ourselves and all our lives to Him, “trading in,” as it were, our fallen humanity for the life of the “new Adam.” In the words of the Apostle, “**put off the old nature with its practices** (anger, malice, lies, slander, foul talk, sexual impurity, etc) **and put on the new nature renewed after the image of the Creator.**”

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Luke

(Luke 17:12-19) At that time, as Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” When He saw them He said to them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus said, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?” And He said to him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

The Gospel of Luke delights in showing how the occasional “outsider” is, unexpectedly, closer to God than those who deceive themselves with the false comfort of being “insiders” in name only. Thus, the prodigal son comes to his senses, while the “good” son’s envy and anger is put on a frightening display; the Samaritan shows pity and generosity with the wounded traveler, while the “professionals of the Law” (the priest and the Levite) pass by without intervening; the tax-collector—a real scumbag, no doubt—begs for God’s mercy and receives it, while the rigorously religious but arrogant Pharisee misses the encounter with God. And today we see that a Samaritan, “a foreigner” to Israel’s covenant with God, is nevertheless closer to God than the nine sons of the covenant who received the same healing.

The first point to ponder is that they were all *lepers*. The point is not that they were all sick people but that they were terrible *sinner*s. How so? In the general perception, leprosy was a sign of being punished, cursed by God, for some unknown misdeed. Hence, ten terrible sinners, and the Lord healed—that is, *forgave* and healed—all of them!

Secondly, although the Lord heals all of them, only one returns to give thanks—and that one is a *Samaritan*! Why is it important that he was Samaritan? Because Samaritans were considered heretics, people who distorted the revelation to Moses, enemies of the true faith upheld by the Jerusalem temple. “Samaritan” was used as an insult. Therefore, just as with the good Samaritan (compared to the religious but callous Israelite priests), and just as with Canaanite woman (whose faith is greater than that found in all of Israel), it is significant that the only one who returns to give thanks to God is a Samaritan!

What do we get out of this story? Sometimes people imagine that God would punish the nine with a return of that awful disease; but this thought is not worthy of the good and gracious God we worship. Besides, not returning to give thanks is itself a terrible form of self-punishment. Indeed, the nine are missing something that only the Samaritan receives. Clearly, then, we stand to learn a lot from the Samaritan today.

For one, the Samaritan is the only one of the ten who hears: “**your faith has made you well!**” This means that even while they had received physical healing, the nine missed the much greater opportunity of meeting God, and being made well in their whole being. Returning to Jesus to give thanks to God, the Samaritan also teaches us about the mystery of meeting God face to face. How did he give thanks to God? “**He fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving Him thanks.**” In short,

even without full understanding, the Samaritan shares with us the knowledge that “**whoever has seen the Son has seen the Father**” (*John 14:9*).

We imitate “this foreigner” in his turning back to give thanks to God every time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy and speak, through the priest:

**You brought us from non-existence into being, and when we had fallen away
You raised us up again; You left nothing undone until You brought us up to
heaven and granted us Your Kingdom that is to come. For all these things we
give thanks to You—for all the benefits we have received, known and
unknown, manifest or hidden; and we also give thanks for this Liturgy ...**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: memorial Trisagion for Ileana Șerbănescu's grandmother, Petruta.

NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 22: Saint Anthony's Day! We will be hosting our brothers and sisters from the other two Orthodox parishes, people from Cranberry, and some of the nuns at Transfiguration Monastery. Our guest and speaker will be **Rev. Dr. Silviu Bunta**, a priest in the OCA and professor of Hebrew Bible at the University of Dayton. donate the collection to a monastic community (since they are the followers of Saint Anthony, “the father of monasticism”). We will take a **special collection** for our monastic sisters in Ellwood City (since they are the followers of Saint Anthony, “the father of monasticism”). We are planning a chili festival. Since we can probably count on 80-100 persons, please bring lots of food!

HOUSE BLESSINGS: In the Orthodox tradition we “extend,” as it were, the blessing of Theophany to all areas of our lives by asking the priests to visit and bless our homes with holy water. If you wish to schedule a visit, please email Fr. Bogdan (frbogdan@orthodoxbutler.org).

CRANBERRY OUTREACH MOVING TO A NEW HOME! Beginning today our mission outreach will gather for Sunday worship at **Old St Kilian's, 205 Clark Street, Mars, PA 16046.**

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Kent (Jean's husband); Mark (Maura's cousin); Maura; Christi, Janet, Ann; John and Mary Ann (Jean's relatives); Stelian (Cezar's father); Seba, Lisa, and Sam (Michaels), Norma; 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: Petruta; Job; George (Georgiades); 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), Joseph (Rose's father), Fred (Dollie's uncle); Lance; Bob (Diane's father), Michael, Gabriel, Hilda (Chris Abraham's mother).