



## SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese  
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### TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

25 November 2018

*TONE 1, Eothonon 4—Leavetaking of the Entry Into the Temple. Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria (305-313). Great Martyr Mercurius of Cæsarea in Cappadocia (3rd c.). Martyr Merkúry of Smolensk (1238). Hieromartyr Clement, Pope of Rome (101). Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Clement, Bishop of Ochrid and Enlightener of the Bulgarians (916). Hieromartyr Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria (311).*

#### FIRST ANTIPHON

*Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised: in the city of our God and in His holy mountain. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! God is known in her palaces for a refuge. As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God. (R.:) Glory... Now and ever... (R.:)*

#### SECOND ANTIPHON

*The Most High hath sanctified His tabernacle. Holiness and majesty are in His sanctuary. (R.:) Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, as we chant to Thee, "Alleluia"! This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter through it. (R.:) Holy is Thy temple, and wonderful in righteousness. (R.:) Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son ...)*

#### THIRD ANTIPHON

- *Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor.*

TROPARION OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS (Tone 4): Today is the prelude of God's good will and the heralding of the salvation of mankind. In the temple of God, the Virgin is present openly, and she proclaimeth Christ unto all. To her, then, with a great voice let us cry aloud: Rejoice, O thou fulfilment of the Creator's dispensation!

- *The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.* TROPARION
- *Virgins shall be brought to the King after her, her companions shall be brought unto Thee.* TROPARION

## 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 1): While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of life. Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ, glory to Thy kingdom, glory to Thy providence, O Thou Who alone art the lover of mankind.

TROPARION OF ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS (Tone 4): Today is the prelude of God's good will and the heralding of the salvation of mankind. In the temple of God, the Virgin is present openly, and she proclaimeth Christ unto all. To her, then, with a great voice let us cry aloud: Rejoice, O thou fulfilment of the Creator's dispensation!

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 THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE (Tone 4): The sacred treasury of God's holy glory, \* the greatly precious bridal chamber and Virgin, \* the Savior's most pure temple, free of stain and undefiled, \* into the House of the Lord \* on this day is brought forward \* and bringeth with herself the grace \* of the Most Divine Spirit; \* her do God's Angels hymn with songs of praise, \* for she is truly the heavenly tabernacle.

## TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.*

*From the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Ephesians*

(Ephesians 5:8-19) **Brethren: walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.**

One of the principles of Orthodox theology is that whatever we see in Christ, our Lord, is destined for us, his followers. If He is truly God, we are also called to increasing likeness to God—a process called “deification.” If we hear Christ proclaim, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12), we are also to become and act as “children of the light.”

Today's Epistle reading has a rather lengthy list of *dos* and *don'ts*: not a random list,

however, but one that reflects the process of entering and growing in the Christian life. First we hear *Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light!* This is very likely a fragment from a hymn that our Christian ancestors in the first century were using in their services. It speaks of fallen humanity as “dead” and “asleep,” and then summoned back to life by God. The same one who said “let there be light” at Creation now creates us anew individually, by calling us to turn from darkness to the light of Christ. After this first step follows a “walking” in the light, a separation from the works of darkness, a careful journey fraught with danger.

To complete this difficult journey of living in Christ is possible only by being filled with the Holy Spirit. This is why the Apostle urges us to **“be filled with the Spirit!”**; this is why we begin all our prayers, individual and communal, with an invocation of the Holy Spirit: “O heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth .... come and abide in us!” Note that the presence of the Spirit, Whom we have received at Baptism, is “activated” in us in the Church’s liturgical gathering, with its “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” when we are “singing and making melody to the Lord.” It is in Liturgy that we receive the food and exercise our behavior for an everyday living as children of the light.

Overall, we are reminded that **the days are evil** and called to “redeem time.” That our times are “evil” is not exactly new information; but the call to “redeem” this evil time is a new and specifically Christian commandment. It is not simply about “making the most of the time”. It means that, as Christians, as Spirit-bearers and children of the light, we ought to infuse this age with the presence of the Kingdom of God. We are called to *embody* the good tidings of this Advent season.

## TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

*The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Luke*

(Luke 18:18-27) At that time, a man came testing Jesus and asking, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother.’” And the man said, “All these I have observed from my youth.” And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when the man heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. Jesus, seeing him sad, said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus said, “What is impossible for human beings is possible for God.”

Here is a man who, by any standards of human morality, is a pretty decent person: he does not cheat on his wife, he behaves well with his parents, he does not steal, he does not slander or bring false accusations against others, did kill anyone, etc. There probably other vices he has managed to avoid. He is, moreover, a deeply religious person (his concern here is “how to inherit eternal life”), who shows appropriate respect for teachers of the Law (note how politely he addresses Jesus). Moreover, he’s acted like that “since his youth”! A decent person, whom we would do well to emulate.

And yet, even while we recite the litany of this man’s qualities, the Gospel seems to sets him forth as an example of *what to avoid*. The word this man receives from Christ comes as a

hard blow to his self-esteem: what he has been doing is far from enough, and what he needs to do is impossibly hard for him. A very depressing answer, indeed, because Jesus puts his finger on a raw nerve: this man was very rich (and liked it), and he would have to give everything up. “The man heard this he became sad, for he was very rich.”

Had the man not been terribly attached to money, but instead sexually promiscuous, the answer would probably be different; perhaps something like “One thing you still lack. Cut out your promiscuity, start living in chastity as of right now, and you will have treasure in heaven.” And the man would have become sad, imagining himself unable to remain faithful to a single woman (chastity in marriage) or faithful to a vow of abstinence (as in monastic chastity). Had he been under the control of vanity, Jesus would have proposed the practice of humility; had he been plagued by anger or violence, the answer would have pointed to *that* problem, and proposed the appropriate spiritual medicine.

In short, the Gospel is not about a particular rich man unwilling to part with his riches; and it is not singling out riches as the major impediment to salvation. In truth, the Gospel applies to each and every one of us. There is no “objective” scale of sins, and no “objective” greatest sin: the greatest sin is always *my* sin. And the word of Christ is not easy to swallow: “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for *you* to enter the kingdom of God.” When Jesus spoke these words to the rich man, those around him were positively shocked: “In this case, who can be saved?” Obviously, nobody; it is, as the Lord states, “impossible for human beings.”

Before speaking to the rich man about his salvation, the Lord points to the goodness of God: “No one is good but God alone!” We should therefore not react like the rich man, who became sad and preferred to leave as soon as he realized that God was not offering him a confirmation of his decent life, but a call to radical change. Note the encouragement: the very impossibility of our salvation and life in God is made possible for us by God himself. The call of today’s Gospel is echoed by our Liturgy, again and again: “let us commit ourselves and all our life to Christ our God ... for You are a good God and You love humankind”! In other words, deny yourself and your sins, entrust yourself to Christ, allow Him to clothe you with His grace, allow Him to make possible that which is impossible.

The Nativity of Christ for which we have started our preparations is the joyous event of the beginning of our salvation: the Virgin prepares to give birth, the Son of God prepares to become one of us, our salvation draws near.

### ***Remember in your prayers***

LIVING: Norma; grieving Serbanescu and Becker families; Gabriel; Ion, Marius & Katherine (Stan); 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).