

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
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FOURTH SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT

26 March 2017

TONE 7—Leavetaking of the Annunciation. Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel. St. John of The Ladder. Stephen the Confessor, Abbot of Triglia (815).

FIRST ANTIPHON

Give the King Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the King's Son. (R.:) Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! Tell forth from day to day the glad tidings of the salvation of our God. (R.:) The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, and will not turn from it: "One of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." (R.:) Glory... Now and ever... (R.:)

SECOND ANTIPHON

He shall come down as rain upon the fleece: and as the dew which falls upon the earth. (R.:) Save us, O Son of God, Who art incarnate of the Virgin, as we chant to Thee, "Alleluia"! The Most High hath sanctified His tabernacle; our God shall plainly come, and shall not keep silence. (R.:) In His days righteousness shall shine forth: and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. (R.:) Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son and Word of God ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

His Name shall be blessed forever: His Name shall continue longer than the sun.
TROPARION OF THE ANNUNCIATION
Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who does wondrous things; blessed be His glorious Name unto the ages of ages! TROPARION OF THE ANNUNCIATION
Glory ... Now and ever... TROPARION OF THE ANNUNCIATION

AT THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

*Tell forth from day to day the glad tidings of the salvation of our God.
Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, 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 THE ANNUNCIATION (Tone 4): Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the manifestation of the mystery from the ages; for the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaims grace. Therefore we shout with him to the Theotokos: "Rejoice, O full of grace! The Lord is with thee!"

TROPARION OF ST 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 ANNUNCIATION (Tone 8): To thee, the Champion Leader, do I offer thanks of victory, O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror; but as thou that hast that power invincible, O Theotokos, thou alone can set me free: from all forms of danger free me and deliver me, that I may cry unto thee: "Rejoice, O Bride without bridegroom!"

Special Hymn to the Theotokos, for the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great: In thee, O full of grace, all creation rejoices ...

Special Koinonikon (Communion Hymn), for the Feast of the Annunciation: The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath chosen it for His dwelling. Alleluia!

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *My soul magnifies the Lord. For he has regarded the humiliation of his handmaid.*

The Reading is from the Epistle to the Hebrews

(Heb 2:11-18) **Brethren: He Who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I will proclaim Thy Name to my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee." And again, "I will put my trust in Him." And again, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." Since, therefore, the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. For surely it is not with angels that He is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because He Himself has suffered and been tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted.**

We only just heard the wonderful, encouraging words about our Jesus, our High Priest: **We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.**

Today we hear more about how our God also came to be our brother. The Apostle explicitly says that God is concerned not with angels, but with us, descendants of Abraham, because it is not the angels, but we who are groaning in bondage to sin and mortality. Therefore, God was made flesh of

our flesh, and tasted our suffering and death. As we hear today, **“He is not ashamed to call us brothers.”** Not as an alien, but as truly our brother, he came to fight on our behalf: **He Himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.**

As we journey through Lent, the liturgical time that so well concentrates our life’s journey of crucifixion and resurrection, our High Priest also travels with us, to strengthen and correct us in our failings: **Because He Himself has suffered and been tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted.**

TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

(Luke 1:24-38) At that time, Elizabeth, the wife of Zachariah, conceived, and for five months she hid herself, saying, “Thus the Lord has done to me in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.” In the sixth month the archangel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the archangel came to her and said, “Rejoice, O favored one, the Lord is with thee! Blessed art thou among women!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the archangel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou wilt conceive in thy womb and bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the archangel, “How shall this be, since I have known no man?” And the archangel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon thee, and the power of the Most High will overshadow thee; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the archangel departed from her.

The Annunciation—the celebration of the Archangel’s announcing the Good News to the Virgin Mary—is a bright feast: it marks, as the troparion says, **“the beginning of our salvation”!**

Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the manifestation of the mystery from the ages; for the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaims grace. Therefore we shout with him to the Theotokos: “Rejoice, O full of grace! The Lord is with thee!”

The Annunciation is the beginning of our salvation because it is at the Annunciation that “the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin.” In other words, it is now that the God takes on the flesh of our humanity. Conversely, at the Annunciation the sons of Adam are once again called to be sons of God. Indeed, the seed of the restored humanity are planted at the Annunciation, because it is now that our humanity, through the Virgin, becomes a “God-bearer.” The Archangel’s words addressed to the Theotokos are also *ours* (“we shout with him”): “Rejoice, O Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee!”

The troparion also speaks about the manifestation of **“the mystery from the ages.”** And what is God’s eternal intention, the mystery hidden from eternity and only whispered here and there throughout the Scriptures? **The Son of God becoming the Son of the Virgin**—in other words,

the Incarnation, the most intimate union between God and man. Indeed, the Orthodox view, held by Fathers from the second to the twentieth century, is that the Incarnation of the the Son of God is not merely a “solution” for the predicament of the Fall; this is rather God’s initial intent, inscribed in the very fabric of the cosmos and in Adam’s call to Godlikeness.

The Annunciation is, like everything in Church, also about us, individually. The Virgin’s free choice of submitting to God—“Let it be to me according to your word”—are the pattern that we are, individually, called to reproduce ourselves. The words of the archangel, “Rejoice! The Lord is with you!” are also spoken to us (just remember that the angels brought the same Good New to the shepherds in Bethlehem!).

When is the beginning of *my* salvation? When I understand that God is speaking to *me* and that “God came into this world to save sinners, of whom *I* am first”; when I believe that “nothing is impossible with God,” not even saving me. When? The hymn urges us not to to procrastinate, not to postpone the beginning of journey home. “*Today* is the beginning of our salvation!”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Today:** memorial service following Liturgy for departed members of the Cisloiu family.
- **LAST LITURGY OF PRESANCTIFIED GIFTS: W, 3/29, 6:30 PM.**
Fr Bogdan will be serving at at the Orthodox Mission in Mars/Cranberry (Old St. Kilian's Church, 205 Clark Street, Mars, PA), Fr. Paisius will be at Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Church.
- **Next Saturday (April 1), 6-8 PM:** Vespers at the Mars/Cranberry mission, followed by “Intro to Orthodoxy” on Christ as Icon of God and Prototype of humankind. Fr. Bogdan will be at the mission, reader’s Vespers in Butler (or regular Vespers if Fr. Paisius comes).
- **Next Sunday (April 2): Syrian Relief Dinner:** St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, 419 S. Dithridge St., Pittsburgh (Oakland). Service at 4 pm, dinner at 5pm. Tickets \$50; Ages 7-18, \$20; children 6 and under free.
- **Saturday, April 8, 10 AM: Raising of Lazarus.** Memorial service for all founders and members of the parish, and all our departed loved ones.
- **Sunday, April 9: Palm Sunday. No service at St. Anthony’s.** We will gather for Matins (9am) and Liturgy (10 am) will be at our Orthodox mission in Mars. The service will be followed by a fish dish and a presentation by Fr. Bogdan (“Learning Theology from the Orthodox Hymns of Holy Week”).
- **Holy Week:** MTW, 6:30 PM at the mission; Thursday and Friday services, and Pascha night at St. Anthony’s followed by common Paschal meal.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: presbyter Vasile; Venetia (Chrissi’s mom); Daniel (Sipos); Kent (Jean’s husband); 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); Derek; Christine, Phoebe, Tina. Garrett & Autumn, Benjamin, Matt and Nancy – seeking the true faith.

DEPARTED: Bill; Iosif; Job; George (Georgiades); Diane (Georgia’s sister); Victoria and Susan (mothers of Frank and Stacy); Dolores (Bingham); Gladys (Smolen); Donald (Norma’s brother); 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).