



SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
www.orthodoxbutler.org

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

PASTOR: Rev. Bogdan Gabriel Bucur

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

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

3 February 2019

TONE 3, Eothon 3—Afterfeast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple. Holy and Righteous Simeon the God-receiver and Anna the Prophetess. Prophet Azariah. Martyrs Papias, Diodorus and Claudianus, at Perge in Pamphylia (250). Martyrs Adrian and Eubulus, at Cæsarea in Cappadocia (ca. 308-309). Martyr Blaise of Cæsarea in Cappadocia (ca. 308-309).

FIRST ANTIPHON

My heart overflows with a good word: I speak my poem to the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. (R.): Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! Grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee forever. (R.:) Glory... Now and ever... (R.:)

SECOND ANTIPHON

Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty. Bend Thy bow, and prosper, and reign. (R.:) O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead: save us who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"! Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; the scepter of Thy kingdom is a righteous scepter. (R.:) Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

Troparion of the Meeting of the Lord, preceded by the following verses:

- *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.*
- *Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy countenance.*
- *I shall commemorate thy name in every generation.*

TROPARION OF THE MEETING OF THE LORD (Tone 1): Rejoice thou who art full of grace, O Virgin Theotokos! For from thee hath risen the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those in darkness. Rejoice thou also, O righteous Elder, as thou receivest in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who also granteth to us the Resurrection!

AT THE 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 THE MEETING OF THE LORD (Tone 1): Rejoice thou who art full of grace, O Virgin Theotokos! For from thee hath risen the Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, enlightening those in darkness. Rejoice thou also, O righteous Elder, as thou receivest in thine arms the Redeemer of our souls, Who also granteth to us the Resurrection!

TROPARION OF SAINT ANTHONY THE GREAT: 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 THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST (Tone 1): Thou, O Christ God, Who by Thy Birth, didst sanctify the Virgin's womb, and, as is meet, didst bless Simeon's arms, and didst also come to save us; preserve Thy fold in wars, and confirm them whom Thou didst love, for Thou alone art the Lover of mankind.

FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Exodus 12: The Lord spoke to Moses in that very day on which He led the children of Israel out from the land of Egypt saying: "Sanctify to Me all the first-born, the first-produced opening the womb among the children of Israel." And Moses went and gathered all the people and said: "Remember this day, in which you came out from the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, for with a strong hand the Lord led you out from thence; and you shall keep His law. And it shall come to pass when the Lord your God shall bring you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to your fathers: you shall set apart all the first-born, whatever opens the womb, the males for the Lord.

Leviticus 12: Thus says the Lord God Almighty: "The first-born of your sons you shall give to Me. And it shall be that a woman who bears a male child, on the eighth day shall circumcise the flesh of his foreskin. ... And after this she shall bring to the Lord an unblemished lamb one year old, as a whole-burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove, to the doors of the tent of witness, to the priest. Or, instead of these she shall bring before the Lord two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and the priest shall pray for her.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

*Prokeimenon: The Lord will give strength to His people.
Ascribe to the Lord, O sons of God, ascribe to the Lord honor and glory.*

The Reading is from the Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

(2 Cor 6:1-10) **Brethren, working together with Him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For He says, "At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation." Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God**

we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger; by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Luke

(Luke 2:22-40) In those days, the parents of Jesus brought Him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Thy people Israel." And His father and his mother marveled at what was said about Him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, and as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of Him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon Him.

The "Meeting" or "Presentation" of the Lord is an ancient feast of the Christian Church. According to the Law, the 40-day old baby Jesus was "presented" and consecrated to God; and there, in the Temple, he was "met" by the priest Simeon and the prophetess Anna.

Who is presented? The Lord—Jesus Christ—as a baby, only 40 days old. According to the Law of Moses, each family had to "present" its first-born son to the Temple: that is, the child was consecrated to God, in the same way that the first yield of the crop was presented to God—a solemn way of thanking God for His gifts, and for asking His blessing upon one's efforts. But that which has been offered up to God has thereby been made sacred (it is "consecrated") and fit to remain there, in the holy place. How can a consecrated offering—the child—be returned to "regular" life, outside the Temple? Parents would "buy it back" by offering instead a young lamb, or, for people who could not afford it, two turtledoves. And this is precisely what Mary the Theotokos and the Righteous Joseph did (incidentally, they were quite poor, so they brought turtledoves).

The Gospel says about Simeon that **the Holy Spirit was upon him**; that he had received revelation **by the Holy Spirit** concerning the coming Messiah; and, then, that he came into the Temple "**guided by the Spirit**"—led there by God, who had promised him that he would not die

before seeing with his very eyes, the One who bring "salvation." One thing to bear in mind: the Holy Spirit always leads to Christ, and to meeting Christ in the temple. If anyone claims to be "spiritual" but away from Christ and the Church, that spirituality is, at best, wishful thinking.

What does Simeon see? God's salvation, namely the Glory of God. "The Glory" is God's living manifestation to the patriarchs and prophets of old—the fiery cloud that called Moses from the bush, and led Israel out of Egypt, and covered the mountain at the giving of the Law! But what Simeon saw was more astonishing: God's Glory in-the-flesh, under the humble appearance of a little baby! And the prophetess Anna also, "spoke of Him to all those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38) because she understood the same. The Lord Jesus Christ is that "Lord," the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the holy One of Israel. This is the theology of the Church as expressed by the icon of the Feast: the prophetess Anna holding a scroll which reads, "This Child has established Heaven and earth." Or, very clearly, as a hymn of Vespers proclaims:

"Today Simeon takes in his arms the Lord of Glory whom Moses saw of old in the darkness, when on Mount Sinai he received the tables of the Law" ...

The Temple is the meeting place: at the same time that the baby is brought into the temple, God summons the Elder Simeon and Anna the prophetess to meet him there. A clear message to us, disciples of the Word-made-flesh: we are also summoned by the Holy Spirit to present ourselves in the Temple, to meet the Lord, who is our light in darkness, divine consolation in our affliction, and the glory of the age to come journey with us in the present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Many thanks to all who have given generously of their time and energy to make last Sunday's celebration of St. Anthony so beautiful!
- Shea and Katie Cole, now in Alabama, have a newborn baby, Brendan!
- If you would like to have your house blessed, please speak to Fr. Bogdan. Saturdays before Vespers or Sundays after Liturgy are the best times.
- Next Sunday, February 10: memorial Trisagion for Viorica (the wife of Ion Stan).