

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese  
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## FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 17 September 2017

*TONE 6—Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross. Martyr Sophia, and her three daughters: Faith, Hope, and Love, at Rome (ca. 137). Martyrs Theodota at Nicæa (ca. 230). Martyr Agathocleia (ca. 230). 156 Martyrs of Palestine (ca. 310).*

### FIRST ANTIPHON

*My God, my God, look upon me; why hast Thou forsaken me? The words of my transgressions are far from my salvation. Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! My God, I cry in the daytime, but Thou hearest not. But Thou, the praise of Israel, dwellest in the sanctuary. (R.:) Glory... Now and ever... (R.:)*

### SECOND ANTIPHON

*O God, why hast Thou cast us off forever? Remember Thy congregation, which Thou hast purchased of old. (R.:) Save us, O Son of God, WHO WAST CRUCIFIED IN THE FLESH, as we chant to Thee, "Alleluia"! God is our King before the ages: working salvation in the midst of the earth. (R.:) Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten ...)*

### THIRD ANTIPHON

TROPARION OF THE CROSS, preceded by the following Psalm verses:

- The Lord is King, let the people rage; He is seated upon the cherubim, let the earth be moved.
- The Lord is great in Zion; He is high above all the people.
- Let them give thanks to Thy great Name, for it is holy.

### LITTLE ENTRANCE

*Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool; for He is holy!*

**Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, as we chant 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 FOR THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS (Tone 4): O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance, grant victory to the Orthodox people over their adversaries; and by the power of Thy Cross preserve Thy habitation.

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 ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS (Tone 4): Do Thou, Who of Thine own good will was lifted up upon the Cross, O Christ our God, bestow Thy bounties upon the new Nation which is called by Thy Name; make glad in Thy might those who lawfully govern, that with them we may be led to victory over our adversaries, having in Thine aid a weapon of peace and a trophy invincible.

## TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *O Lord, how manifold are Thy works. In wisdom hast Thou made them all.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul.*

### *From Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*

(Gal 2:16-20) **Brethren, you know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. Even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified. But if, in our endeavor to be justified in Christ, we ourselves were found to be sinners, is Christ then an agent of sin? Certainly not! But if I build up again those things which I tore down, then I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the Law died to the Law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.**

In this passage Saint Paul is responding to the charge that if one does away with the Law and emphasizes only Christ, one would be making it very easy for people to fall into immoral behavior—thus making, as it were, Christ into an instrument of sin!

In his reply, St. Paul is thinking of Christ as the living Law of God, the Law-made-flesh. The Law that Moses received on Mount Sinai (the ten commandments, the commandments regarding the worship of God, and the host of commandments regulating everyday life in Israel) was meant as a preparation for the coming of Christ. Once the fullness of God has come among us as a human being, however, the commandments of the Law no longer retain their complete validity. *We have, as it were, graduated elementary school, and must move on to higher things!* For instance, the ten commandments are contained in and surpassed by the “new commandment” that we love each other; the tent of meeting and, later, the Temple, is contained in and surpassed by new true temple of God: Jesus Christ; as for dietary laws and other such regulations, they are relative now, and subservient to fostering our life in Christ.

To live in Christ means— for Saint Paul just as for today's Gospel—to be crucified with Christ: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” That is, to become gradually, step by step, similar to Jesus Christ. Elsewhere in the New Testament we find a vivid comparison: it is as though the life of a Christian would consist of becoming an icon of Christ. With every step of our life, we draw the lines, we add the colors, we shape our being such that it would reflect the beauty of Jesus Christ “who loved me and gave himself for me.”

“**Christ loved *me* and gave his life *for me***”— note how St Paul, who so often speaks about the Church as a body formed of many members, and emphasizes the cosmic dimension of Christ's work of salvation, speaks here about “I, me, mine”. This is not “individualism”: it means, simply but very seriously, that God' universal work of salvation becomes “real” only when *I personally* come to taste of it.

## TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

### *From the Holy Gospel according to Mark*

(Mark 8:34-9:1) The Lord said, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for My sake and the Gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." And He said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Kingdom of God come with power."

Today's Gospel (for the Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross) has a clear, even blunt, message: to be a Christian, a disciple of Jesus, means to follow and imitate Christ—and this necessarily includes the central element of Christ's earthly life, the crucifixion. But what exactly does it mean, "to deny oneself", "to take up one's cross," and "to lose one's life for the sake of Christ and the Gospel"? Obviously, "taking up one's cross" means getting ready to be crucified—but not in the sense of imitating Jesus *physically*. Rather, we can think of this as an exchange: letting go of the *me*-centered life, and becoming instead *Christ*-centered, like the Theotokos; letting go of the fallen life of Adam and Eve, and starting to live in relation to the source of true life—Christ; letting go of the grim news that we are born only to die, and embrace the Good News (the "gospel") that we are called to become children in the Kingdom of God, to be raised from the dead and to forever advance in love and knowledge of God. This is why "losing one's life for the sake of Christ and the Gospel" is, in a way, "investing" our life in God, so that we may regain it back as eternal life. It is similar to the way in which we "lose" our bread and wine for the sake of the Liturgy, and receive it back transformed by the Holy Spirit into food for eternal life.

By the same token, not "investing" our life in Christ—refusing to deny our life, refusing to lose it for Christ—we find our life rotting away pointlessly, and we lose everything we thought we possessed.

