



SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
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FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

1 July 2018

TONE 4—Unmercenary Healers Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs in Rome (284). Martyr Potitus at Naples (2nd c.). Ven. Peter of Constantinople (854). St. Angelina of Serbia (16th c.).

FIRST ANTIPHON

It is good to praise the Lord, to chant unto Thy Name, O Most High! R.: Through the inter-cessions of the Theotokos, 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 4): Having learned the joyful message of the Resurrection from the angel the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation. And proudly broke the news to the Disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled; Christ God is risen, granting the world Great Mercy.

TROPARION OF SS. COSMAS AND DAMIAN (Tone 8): O Holy unmercenary and wonderworking Cosmas and Damian, visit our infirmities. Freely you have received; freely give to us.

TROPARION OF SAINT ANTHONY THE GREAT (Tone 4): 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 FOR 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, them that honor thee.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *In the saints that are in His earth has the Lord been wondrous.
I beheld the Lord ever before me.*

From the First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

(1 Cor 12:27-13:8) **Brethren, you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.**

What can one add after these words coming from Saint Paul, the great theologian, missionary, and administrator of the Apostolic church? Simply repeating his famous “hymn on love” helps us get a feeling of these divine heights. **Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude; love is not irritable or resentful; love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.**

“Love never ends”?! What about feelings that lose their freshness, what of broken friendships, what about divorce? What about death? Are these not instances in which whatever we mean by “love” is lost, or betrayed, or falsified, or taken from us? But the Church learns its language from the deeds of God. When the Church speaks about love it starts with *how God loves us*. And we see that whatever God’s love touches is made eternal: He established his creation in love, and it shall never be undone; He made each one of us by speaking a creative word, a word of love, which is the root of our very being—and we are thereby called to enter an eternal dialogue of love with Him, with our fellow humans, and with all creation. **Love stands at our beginning.**

Even as we look at our brokenness—the brokenness of fallen creatures in a fallen world—we believe that God is at work to heal this wound, and are awaiting “the age to come.” This “age to come,” the “Kingdom of God,” is not some other time and some other place; it is rather a mode of existence in which we are attuned to God, healed, and restored to live in God. And **love is the substance of the Kingdom to come.**

Between our origin and our destination, Saint Paul speaks about love as the way on which we travel. It is **“the more excellent way”**: more excellent, of course, than food and drink and money and power and glory; but more excellent also than all miracles and spiritual “superpowers” one may think of. All are *at best* means to an end; but love is the end, the goal, the fulfilment. We are made by God in love and destined for love; without love we *are nothing* (“**a noisy gong, a clanging cymbal**”) and *have nothing*; and it is only through love that we understand anything.

All this lofty theologizing about love might leave us impressed but confused. Where do we get a taste of that? Where do we begin? Saint Paul was also a practical man. If you want to begin, he says, start here: **you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.** In Church we are bound to Christ and bound to each other, like the various members of a body; and we are given a place to start and to practice, a place to “taste” the realities of heaven right here and now.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

(Mat 8:28-9:1) At that time, when Jesus came to the country of the Gergesenes, two demoniacs met Him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. And behold, they cried out, "What have we to do to Thee, O Son of God? Art Thou come here to torment us before the time?" Now a herd of many swine was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged Him, "If Thou cast us out, send us away into the herd of swine." And He said to them, "Go." So they came out and went into the swine; and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and perished in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, and what had happened to the demoniacs. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they begged Him to leave their neighborhood. And getting into a boat He crossed over and came to His own city.

It is frightening to imagine a human life that has become the playground of demons. We know how painful it is to walk around plagued by a mere headache, or how terrible it is to be haunted by regrets and painful memories, and how guilt over things past or anxiety over things future can rob you of your peace and of the ability to enjoy anything in the present. How much worse, then, for the two demoniacs of today's Gospel reading! Although alive, they spend their tortured existence in tombs, haunted by nightmarish frights; they are "fierce" and nobody can pass by without being deeply affected.

It is not so much their apparition and their antics that frighten, as it is the insight that we, "normal" ones, are only a hair's breadth away from their state and not safe at all. Indeed, according to Scripture, "the world lies under the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19), so that we have here an appropriate image of the fallen existence that Adam chose by trusting the evil one rather than God.

The Lord decides to heal the demoniacs in such a way that people would see and understand the depth 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 a frightening view of the destructive force that had been ravaging the two demoniacs.

Most frightening, however, is what follows after the demons are banished and the two restored to health. Instead of giving thanks for the healing and perhaps throwing a feast, the Gergesenes **begged Him to leave their neighborhood**. They are afraid, it seems, not of the demons *but of God!* Their situation so far was, in a way, settled and satisfying: the two demoniacs allowed the other inhabitants to view themselves as "good" by imagining that all evil was *elsewhere*—namely *there*, in the tombs, in the two demoniacs. Jesus disrupts this arrangement and now the Gergesenes are afraid that God is coming into their lives. They are unwilling to welcome into their homes a guest that disrupts the status quo by bringing in a new kind of life.

As for us, we are called to move in the opposite direction. The Bible ends with these words: "Come Jesus Christ!" And we train ourselves for that coming when we respond to the call issued at Liturgy: "With fear of God, faith, and love *draw near!*"



SAINT DAMIAN AND KOSMAS

Saints Damian and Kosmas were twin brothers trained physicians who practiced in the seaport of Aegea (modern Ayas) in the Roman province of Syria. They accepted no payment for their services, strictly observing the command of the Lord: "Freely have you received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). This led them to be nicknamed "anargyroi"—in Greek, "Silverless" or "Unmercenaries." Their most famous miraculous work was the grafting of a leg from a recently deceased Ethiopian to replace a patient's damaged leg. By their compassion and service they led many to the Faith.

During the persecution under the Roman Emperor Diocletian, the brothers were arrested and ordered under torture to renounce Christ. However, they remained true to the Faith, enduring suffering and finally beheading.

As early as the fourth century, churches dedicated to the twin saints were established at Jerusalem, in Egypt and in Mesopotamia. Icons of the saints depict them vested as laymen holding

medicine boxes. Often each will also hold a spoon with which to dispense medicine. The handle of the spoon is normally shaped like a cross to indicate both their martyrdoms and the importance of spiritual as well as physical healing, thus acknowledging that all cures come from God.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our parish will soon receive the deacon we have been asking for! His Grace Bishop Thomas will ordain Subdeacon Martin to the Diaconate on **Sunday, August 5**, when he is visiting St. Elias in New Castle. Logistical details about that Sunday will be posted later.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Silviu and the Serbanescu family; newborn Jubilee Mae; Sula; Stella & Dimitrios; Ion, Marius & Katherine; Norma; Christine (Abraham); Daniel (Sipos); Venetia (Chrissi's mom); Barbara (Dollie's daughter); Maura; Ann; Ed, Peter, John, Jonathan and Joanna; Andrei; John, Janet, Christy (relatives of Jean); Stelian (Cezar's father); Laura and Stephen, newly married.

DEPARTED: Ross (Chrissi's friend); Richard Johns; Viorica; Bishop Antoun; Vito (DiPento); Miltiades; Jim and Marion (Raimondi); Stephanie (Yazge); Job; George (Georgiades); Abie (Abraham).