



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

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

3 November 2019

TONE 3 / Eothinon 9—*Synaxis of the Holy Unmercenary Healer. Greatmartyr George in Lydda (Dedication of the Church in Lydda, 4th c.). Martyrs Akepsimas the Bishop, Joseph the Presbyter, and Aithalas the Deacon, of Persia (4th c.). Martyrs Eudoxios, Agapios, Atticus, Marinus, Oceanus, Eustratios, Karterios, Nikopolitianos, Styrax, and Tobias, at Sebaste (ca. 320). Ven. Acepsimas, Hermit, of Cyrrhus in Syria (4th c.). St. Snandulia of Persia (4th 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 has 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 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 GREATMARTYR GEORGE (Tone 4): Since thou art a liberator and deliverer of captives, a help and support of the poor and needy, a healing physician of the sick, a contender and fighter for kings, O great among Martyrs, the victory-clad George; intercede with Christ God for the salvation of our souls.

TROPARION OF ST. 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: *Sing praises to our God, sing praises. Clap your hands, all ye peoples!*

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians

(Gal 1:11-19) Brethren, I would have you know that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it; and I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and had called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother.

Saint Paul was not one of the twelve disciples; in fact, he never even met the Lord during His earthly ministry. Moreover, in the early years of the Church, Paul (then called Saul) did his best to stop the spreading of the faith, preaching against those who called Jesus "Messiah" (in Greek "Christ") and "Lord," and putting all his time and energy into persecuting the Church. When the authorities executed St. Stephen, the first deacon and martyr, Saul was guarding the clothes of those throwing stones!

Although blind, Paul's zeal was genuine. And since God knows the heart of man, and never fails to guide those that search earnestly for His truth, at a certain moment in God's time, something extraordinary happened. In St. Paul's words, God "revealed his Son to him." On the way to Damascus, he did meet the resurrected Jesus Christ in an overwhelming, life-changing vision. And it was this meeting that established Paul as an apostle, and a divinely authorized preacher of the Gospel.

But many were skeptical about the Gospel preached by this man (now baptized "Paul"). They kept insisting that he had not received a commission from Christ—like the other apostles—or from Peter, the leader of the apostles, or from James, the leader of the Mother-Church in Jerusalem. Yet Paul knew what he had received from Christ: "the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ."

And this special commissioning of St. Paul has borne rich fruit: it is to him and to his disciple, St. Luke, that we owe most of the New Testament; it is he that showed the importance of sharing the Good News with the pagans; it is he that crisscrossed Europe to found its first Church communities; his life ended at Rome in 64, when he was martyred along with St. Peter.

Whether "cradle Orthodox" or converts, we are called, like St. Paul, to allow Christ to be revealed in us, and to gradually learn how to live as His disciples. Nobody ever said it would be easy; but we can all take the advice that the same Apostle Paul gave to one of his spiritual sons: Here is a trustworthy saying: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first! (1 Tim 1:15).

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Luke

(Luke 16:19-31) The Lord said, "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'"

It is easy to blame the rich man in this story: he shares nothing with poor Lazarus, he does not care for his sick and dying fellow-human, he is a monster! And yet, judging things on a strictly social and political level, the rich man may have some sort of justification. After all, some would say, the rich man was not responsible for the poverty and sickness of Lazarus; besides, Lazarus should be grateful for the crumbs he is getting!

But the story requires us to approach it differently, so that we understand why the story of the rich man is a warning to us not to do like he did. Let us pause over a detail in the Gospel's portrayal of Lazarus: "the dogs," it says, "came and licked his sores." These are the rich man's guard dogs—fierce creatures. If they befriend Lazarus and even do their best to clean his wounds, it is probably because, this man who possesses nothing, has a kind heart and shares the little he gets (the crumbs) with them.

