



SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
www.orthodoxbutler.org

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

PASTOR: Rev. Bogdan Gabriel Bucur

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

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

22 September 2019

Tone 5 / Eothinon 3—*Hieromartyr Phocas, Bishop of Sinopè (117). Prophet Jonah (8th c. B.C.). St. Jonah the Presbyter (9th c.), father of Ss. Theophanes the Hymnographer and Theodore Graptus. Martyr Phocas the Gardener, of Sinopè (ca. 320). St. Peter the Tax-collector (6th c.).*

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 5): Let us believers praise and worship the Word; coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For, He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death; and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

TROPARION OF SAINT PHOCAS OF SYNOPE (Tone 4): By choosing the Apostles' way of life, thou hast succeeded to their throne. Inspired by God, thou didst find the way to divine contemplation through the practice of virtue. After teaching the Word of Truth without error, thou didst defend the Faith to the very shedding of thy blood, O Holy Martyr among bishops Phocas. Entreat the Lord our God to save our souls.

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 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: *Thou, O Lord, wilt keep and preserve us. Save me, O Lord, for the godly man has failed.*

From Saint Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians

(2 Cor 1:21-2:4) **Brethren, it is God that establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us and sealed us and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. But I call God to witness against me that it was to spare you that I refrained from coming to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith; we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith. For I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.**

We all know that the Apostles were sent out by the Lord—this is actually what the word “apostle” means in Greek: one who is sent, an emissary, a messenger—and founded churches everywhere they went. Today we get a glimpse into another dimension of the life of the foremost among the Apostles, Saint Paul: he was also a “pastor,” a shepherd to his Christian flock. He taught, he gave advice, he corrected, and oftentimes he struggled against the temptations that assault each and every community.

In Corinth there were a lot of really difficult problems—heretical ideas, to be sure, and questions of Christian morality, but also issues about organization and the flow of money. Saint Paul speaks about the sorrowful letter he wrote them **“with much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears,”** about paying them a **“painful visit,”** then deciding to not visit in order not to inflict more pain on the community; and he also speaks about himself **suffering pain from those who should have made him rejoice.**

In fact, this work of “disciplining” goes back to the Lord himself, who had three years to teach and reshape his followers from fishermen into fishers of men. And he did this sometimes tenderly, sometimes more harshly (just read the Gospel of Mark!), sometimes with praise and sometimes with chastisement (“You are the Rock and on this rock I shall build my church!” he tells Peter; a few moments later: “you are a stumbling block ... get behind me, Satan!”).

Saint Paul reminds the Corinthians, first of all, that “being Church” is the work of God in us, and that discipleship simply is how this work is moving forward. That it is not about Paul forcing his views over them, rather, it is God who establishes us, **it is God who has commissioned us, He has put his seal upon us, He and given us His Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.** Secondly, the work of the Apostle is, essentially, for the flourishing of those entrusted to him, and it is a work of cooperation

between God, the Apostle, and his flock: **we work with you and for your joy**. Thirdly, however, this cooperation will always bring to the surface our estrangement from God and our diseased heart and mind—whence the difficulties, pain, and tears Saint Paul refers to. Any priest, any abbot or abbess in monastery, and any bishop knows just that this portrayal of the struggles in church is absolutely realistic.

What do we learn from today's reading? That "doing Church" is a struggle and that sooner or later it will require uncomfortable changes for the sake of healing; that "doing Church" is the only way to be a Christian; that "doing Church" is not only about "gaining" the blessedness of some distant future, but about a subtle and pure joy here and now—a joy that builds little by little, as it dawns on us that we are training ourselves by cooperating with God and each other. To encourage us on the way, Saint Paul assures us of the essential: **I wrote you ... not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.**

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

(Luke 5:1-11) **At that time, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, Jesus asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when Jesus had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zeb'edee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, I they left everything and followed him.**

The fishermen kindly allowed Jesus to use one of their boats for his preaching; however, when he asked Simon Peter to go fishing, they must have thought to themselves that this stranger had overstepped the boundaries of his authority and competence. They knew that it is easier to fish at night, when the fish move up shallower. **"We toiled all night and took nothing!"**: a very polite way of suggesting that the carpenter-turned-preacher should perhaps confine himself to his preaching, since he obviously didn't know much about fishing.

Nevertheless, Peter is willing to do what the Lord says. And his humility is recompensed beyond expectation. The catch is so rich that the boats are close to sinking. This is when Peter, in a flash of insight, understands that in his poor fishing boat he has come face to face with *the Lord*—He who commanded and it came to be; the maker and sustainer of all creation.

We can learn quite a few things from this Gospel. First, that we should allow God to "borrow" this and that and the other part of our life, just as Peter allowed Christ to use his boat. Second, that God is always going to ask for increasingly more control over one's life, just as he went from using Peter's boat to telling him when and where and how to do his job. In the end, one comes to realize, as the saying goes, "if God is your copilot, switch seats!" Faith and humility—that is, ceding increasingly more room for God to work in us—is not about some cultish self-annihilation of personality. In small and in great things, living with God yields rich fruit: in the midst of trials and tribulations, in this our

valley of tears, the fruit we are craving: peace, joy, love, and the beauty of knowing that our existence is truly meaningful.

The heart of our Gospel, however, is Saint Peter's word to the Lord: "**Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man.**" It is only in this way that our journey can truly begin. The prophet Micah (6:8) wrote in this respect, "He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and *to walk humbly with your God?*" To *walk humbly with God* means that we always remember just *who* it is that stands before us. When we pray, we learn from the very words of prayer: "**with boldness and without condemnation we dare to call upon You, the heavenly God, as Father.**" The more difficult part is to know that at all time it is no less than God, the Lord, who stands in front of us. As for Peter, the presence of the Lord, is overwhelming, awe-inspiring, fearsome. We are all, without a single exception, broken vessels, sinful people, surely not a "fitting" place for the Lord to visit. Yet, this is precisely why our faith is called the Gospel, that is "the Good News": the Lord has come to be with us, has mingled God's holiness with our very lowliness, has truly come to seek us out.

Simon Peter and the others **left everything and followed Him**, and have also brought this Good News to many others. Today, it has reached us. Will we allow our lives to be touched and changed by the Lord's visitation? Will we at least lend him our hearing?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Today:** 1-year memorial for Timothy Becker
"Pilgrimage to the Holy Land" after Liturgy Cezar and Roxana

From the parish council: CALLING ALL ABLE-BODIED PARISHIONERS! We are having a much needed clean-up day both inside and outside on **Saturday, September 28**. We'll start at 8:00 am and go until we can't go anymore. If you can give all morning, or all afternoon, or even just a couple of hours, WE NEED YOUR HELP! Please consider volunteering some time for this event. Bring cleaning material and outside tools if you can. Lets make OUR St. Anthony's Great again!

- **Next Sunday, 9/29, 12:30 to 1:30 pm**
SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS
"***I am the Image of Your Glory: Learning Theology from a Funeral Hymn***"
(A presentation by Fr. Bogdan, followed by Q&A)

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: Jackie (Rose Totin's mother); Maria (Stella Lyras' sister); 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.