



SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
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EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

11 August 2019

Tone 7 / Eothinon 8—Afterfeast of the Transfiguration. *Virgin Martyr Susanna and those with her (295-296). Holy Martyr and Archdeacon Euplus (Euplius) of Catania (304). Martyrs Basil and Theodore of the Kievan Caves (1098). St. Theodosius (Prince Theodore) of Ostrog of the Kievan Caves (1438). St. Niphon, Patriarch of Constantinople (Mt. Athos—1515).*

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 and Word of God ...)

LITTLE ENTRANCE

**Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ!
Save us, O Son of God Who art risen from the dead, as we sing to Thee: Alleluia!**

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 7): Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world great mercy.

TROPARION OF THE TRANSFIGURATION (Tone 7): Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God, showing to Thy disciples Thy glory as each one could endure. Shine forth Thou on us, who are sinners all, Thy light ever-unending. Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Light-bestower: glory to Thee!

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 OF TRANSFIGURATION (Tone 7): On the mount Thou wast transfigured, and Thy Disciples, as much as they could bear, beheld Thy glory, O Christ our God; that, when they should see Thee crucified, they would know Thy Passion to be willing, and would preach to the world that Thou, in truth, art the Effulgence of the Father.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

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

The Reading is from Saint Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

(1 Cor 1:10-17) **Brethren: I plead with you, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**

The situation to which Saint Paul was forced to respond here was quite sad: the Christians in Corinth had started to form various "cliques," each claiming the patronage of some highly regarded teacher: **each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas."**

The Corinthians were quite serious about their respective choices. They must have viewed their allegiance to one or the other charismatic, Spirit-endowed leaders as the way of "getting deeper" with their Christian faith. But Saint Paul saw clearly that this was nothing but childish division parading as spirituality. In reality, the "fans" of Paul, Peter, or Apollos were victims of spiritual delusion, and were promoting a sectarianism completely foreign to the Gospel.

The Apostle begins by reminding the Corinthians of the importance of unity among believers: **I plead with you ... that you all speak the same thing, that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind.** The unity and fullness of the Church has from the beginning been seen as normative Christian teaching; by contrast, division, schism, separation have always been seen as the devil's work.

But how can people who are naturally diverse live in "perfect unity"? We do not necessarily dress the same, eat the same food, work the same jobs, hold the same political views, etc. And if one considers the world-wide Christian community, there is even more diversity. How, then, should we "speak the same thing" and have "the same mind"? Does Paul envision a sort of "cult," made up of regimented, depersonalized individuals? What kind of unity does he actually have in mind?

The answer lies in the last verse of today's reading: **the message of the cross is, to us who are being saved, the power of God.** The unity of the Church resides in the common root of all believers: the Cross with its two aspects—death and resurrection. We *all* confess that Christ became flesh, was

crucified for us and our salvation, and was raised from the dead as "first fruit" of a rich harvest of those restored to beauty and immortality. We *all* "are being saved," and this ongoing process takes place in the *one* Body of Christ.

At the same time, however, each one is remolded by God into a unique being, adorned by unique gifts, and each of us is fighting very individual battles. After all, Saint Paul's metaphor of a "body" says as much: *unity* in *diversity* (*one* body, but *many* members, each individually different).

FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT: THE LORD FEEDS HIS PEOPLE

Exodus 16 2 The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3 The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." ... 11 The Lord spoke to Moses and said, 12 "I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'" 13 In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. 14 When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. 15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat."

From Rabbinic lore about the giving of the Law: Rabi Levi said, ... When the Holy One spoke, each and every person in Israel could say, "The Divine Word is addressing *me*." R. Yose bar R. Hanina said: The Divine Word spoke to each and every person according to his particular capacity. And do not be surprised at this idea. For when manna came down for Israel, each and every person tasted it in keeping with his own capacity—infants in keeping with their capacity; young men in keeping with their capacity; and the elderly in keeping with their capacity ... Now what was true about the manna, was equally true about the Divine Word. Each and every person heard it according to his own particular capacity.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Mat 14:14-22 At that time, when Jesus went ashore and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, and he cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples approached him and said, "This is a deserted place and it is already late; dismiss the crowds so that they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "There is no need for them to go away; give them some food yourselves." But they said to him, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have here." Then he said, "Bring them here to me," and he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds. They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the fragments left over—twelve wicker baskets full. Those who ate were about five thousand men, not counting women and children. Then he made the disciples get into the boat and precede him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.

There is a phrase in today's Gospel that we should treasure especially: **His heart was moved with pity for them.** This gives us a good insight not only into Christ's ministry two thousand of years ago, but into the very way God relates to us. "God" is not some impersonal cosmic law or energy out there; rather, as we repeat so often in our services, he is to us the compassionate "lover of mankind." As the

Lord speaks to Israel through the prophet Isaiah: "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!" (Isa. 49:15).

Seeing the miraculous feeding, the Jews certainly recalled God feeding their ancestors in the desert, as they were being led from Egyptian captivity into the Holy Land. And we should also remember the parable of the good Samaritan: when he saw the wounded man, "*he had compassion on him*, he went to him and bandaged his wounds, he brought him to an inn and took care of him."

God became man to refashion us into people that would embody and shine forth divine compassion. We learn this by first experiencing it first-hand, as we are, valued, cleansed of our sins, led out into the light and fed at God's richly-laid banquet. What we receive from God, but also *how* we receive it (graciously, abundantly, unconditionally) sets the standard for how we face the world.

But "**this is a deserted place**," the disciples rightly complain; and when the disciples are commanded, "**give them some food yourselves**," they have nothing or too little to give. Same with our call to live compassionately: it is anything but easy! Today's Gospel teaches, however, that whenever we decide to turn to our neighbor with compassion rather than with fear and suspicion, we give what we don't actually possess, because we simply share that which flows from God.

Christ's feeding the multitudes not only echoes Israel's experience in the past; it is also an image of the age to come. When God's compassion will flow through the meek, it will transform them as well as the earth they have inherited: "**The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the rose**" (Isa 35:1); and "**they will renew their strength, they will soar as with eagles' wings; They will run and not grow weary, walk and not grow faint**" (Isa 40:31).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Today:**
 - one-year memorial for Silviu, may he rest in God's peace and joy.
 - Deacon Martin is serving at St. George Cathedral in Pittsburgh.
 - meeting of the parish council.
- **Wednesday, August 14, 6 PM:** Vespertal Liturgy for the Dormition of the Theotokos
- **Next Sunday, August 18:** Deacon Martin will lead the service of Typika and distribute Holy Communion. (Fr. Bogdan will be out of the country for a conference).
- **Sunday, August 25:** parish picnic at Harcrest Park (Three Degree Road, Penn Township, Butler). Details forthcoming.

Remember in your prayer

LIVING: Fr. Paisius (recovering from surgery); Nyal, Jean's son-in-law (motorcycle accident); Joseph Totin (recovering from illness and surgery); Ion, Marius & Katherine (Stan); Serbanescu and Becker families; Gabriel; Karen (Jane Best's daughter); Charitini; Stella & Dimitrios; Christine (Abraham); Dollie; Venetia; Maura; Ann; Ed, Peter, John, Jonathan and Joanna; Andrei; Kent, Bob, David (relatives of Jean); Stelian; Diane; Maura (Andronic); Susannah.

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