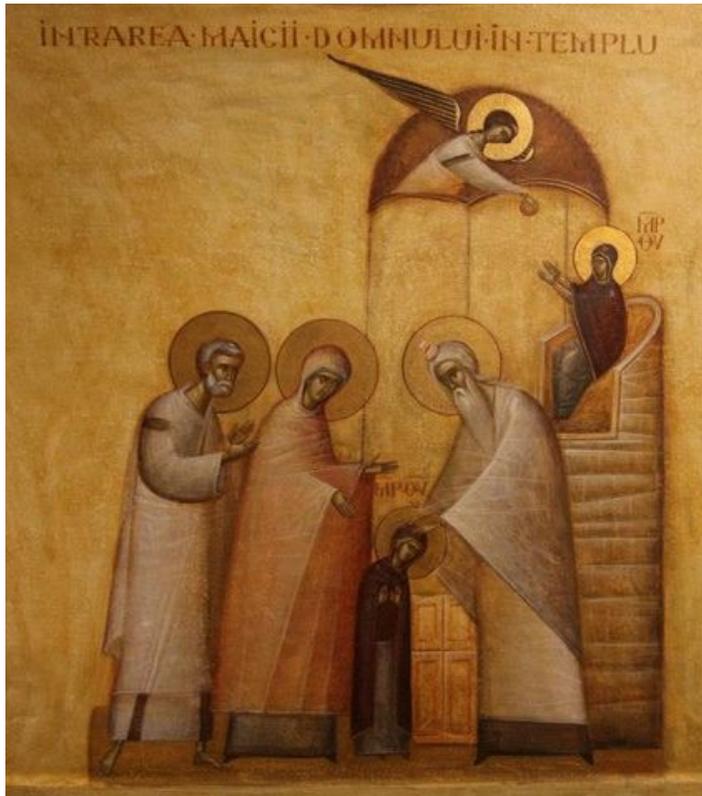
The big turning-point of the story is the death of both the rich man and Lazarus. It is now, when they pass from this life, that their truth is revealed. It is as though we, the readers, are given a glimpse into how God sees these men: Lazarus, poor in goods but rich in goodness, is embraced by heaven; the rich man, rich in all kinds of goods but lacking in goodness, finds himself estranged from the Good One.

As always with the Lord's parables, ask yourselves: who are *we* in this story? where would *we* belong? Needless to say, the answer has nothing to do with the amount of money one has accumulated, or one's social status. Theologically speaking, all of us—rich and poor, men and women, citizens and foreigners, etc— are somewhat like Lazarus, suffering from the incurable sickness of mortality, covered with the boils of sinful and destructive habits, barely alive through our own choice of separating ourselves from the divine source of life. Now, since God is not responsible for our fallen state, could he not "just tolerate" us, the way the rich man tolerates the poor Lazarus who eats crumbs from his table?

But God shows us a different way. He does not ask whether we "truly deserve" a better state; in dealing with our shortcomings, as the Psalmist says, He does not keep score: "If You should mark our iniquities, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness." And, unlike the rich man in the parable, He does not feed us mere crumbs. Remember the invitation addressed to us on Pascha: "Rejoice today, *for the table is richly laden! Enjoy all the riches of His goodness!* Let no one mourn that he has fallen"

God's mode of existence—generous and forgiving—is what is asked of us. It is asked of us because it is first offered to us in Christ: if we embrace Christ and the risen life that flows from Him, then we are given the power to live out a truly Christian life, a life in which God's abundant generosity is manifested here and now, towards our neighbor.

If we refuse to be like God, we automatically separate ourselves from Him, and choose the same miserable hell as the foolish rich man. Of course, God does not wish any of us to experience in our real existence that which the rich man experiences in the parable, so He sets before us— before our very eyes—many opportunities to share with others the gifts that we have so richly received from Him. The matter is urgent, the stakes couldn't be higher: by choosing either to treat our neighbor as a brother, or to leave him to the dogs, we friendship with God or estrangement from him, heaven or hell.



TODAY

12:30 to 1:30 pm

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ADULTS

Mary:
Presenting Ourselves as a Temple

Presentation by Deacon Martin,
followed by Q&A

- **Next Sunday, Nov. 10: pan-Orthodox Divine Liturgy at Sts. Peter and Paul.** We continue our beautiful local tradition—namely, that on the last Sunday before the start of the Nativity fast, we gather with our Orthodox brothers and sister for worship and a common meal.
- **NATIVITY FAST: November 15 — December 25.**

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: Kurt (Melinda's father); 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.

