

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

www.orthodoxbutler.org

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TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 5 November 2017

TONE 5— *Apostles Hermas, Linus, Gaius, Patrobas and Philologos of the Seventy (1st c.). Martyr Galaction and his wife, Epistemis, at Emesa (3rd c.). Gregory, Archbishop of Alexandria (9th c.). Jonah the wonderworker, archbishop of Novgorod (1470).*

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 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 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: *Thou, O Lord, shalt preserve us and keep us from this generation.
Save me, O Lord, for the godly man hath disappeared.*

From the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians

(Galatians 6:11-18) Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the Law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all, who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

It is clear that Saint Paul is writing here about a matter he views as extremely important. The first line about the “large letters” means something like “I want to emphasize in the bold scrawls of my personal handwriting the immense importance of what I have written.” What was the problem? Saint Paul was writing to warn the Galatians against certain Christian leaders who compelled all new converts to the faith to practice circumcision. He warned that such “missionaries” were in fact interested in cultivating their own public image in the Christian community, while at the same time “keeping a low profile” in the larger society, so as to avoid prosecution by the Roman Empire (as long as Christians would be perceived as a type of Judaism, they would not be persecuted, but tolerated, like the Jews). The false missionaries were not “crazy” to insist on circumcision; it was, to them and to many, a definite mark of religious piety. Today, it would be things like not eating certain foods on certain days, dressing in a certain way, abstaining from this or that, etc.

Saint Paul’s point is that, ultimately, all these things must be placed in a different perspective: what truly matters is not that we do this or that, or that we keep this or that rule of piety; what matters is that we become a “new creation”—and this is God’s work in us. Indeed, as the Apostle writes elsewhere (2 Cor 4:6), the same God who spoke at creation, *let there be light*—and, indeed, *it was light*, now shines in our hearts, drawing us out of darkness and re-creating us into children of the light. “A new creation” means that our Christian life is God’s liturgy in us, where we are co-workers with God.

We should also pay close attention to the following verse: **Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God.** What is “the Israel of God” here? Since the Apostle is writing to Christians, it is quite obvious that the Israel of God refers to the community of believers in Christ—the Church! Saint Paul sees the Good News as the work of God by which the Gentiles were received into the fold of God’s people, and “Israel” was extended into encompassing, potentially, the entire world.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

From the Holy Gospel according to Luke

(Luke 16:19-31) The Lord said, "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

It is easy to blame the rich man in this story: he shares nothing with poor Lazarus, he does not care for his sick and dying fellow-human, he is a monster! And yet, judging things on a strictly social and political level, the rich man may have some sort of justification. After all, some would say, the rich man was not responsible for the poverty and sickness of Lazarus; besides, Lazarus should be grateful for the crumbs he is getting! But the story requires us to approach it differently, so that we understand why the rich man is used as a warning *not* to do like he did.

Let us pause over a detail in the Gospel's portrayal of Lazarus: "**the dogs,**" it says, "**came and licked his sores.**" These were the rich man's guard dogs, fierce creatures. If they befriend Lazarus and even do their best to clean his wounds, it is probably because, although the man has nothing, he has a kind heart and shares the little he gets (the crumbs) with them. When they pass from this life, their truth is revealed: Lazarus, poor in goods but rich in goodness, is embraced by heaven; the rich man, rich in all kinds of goods but lacking in goodness, finds himself estranged from the Good One.

As always with the Lord's parables, we should ask ourselves: who are *we* in this story? The answer has nothing to do with the amount of money one has accumulated, or one's social status. Theologically speaking, *all of us*—rich and poor, men and women, citizens and foreigners, etc.— are somewhat like Lazarus, suffering from the incurable sickness of mortality, covered with the boils of sinful and destructive habits, barely alive through our own choice of separating ourselves from the divine source of life. Now, since God is not responsible for our fallen state, could he not "just tolerate" us, the way the rich man tolerates the poor Lazarus who eats crumbs from his table?

But God shows us a different way. He does not ask whether we "truly deserve" a better state; in dealing with our shortcomings, as the Psalmist says, He does not keep score: "If You should mark our iniquities, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness." And, unlike the rich man in the parable, God does not feed us mere crumbs. Remember the invitation addressed to us on Pascha night: "*You that have kept the fast, and you that have not, rejoice today, for the table is richly laden! The calf is a*

fatted one, let no one go away hungry! Enjoy all the riches of His goodness! Let no one grieve at his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave.”

God’s mode of existence—generous and forgiving—is what is asked of us. It is not only asked of us, but it is offered to us in Christ: if we embrace Christ and the risen life that flows from Him, then we are given the power to live out a truly Christian life, a life in which God’s abundant generosity is manifested here and now, towards our neighbor. If we refuse to be like God, we automatically separate ourselves from Him, and choose the same miserable hell as the foolish rich man. God does not wish for this; therefore He sets before us many opportunities to share with others the gifts that we ourselves have so richly received from Him. Let us not neglect the opportunities that lie before our very eyes!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Today:** the Cranberry families are at St. Kilian’s for Typika with Dc. Seraphim Moslener and Sunday school for Adults led by Martie.
- **Next Sunday, 11/12: pan-Orthodox Divine Liturgy at Sts. Peter and Paul in Lyndora/Butler.** We continue a beautiful tradition of the last few years—namely, that on the last Sunday before the start of the Nativity fast, we gather with all Orthodox in our area for worship and a common meal. This year it’s a potluck meal, so feel free to bring a small (small) dish to share.
- **NATIVITY FAST:** November 15—December 25
- **Sunday, 11/ 19:** services at St. Anthony’s (Typika led by Deacon Ned Trbovich; Fr. Bogdan will be out of town for a conference). **Assembly / Drop-off Day for Health Kit & Cleaning Kits** (to be sent to hurricane victims).

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, 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).