



SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
www.orthodoxbutler.org

ADDRESS: 400 S. Sixth Avenue, Butler, PA 16001

PASTOR: Rev. Bogdan Gabriel Bucur

724.287.6893 (church); 412.390.8208 (priest); frbogdan@orthodoxbutler.org

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

21 October 2018

TONE 4, Eothonon 10—Ven. Hilarion the Great (371-372). Martyr Dasius, Gaius, and Zoticus, at Nicomedia (303). Christodoulos of Patmos the wonderworker; Martyrs Socrates and Theodota at Ancyra; Ven. Philotheus of Dionysiou (Mt. Athos—1610). Ven. Visarion Sarai and Sophronie of Cioara, Confessors, and Martyr Oprea of Saliste, Romania (1776).

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 Son ...)

LITTLE ENTRANCE

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ! Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, as we chant 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 ST. HILARION (Tone 8): The barren wilderness thou didst make fertile with the streams of thy tears; and by thy deep sighing thou hast given fruit through thy struggles a hundred-fold. Accordingly, thou hast become a star for the universe, sparkling with miracles. Therefore, O righteous Father Hilarion, intercede with Christ God to save our souls.

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

From the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians

(Galatians 2:16-20) Brethren, we who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, 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 seeking 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 show myself to be a transgressor. For through the law I 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 reply, the holy Apostle affirms that being “in Christ” implies a high level of morality; for a Christian, however, to strive to attain God by following the Law, is a terrible rejection of God’s providence that the Law should be surpassed and absorbed by Christ.

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 laws regarding the worship of God, and the host of laws 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 who 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 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, d. 1956) 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, rather, of God coming into their lives and into their homes, to disrupt the status quo by bringing in a new kind of life.

The Gadarenes are in grave danger: worse than not recognizing the presence of God in their lives, they actually *do* understand that God is visiting them—but they chase him away. And this, in turn, sets them on a slippery slope leading them to soon share the fate of their countryman, whom the Lord has just delivered from his torment.

But we can be on the very same dangerous slippery slope. Even if we don't raise pigs, when we fall into an existence with no other horizon than *acquisition* and *possession*—of wealth, power, pleasure, etc—then we, too, are "**in the country of the Gadarenes.**" Greed leads to spiritual blindness, and that blindness leads to slavery; and, once enslaved to pure materialism, we are unable to discern the insidious activity of the evil powers.

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

- **Sunday, November 11: pan-Orthodox Divine Liturgy at Sts. Peter and Paul.** We continue our beautiful local tradition—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.
- *From the treasurer:* September Receipts: 2,590.00; Disbursements: 2,693.07; Deficit: 103.07

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: grieving Serbanescu and Becker families; Gabriel; Ion, Marius & Katherine (Stan); Norma; Karen (Jane Best's daughter); Elisabeth, Chris and Jillian; Sula; Stella & Dimitrios; 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); Edith (Humphrey); Diane.

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