



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

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

26 July 2020

Tone 6 / Eothinon 7—*St. Jacob (Netsvetov), Enlightener of the Peoples of Alaska (1864). Hieromartyr Hermolaus and Martyrs Hermippus and Hermocrates at Nicomedia (ca. 305). Ven. Moses the Hungarian, of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—ca. 1043). Martyr Parasceva of Rome (2nd c.). Ven. Gerontius of St. Anne Skete (Mt. Athos).*

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 ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON: THE BEATITUDES

In Thy kingdom remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and speak all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven!

THE 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 6): When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb; and the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou hast led hell captive and wast not tempted thereby; Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world. O Thou, Who art risen from the dead: O Lord, 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 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: *O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. Unto Thee I cry, O Lord my God.*

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans

(Rom 15:1-7) **Brethren: we who are strong ought to bear with the failings of those who are weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult You fell on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together, with one voice, you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you into the glory of God.**

Saint Paul was a realistic teacher and pastor. He knew well how weak his disciples were. Above all, he knew that by ourselves, without being part of a living community, our life in Christ is near impossible: we are in danger of forgetting why we are on the way, we risk losing sight of where the road is leading us, and likely to run out of the hope and joy that sustain us on our journey in Christ. Saint Paul speaks of the Church as the Body of Christ: as in a body, members need each other and must care for each other.

We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of those who are weak—especially since those who today are “strong” may be “weak” tomorrow! And **“live in harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus:”** note that Saint Paul mentions “accord” with Christ in the same breath as “harmony” with one another. We are, in a way, like the spokes of a wheel: the closer the spokes come to the axis of the wheel, the closer they are to each other.

Finally, a very weighty statement: **Welcome one another, as Christ has welcomed you into the glory of God!** The key lies in the second half of the sentence, so let's read it as follows: “Since Christ has welcomed you into the glory of God, welcome also each other!” This “glory” is more than some

vague “honor”: “the glory of God” is Scripture’s language for the presence of God in creation—God’s grace, God’s light, God’s energy, God’s creative and sanctifying power.

Saint Paul says that we have been received into the glory of God. How did we get there? We didn’t “get there” ourselves, we didn’t “make it”: we were received. Remember: no one has ascended to heaven; the only one who knows the way from earth to heaven and into the presence of God, knows how to guided and care for his followers and friends, the only one who has the keys to open for them the gates of the Kingdom, is the one who humbled himself to make the journey from there to here, from heaven to earth, from the glory of God into the mortal human existence.

In short: It is Christ who grants us access into the glory of God. But how do we go about following him and entering? There is one condition: that we should welcome others, just as we have been welcome. In doing so, we actually begin to enter ourselves.



Fr Dumitru Staniloae:

The Church is a part of the cosmos which is partly united with God ... The Church provides an image of God working in the world to gather the world into himself. The work that Christ does in the Church is not separate from the work He does in the world; He begins from a small circle of humans with the intention of extending it to the entire creation. This implies, of course, that we participate in the Liturgy of the Church and, as we leave the service, we bring the spirit of our union with God and of the union of all creation in God.

TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Mat 9:27-35

At that time, as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud: “Have mercy on us, Son of David.” When He entered the house, the blind men came to Him; and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” Then He touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith be it done to you.” And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, “See that no one knows it.” But they went away and spread His fame through all that district. As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to Him. And

when the demon had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons." And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity.

The Lord heals two blind men and a mute. And what is the reaction of the "professional theologians"? They deny the obvious work of God, and accuse Jesus of being in league with evil spirits. *Even in the obvious presence of God* people are still able to play blind, deaf, and dumb. But Christ remains the same: we read that "he went on teaching, preaching, and healing every infirmity."

As always, the Gospel calls for us to place ourselves in the story: do we want to be like the blind men, who beg for and receive their healing? Are we like the crowd, cheering on whatever and whomever has power and success? The crowds are amazed now, when he is "impressive" because of his miracles, but as soon as he starts to look weak, they will abandon him and ask for his crucifixion).

The question is: *what do you want?* You can find much to criticize about the bishops, the priests, the monks, the nuns, the Church administration, the books, the music, the length of the services, etc, etc, etc. *But maybe you want to be healed.* If so, then follow the blind men who receive their sight, and recognize Christ for who he is; and imitate the dumb man, who is freed from dark oppression, and can speak. We are even given the words to express ourselves: "Have mercy on me, Son of David!" All of this is available to us—if *that is what we are seeking.*

The Gospel (the good news that God is with us with his grace and love for mankind) is still being preached. And Christ does not disdain our diseases or infirmities; it is up to us, however, to acknowledge them and ask for healing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Garrett and Autumn announce the birth of **Isaac James** on 7/23. Mom and baby are well!
- **Fr Martin Johnson** is the new pastor of St Anthony's: Axios! Since this kind of ministry, ultimately aimed at the salvation of all, occurs at the confluence of God's grace and the good will of the entire community of believers, please keep Fr Martin and his family in your prayers. As we heard today, let us "welcome one another, as Christ has welcomed you into the glory of God" and may we see each other's faces in the Kingdom of God!
- **Today, right after Liturgy:** "good bye" get together at Alameda Park, Lion's pavilion. Lots of good bbq from our friendly neighbor, *When Pigs Fly*, and more -- and above all, fellowship.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: newborn Isaac (Health); newly baptized Nicholas (DiNunzio); Larry Hamil (undergoing cancer treatment); Mother Barbara (recovering after a fall); Michael (Stephine's husband); Vassila (Georgia's godmother); Dollie; Maura (Andronic); Don (Dollie's brother); Ann (Wilson); Nyal, Jean's son-in-law (motorcycle accident); Joseph Totin; Christine (Abraham); Venetia; Maura; Ann; Ed, Peter, John, Jonathan and Joanna; Andrei; Kent, Bob, David (relatives of Jean); Diane; Susannah; Ed Sr (Totin).

DEPARTED: Karen (Jane Best's daughter); Frank (Seba's brother); Kurt (Melinda's father); Jackie (Rose Totin's mother); Maria (Stella Lyras' sister); Sula; Kurt (Diane's son); 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.

We are very grateful for your continued financial support, which allows St. Anthony's to remain current with its obligations.