

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

www.orthodoxbutler.org

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

RECTOR: Rev. Bogdan Gabriel Bucur

CONTACT: 724.287.6983 (church); 412.390.8208 (priest);
frbogdan@orthodoxbutler.org

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT (“Veneration of the Precious and Holy Cross”) 23 March 2014

— *Tone 6. Martyr Nikon and 199 disciples with him in Sicily (251); Martyrs Philetas the Senator, and those with him, in Illyria (117-138); Ven. Nikon, Abbot of the Kiev Caves (1088); Righteous Basil of Mangazea in Siberia (1600); Monk Martyr Luke of St. Anne’s Skete on Mt. Athos (1802).*

FIRST ANTIPHON

The light of Thy Face, O Lord, is marked upon us. Thou hast given a sign to them that fear Thee, so that they may flee from the bow! (Refrain) Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive. Thou hast given an inheritance to those that fear Thy Name, O Lord. (R:) Glory... Now and ever... (R:)

SECOND ANTIPHON

All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Let us worship at His footstool. (R:) O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, save us who sing to Thee, “Alleluia”! God, our King before the ages, has worked salvation in the midst of the earth. (R:) I will be exalted among the heathen; I will be exalted in the earth. (R:) Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son and Word of God ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

TROPARION OF THE CROSS (see next page) with the following verses:
Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool!
Save Thy people and bless Thy inheritance, shepherd them and bear them unto eternity
Glory ... Now and ever...

VARIABLES FOR TODAY’S DIVINE LITURGY

- > Instead of “Holy God” we sing “Before Thy Cross we bow down...”
- > Instead of “We have seen the true light” we sing “O Lord, save Thy people...”
- > Special hymn to the Theotokos: “In thee, O full of grace, all creation rejoices”

LITTLE ENTRANCE

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

TROPARION OF 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 led Hades 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 THE CROSS (Tone 1): O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance; grant victory to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by the power of Thy Cross preserve Thy habitation!

TROPARION OF SAINT ANTHONY THE GREAT (Tone 4, Russian): 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 ANNUNCIATION (Tone 8): To thee the champion leader, I thy servant offer thanks for victory, O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror. As thou hast power invincible, free me from every danger, that I may cry unto thee: Rejoice, O bride without bridegroom!

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Norma, Richard (Michaels), Victoria (Frank's mother), Richard (Johns), Bill, Ed, Peter, Georgia and Scot, Sam, Karen (Joanna's mother), Diane, Sula, Dollie, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Ignatius and Amy, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka, Benjamin, John, Janet.

DEPARTED: Metropolitan Philip; Stella, Edmund (Ed's uncle), Richard, Dolores Patricia (Thompson), Leatrice (Totin), Ed (Joanna's grandfather), Joseph (Rose's father), Fred (Dollie's uncle), Bob (Diane's father), Michael, Gabriel, Hilda (Chris Abraham's mother).

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance! Unto Thee will I cry, O Lord, O my God.

The Reading is from the Epistle to the Hebrews

(Heb 4:14-5:6) **BRETHREN:** we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God; let us therefore hold fast our confession! For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every High Priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a High Priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my son, today I have begotten thee"; as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek!"

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Mark

(Mk 8:34-9:1) The Lord said: "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the gospel will save it. What profit is there for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? What could one give in exchange for his life? Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this faithless and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels." He also said to them, "Amen, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the Kingdom of God has come in power!"

REMEMBERING METROPOLITAN PHILIP

From *Out Of The Depths Have I Cried: Thoughts on Incarnational Theology in the Eastern Christian Experience* by Metropolitan Philip, ed. Fr. Joseph Allen (Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1979)

We are never totally aware of how God is moving in our lives, how He is active in our existence. We do know that He is there, that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). We are in Him and He is in us. But we are never totally conscious of just *how* He is there, and what are His motivations for our lives. ... Not understanding completely, we wonder in fact if we can lure Him into doing what *we* want. We make a "deal": if this happens, I will do this or that. We sometimes make our faith conditional, even though our faith must be there *in spite of* what happens, not *because of* what happens.

We try to comprehend it all rationally, with our heads, but it does not work like that. We know such things not with our heads; we know them with our hearts – we intuit, we perceive, we sense, we experience. This is dangerous, as we will see, and yet it is truly the deepest kind of knowing. But even with this kind of knowing, God's existence in our lives remains only partially in our awareness; the rest is out of our awareness.