Put this way, who wouldn't want to lose one's life for Christ? Who would not trade "our" life for the free gift of "resurrected life" that the Christ is offering? And yet, in practice, it seems that letting go of our lives and embracing Christ is unbelievably hard. To be frank, being a Christian is not easy: forgiving is not easy, and asking for forgiveness is even harder; loving those who hate us is not easy; being merciful to those who do not "deserve" it, and leaving all judgment to God—all of this is easier read or written about than actually practiced. All of this is the crucifixion that we are called to experience in our lives: crucifying the "old man" (our fallen, sinful habits) so that we may enter the resurrected state of the "new creation" (Gal 6:15) and be children of God.

Today's Gospel is not an easy one to hear. It comes with a terrible warning about the choice we are making. When we live without God, when we refuse to "deny" and "lose" our life in exchange for Christ's very life in us, our existence remains sterile, unsatisfying, pointless: an absurd joke ending, inevitably, with death. In the end, as Christ says, you may gain this or that thing—perhaps even gain the whole world—but your life will be lost.

The tone of the Gospel then becomes harsh: "whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father." We might ask: isn't it below God to answer *tit for tat*? Can't God save all of us, despite everything? But God, because He is a good God, made us free *even to reject him*. And if I am ashamed of Him, if I refuse His gift, if I shut Him out and cling to a dead life without Him, God will have to allow me the freedom of my choice—eternally. By contrast, those who take up their cross by entrusting their life to Christ, will receive their own selves back, refreshed, restored, and resurrected in the Kingdom of God.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Next Sunday (9/24): Divine Liturgy will be at St. Kilian's.** After the service we will assemble Health & Cleaning Kits (or you may just drop off your already assembled kits); some of us might want to drive up to Moraine State Park (North Shore McDaniel pavilion) to join in the picnic held by the two other Butler churches; and remember also the Orthodox music concert

### "A VOYAGE THROUGH ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN SACRED CHANT"

**Sunday, September 24, 4 PM**

St. Bernard Catholic Church (311 Washington Rd. Pittsburgh, PA)

The region's two key Orthodox ecclesiastic choirs, **the Pan-Orthodox Choir of Pittsburgh**, and **the Byzantine Choir of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh**, have joined together to express and present these traditions faithfully to their origins in this unique and inspiring musical journey.

### LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE UPCOMING WEEKS

#### **Saturday-Sunday, September 23-24: services at the Cranberry Outreach**

Sat, 6 pm: Great Vespers followed by "Intro to Orthodoxy" (Dr. Edith Humphrey)

Sun, 9:30 am: Akathist "Glory to God for all things" and Divine Liturgy

#### **Saturday-Sunday, September 30-October 1: services at St. Anthony's in Butler**

Sat, 6:30 pm: Great Vespers; Sun, 9:15 am: Matins and Divine Liturgy.

Start of "Sunday School for Adults" (30 mins with Martie)

#### **Saturday-Sunday, October 7-8: services at the Cranberry Outreach**

Sat, 6 pm: Great Vespers followed by music practice (Deacon Abraham)

Sun, 9:15 am: Akathist "Glory to God for all things" and Divine Liturgy

#### **Saturday-Sunday, October 14-15: services at St. Anthony's in Butler**

Sat, 6:30 pm: Great Vespers; Sun, 9:15 am: Matins and Divine Liturgy

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### **Saint Anthony's and Cranberry Outreach Relief Effort for the Victims of Hurricane Harvey and people in need in Haiti and Syria**

(1) **Extra Collection:** The supplemental collection will be sent to the Antiochian Archdiocese. If you are writing a check, please make the check out to the ANTIOCHIAN ARCHDIOCESE of NORTH AMERICA, and in the "memo" section of your check write: "Hurricane Harvey".

#### **(2) Health Kit & Cleaning Kit Assembly / Drop-off Days**

- September 24 - Benefiting Texas
- October 22 - Benefiting Texas
- November 19th - Benefiting Haiti
- December 17th - Benefiting Syria

St. Anthony's & The Cranberry Outreach will send our boxes of assembled kits once a month, from September to December. The kits will be either assembled at home and collected at church, or assembled at church after Liturgy (your option) on the dates below and shipped to IOCC. IOCC will then route our kits to where we have designated for distribution.

(3) **SAT, Nov. 4: HURRICANE RELIEF RUMMAGE SALE** at St. Anthony's. INFO: See Seba ("Butchie").

***Remember in your prayers***

***LIVING:*** David (Maureen's brother); Fr. Anthony Yazge (widowed and seriously ill); Fr. Ignatius and Amy and newborn baby Joseph; Sula; Norma; Richard (Johns); Christine (Abraham); Daniel (Sipos); Venetia (Chrissi's mom); Kent (Jean's husband); Barbara (Dollie's daughter); Maura; Christi, Janet, Ann; John and Mary Ann (Jean's relatives); Stelian (Cezar's father); Ed, Peter, Georgia and Scot; John, Jonathan and Joanna; Andrei; John, Janet, Christy (relatives of Jean); Dennis, Vincent, Roy and Laura, Danny, Danny, Cathy (relatives of John and Julie); Derek; Phoebe, Tina.

*Garrett & Autumn – to be received in the Church (St Nicholas [OCA], Mckeesport);*

*Matt and Nancy – to be received in the Orthodox Church (Holy Trinity [Greek], Wexford);*

***DEPARTED:*** Jim and Marion (Raimondi); Stephanie (Yazge); Job; George (Georgiades).