

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

22 October 2017

TONE 3—Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Abercius, Bishop and Wonderworker of Hieropolis (ca. 167). The Holy Seven Youths (“Seven Sleepers”) of Ephesus (ca. 250). Martyrs Alexander the Bishop, Heraclius, Anna, Elizabeth, Theodota, and Glyceria (Glykéria), at Adrianopolis (2nd-3rd 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 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 ...)

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 3): Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and become the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world great mercy.

TROPARION OF ST. ABERCIUS (Tone 4): Thy works of justice did reveal thee to thy community as a canon of faith, the likeness of humility and teacher of abstinence, O Father Bishop Averkios. Wherefore, by humility thou hast achieved exaltation, and by thy meekness wealth. Intercede, therefore, with Christ God to save our souls.

TROPARION OF THE SEVEN SLEEPERS OF EPHESUS (Tone 4): Thy Martyrs, O Lord, in their courageous contest for Thee * received as the prize the crowns of incorruption and life from Thee, our immortal God. * For since they possessed Thy strength, they cast down the tyrants * and wholly destroyed the demons' strengthless presumption. * O Christ God, by their prayers, save our souls, since Thou art merciful.

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 OF 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, those that honor thee.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: Sing praises to our God, sing praises. Clap your hands, all ye peoples!

From the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians

(Gal 1:11-19) Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

Saint Paul was *not* one of the twelve disciples; in fact, he never even met the Lord during His earthly ministry. Moreover, in the early years of the Church, Paul (then called Saul) did his best to stop the spreading of the faith, preaching against those who called Jesus "Messiah" (in Greek "Christ") and "Lord," and putting all his time and energy into persecuting the Church. When the authorities executed St. Stephen, the first deacon and martyr, Saul was guarding the clothes of those throwing stones!

Although blind, Paul's zeal was genuine. And since God knows the heart of man, and never fails to guide those that search earnestly for His truth, at a certain moment in God's time, something extraordinary happened. In St. Paul's words, God "revealed his Son to him." On the way to Damascus, he *did* meet the resurrected Jesus Christ in an overwhelming, life-changing vision. And it was this meeting that established Paul as an apostle, and a divinely authorized preacher of the Gospel.

But many were skeptical about the Gospel preached by this man (now baptized "Paul"). They kept insisting that he had not received a commission from Christ—like the other apostles—or from Peter, the leader of the apostles, or from James, the leader of the Mother-Church in Jerusalem. Yet Paul knew what he had received from Christ: "the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ."

And this special commissioning of St. Paul has borne rich fruit: it is to him and to his disciple, St. Luke, that we owe most of the New Testament; it is he that showed the importance of sharing the Good News with the pagans; it is he that crisscrossed Europe to found its first Christian communities; and he ended his life in martyrdom together with St. Peter, in 64 C.E., at Rome.

Whether "cradle Orthodox" or converts, we are called, like St. Paul, to allow Christ to be revealed in us, and to gradually learn how to live as His disciples. Nobody ever said it would be easy; but we can

all take the advice that the same Apostle Paul gave to one of his spiritual sons: *Here is a trustworthy saying: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first!* (1 Tim 1:15).

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

From the Holy Gospel according to Luke

(Luke 8:26-39) At that time, as Jesus arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes and he lived not in a house but among the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him, and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech you, do not torment me." For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him; he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters, but he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the desert.) Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. Now a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside; and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them leave. Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned. When the herdsmen saw what happened, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country. Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. And those who had seen it told them how he who had been possessed with demons was healed. Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gadarenes asked him to depart from them; for they were seized with great fear; so he got into the boat and returned. The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but he sent him away, saying, Return home, and declare how much God has done for you. And he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.

A recent saint (St. Nikolai Velimirovich) wrote that "God teaches not only through the sky, filled with angels and adorned with stars, or through the earth, all covered with the media of God's created beings, *but even through the demons.*" Indeed, Christ allowed the demons to show us vividly just what is at stake in the Gospel's call to repentance and life with God.

At the very beginning, we learn that of a man living a tormented existence "wearing no clothes, and not in a house but among the tombs": a "dead life," haunted by nightmarish frights. The man was out of his mind: his mind, that is, was the playground of a legion of spirits; and, just as sleepwalkers play out their dreams by moving about physically, at the risk of gravely injuring themselves, so also was this man's body wounded by being dragged along as the demons were harassing his spirit. This is indeed disturbing to any reader or hearer of the Gospel, because we have here an appropriate image of the fallen existence that Adam chose by trusting the evil one rather than God.

When the Lord meets him and heals him, he decides to bring the evil out in a spectacular display, so that people see and understand the extent of this man's torment: he sends the legion of demons into a herd of swine. The resulting stampede, with the swine rushing headlong off a cliff to a miserable drowning, gives us frightening insight into the kind of dark and destructive force had been ravaging the man from Gadara. The account is frightening, especially bearing in mind that, according to Scripture, "the world lies under the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19).

Most frightening, however, is what follows after the demons are banished and the man restored to health. Instead of giving thanks for the healing and perhaps throwing a feast, the Gadarenes are “seized with great fear” and ask Jesus to leave the area at once! They are afraid, indeed, but not of the demons. They are afraid of God coming into their lives, unwilling to welcome into their homes a guest that disrupts the status quo by bringing in a new kind of life. It is, indeed, frightening to see that the Gadarenes are not speaking with complete freedom, but are in fact mouthing the words of the demons: “What have you to do with us, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?”

Today's Gospel makes it clear that the choice we are given in our life is a deadly serious one. God or a legion of demons; being enslaved and harassed by evil, or healed by the Savior of all mankind. Let us leave our tombs and run to Christ, heeding the call that has gone out to us: “With fear of God, faith, and love *draw near!*”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **TODAY:**
 - ✧ Sunday School for Adults” (30 mins with Martie);
 - ✧ assembly/ drop-off of Health & Cleaning Kits for hurricane victims.
- **Next two Sundays (10/29, 11/5):** Liturgy at St. Anthony (Fr. Bogdan)
Typika at St. Kilian (Dc. Seraphim Moslener)
- **Saturday, 11/4:** Cookie Bake & Rummage Sale to raise money for hurricane victims. More info: Seba.

LADIES RETREAT (led by Melinda Johnson): Saturday, October 28
@ Diane's (210 Chan Mowr Drive, Valencia, PA)

UPDATE ON THE CRANBERRY OUTREACH

In order to improve the chances of success for both St. Anthony's and the Cranberry mission, while awaiting Martie's ordination as a deacon, we have decided on the following:

- weekly services resume in Butler, at St. Anthony's;
- the mission will restart itself, from the ground up: Martie will lead Bible studies /Intro to Orthodoxy on weeknights; occasional Sunday liturgies will occur when clergy are available;
- when no Sunday services are held at the mission, anyone willing and able is encouraged to come to St. Anthony's for worship, fellowship, and catechesis;
- when Martie is ordained we will return to weekly services at both locations

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Sula; Fr. Anthony Yazge; 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, John, Jonathan and Joanna; Andrei; John, Janet, Christy (relatives of Jean); Dennis, Vincent, Roy and Laura, 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: Bishop Antoun; Vito (DiPento); Dorothy (Fr Roeber's mother); Jim and Marion (Raimondi); Stephanie (Yazge); Job; George (Georgiades).