Of course, the more we mature spiritually, the more we can bring His energy into us, into our awareness, where it can then become expressed in our lives' acts. We never completely exhaust this possibility because there will always be more; we are never totally "filled up" with God's energy. Saint Gregory of Nyssa knew this when he said that our search for God was an "endless seeking." What he meant is that this energy is always coming to us, always active in us, always emerging, but we can become *conscious of it, be aware of it, discern it*, only partially.

This does not happen automatically, however. We, as living and growing beings, have a part to play in making our person available and open to God's presence. We must cooperate – the Eastern Fathers called this "synergy" – in such a way that the energy of God and the energy of our very selves *fuse*, raising us to new levels continuously. Unlike some of the more common (yet valuable!) qualities associated with Christianity, there are *specific* qualities related to the exploration of our depths: surrendering, disclosure, silence, waiting, hoping, remembering, etc. It is through such qualities as these, which we can provide (that is, *our* part) that allows for the fullest flow of God's presence (that is, *His* part) into our consciousness. That flow takes various forms: compassion, forgiveness, love, care – holiness. In this exploration, we shall be mostly concerned with *our* part out of which we will see God's part emerging in such forms as these.

Certainly we fear that this experience of our depths is dangerous, because we do not know all that is there. We have, indeed, been warned that there, in our depths, the Evil One himself, the great deceiver, also dwells. We cannot presume that he does not also lurk in these deepest reaches

of our souls, pushing always to mix his evil and dark intentions into the flowing of God's energies. The Desert Fathers knew that our depths seethe with tremendous forces, both negative and positive, dark and light. The dark and negative must also be brought into awareness, and there to be confessed, exorcised and acted upon. But this must not keep the force of light from incarnation; the devil must not keep us from God.

God wants to be more and more in our lives and it is truly up to us to expand our awareness of Him. Because He not only lives "above," but also in our "depths," our attempt must be to contact, penetrate and plumb these depths.

Unlike what others think in the secular, psychological environment, to become more conscious and aware is not here the value in itself; "increased consciousness" is not the aim at all. Rather, it is "pivotal" in the sense that it takes us to something beyond itself. Through increased consciousness we are attempting to develop a relationship with our depths as a way of touching what is shining through them as a *transparency* of Divinity, that is, the light of another being and life. Thus, what we seek is not an "experience," but God Himself. What is important is not an emotional, psychological, physical, or otherwise experience, but that our *receptivity* may be increased. The goal is clearly communion with the Divine; this is what we must seek to "experience."

We are not attempting to totally *control* these depths which we cannot, in any case, absolutely grasp. Anxiety over "control" of any aspect of our lives, that is, an overabundance of concern for self-direction, can only kill any fresh and spontaneous reaction to God's arising message; this can only numb us. Wishing to absolutely "control" means forgetting that we are *not* our own, that we belong to Another Who *shares* our direction.

The task is difficult, to be sure. More than that, it is *fearful*; "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). And yet we must! Saint John Chrysostom meant this when he said, "Find the door to the inner chamber of your soul, and you will discover the door to the Kingdom of Heaven." And again, Saint Ephraim the Syrian knew that God placed in man at creation "all the Kingdom" for which he must dig deeply. Such men know this simple truth: the way "upward" is the way "inward."

We explore, then, the part that *we* can play in discovering just what it is that flows from these depths, revealing to us God's presence in whose image we are formed. It is, after all, from this deepest level of our self, that we can also exclaim, "Out of the depths have I cried."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Today:** installation of the parish council
- **25 March: Annunciation.** Please attend one of the services at St Andrew or Sts Peter & Paul
- **Next Sunday,** Fr. James Purdie from St. Basil's in Poquoson, will be with us for Matins and Divine Liturgy. He brings relics of Saint Anthony and his disciple, Saint Paul the Simple, and will receive the altar table as a donation from our church to the community he is serving.
- **Next Sunday, March 30, 1pm:** "LEARNING THEOLOGY FROM THE HYMNS OF LENT AND HOLY WEEK." This will be an audio-video presentation, followed by questions-and-answers.

Wednesday, March 26, 6pm: Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts [St. Andrew's]

Wednesday, April 2, 6pm: Liturgy of Pre-Sanctified Gifts [Sts. Peter and Paul]

Thursday, April 3, 6pm: Great Canon of St. Andrew [St. Andrew's]

Wednesday, April 9, 6pm: Liturgy of Pre-Sanctified Gifts [St. Anthony's]