



SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
www.orthodoxbutler.org

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TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

25 August 2019

Tone 1 / Eothinon 10—*Holy Apostle Titus of the Seventy, Bishop of Crete (1st c.). Return of the Relics of the Apostle Bartholomew from Anastasiopolis to Lipari (6th c.). Ss. Barses and Eulogius, Bishops of Edessa, and St. Protogenes, Bishop of Carrhæ, Confessors (4th c.). St. Menas, Patriarch of Constantinople (536-552).*

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 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 STS. BARTHOLOMEW AND TITUS (Tone 3): O Holy Apostles, intercede with our merciful God, to grant our souls forgiveness of sins.

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 THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS (Tone 4): By thy holy nativity, O pure one, Joachim and Anna were delivered from the reproach of barrenness; and Adam and Eve were delivered from the corruption of death; thy people do celebrate it, having been saved from the stain of iniquity, crying unto thee: The barren doth give birth to the Theotokos, who nourisheth our life.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

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

The Reading is from the First Letter to the Corinthians of the Holy Apostle Paul

(1 Cor 4:9-16) **Brethren: God has exhibited us Apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill clad and buffeted and homeless; and we labor, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we try to conciliate; we have become, and are now, as the refuse of the world, the off scouring of all things. I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel. I urge you, then, become imitators of me.**

The ministry of the Holy Apostles, as laid out by the Lord, was to bring the Good News to the entire world, and to make disciples of any and all who would taste the new life in Christ. Of course, "making disciples" is more than providing information or organizing disciplined battalions of followers; it means sharing the life of those who are being "made disciples" and gradually reshaping them in the image and likeness of a living model.

This is what the followers of the Lord experienced in their three years of following Jesus Christ, and, after Pentecost, in their new experience of the Risen Christ made present through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Apostles received the mandate to bring others into this spiritual fellowship with the Risen Lord: to make anyone willing a disciple—a disciple of Christ! And Saint Paul writes: **Even if you should have countless guides to Christ, yet you do not have many fathers, for I became your father in Christ Jesus through the Gospel. Therefore, I urge you, be imitators of me.**

But why does Paul urge the Corinthians to imitate him? Why not imitate *Christ*? And why does he speak of himself as their "father"? Let us note, first, that in the same letter, the Apostle writes: **Be imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ** (1 Cor 11:1). Even in today's Epistle, Saint Paul compares "guide to Christ" to "father in Christ": both "guide" and "father" are explained, specifically, in relation to Christ! It is understood that a "guide to Christ" leads not to Paul, but to Christ. So also with spiritual fatherhood: this much more intimate relation also results in making Paul's disciples into children of Christ.

Christian discipleship today occurs in parishes and monasteries. **Each according to his own gift, one in this manner, and another in that**, as the Holy Apostle writes elsewhere (1 Cor 7:7). Even though we have few reliable guides to Christ today, and even fewer fathers in Christ, God will always provide for those who seek him earnestly, and whoever wants to be saved will be given the proper avenue of discipleship. The Lord promised to be us always, unto the end of the ages.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

(Mat 17:14-23) At that time, a man came up to Jesus and kneeling before Him said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; for often he falls into the fire, and often into the water. And I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not heal him." And Jesus answered, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him here to me." And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" Jesus said to them, "Because you have no faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you. This kind never comes out except by prayer and fasting." As they were traveling together through Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and He will rise on the third day."

The Gospel reading presents a three-sided interaction: the Lord, the father with his son, and the crowd (including the disciples). The father has brought his child to the Lord, in desperate hope of finding healing for the child's terrible predicament: "Lord, have mercy on my son!" Yet the Lord's answer is directed to the crowd: "**You faithless and perverse generation! How long am I to be with you?**" Why is He talking to them, and even raising the ominous possibility of leaving them, and why does he seem to overlook the urgent petition of the father? But Jesus does not overlook the man: "**Bring him to me!**" He has heard the petition, but does not speak to the petitioner; he does not speak to him, but heals the child at once; he speaks to the crowd, but threatens to no longer hear them. And, after the healing, he gives his teaching about faith to the disciples who had not been able to do anything for the child in His absence.

As always, we look at today's Gospel not only for its "story"—the miraculous healing of a demon-possessed child two thousand years ago—but for what it says about us and *our* state *today*. We find ourselves somewhere in between all these interactions: we are disciples, we are part of the crowd, we have come to pray, "Lord have mercy"; and we are also, like the child, in need of healing.

It is noteworthy that the tortured existence of that child, as well as the shocking inability of the Apostles to provide healing (they are themselves puzzled about the incident) are due, the Lord says, to lack of faith. And it is about faith and its transformative power that Christ speaks to his disciples "in private," after the healing. We learn that "nothing is impossible" once we learn to live in faith.

What exactly is "faith," then? Let us remember, first, that today's Gospel text follows immediately after the Transfiguration. It is there, on Mount Tabor, that three of the disciples have seen Christ in the blazing light of his glory. That "the boy was cured instantly" is not surprising if we remember just *Who* it is that touched him: the Lord of glory, the Light and Life of the world. And we should also note that the Church sees the transfigured Christ as an image of what God intends for the restored humanity of the age to come.

What about us here and now, in the meantime—living as fallen creatures in this fallen world, even as we confess in the Creed, that we "look for the Resurrection and the life of the age to come"? The Gospel proclaims that the Kingdom of God has *already* dawned; we *already* experience a measure of the new reality, in which "God is with us, with His grace and love of mankind" (the priest proclaims this in the prayer following the main meal of the day). Miracles are the "normal" of the Kingdom to come, shining through, even for a single moment, in the fallen world. The key is faith.

Faith is the medium through which a glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven can be received in our everyday lives. Indeed, it is *faith* that allows us to experience the healing power of Christ (and lack of faith prevents it, as we see with the Lord's disciples today).

To prevent us from misunderstanding faith as a search for magical superpowers, today's Gospel reading ends with the truth that undergirds our faith, hope, and love: **"The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and He will rise on the third day."** We remember this every time we are called to draw near *with faith* to receive the Body of Christ, so as to taste the power and glory of the Resurrection even here and now.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Fellowship after Liturgy**

To help coordinate among those who would like to contribute in some way to our common Sunday meals, a Google document is now available on the parish website (orthodoxbutler.org) under "Fellowship after Sunday Liturgy"— just click on the link, which will open a sign-up sheet. Whatever you add or change there is automatically updated.

- Many thanks to everyone involved in the Great Cleanup that has been underway last week. A good number of broken, defective, or otherwise unneeded items have been removed. Some of this was a long-needed cleanup, some of it was necessary so that we can begin to set up the office in its new location (in the former choir loft) and create a large book display for a sort of parish library. The next "purge" is targeting unused kitchen equipment and the sports display. If you have any suggestions or concerns, or if you would like to take home anything we are planning on giving away, please talk to Diane.

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.