

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
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SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 5 October 2014

Tone 8 — Martyr Charitina of Amisus (304); Hieromartyr Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria (264-264); Martyr Memelchta of Persia (ca. 344); St. Gregory of Chandzoe in Georgia (861); Ven. Damian the Healer (1097), Jeremiah (ca. 1070), and Matthew (ca. 1085), clairvoyants at the Kiev Caves; Ven. Charitina, Princess of Lithuania (1281); Ven. Eudocimus of Vatopedi (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 hath girt Himself! (R.) O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead: save us who sing 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)

THIRD ANTIPHON

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 8): From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee!

Glory ... repeat

Now and ever ... repeat

AT THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

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

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 8): From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One, and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou might deliver us from passion; Thou art our life and our Resurrection, O Lord, glory to Thee!

Glory ...

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.

Now and ever ...

KONTAKION FOR ORDINARY SUNDAYS (Tone 4): Undisputed intercessor of Christians, the mediatrix who is unrejected by the Creator, turn not away from the voice of our petitions, though we be sinners. Come to us in time with aid, as we cry unto thee in faith; for thou art good. Hasten to us with intercessions O Theotokos, who dost ever intercede for those who honor thee!

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them.
God is known in Judah; His Name is great in Israel!*

From the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

(2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1) Brethren, we are the temple of the living God; as God said, “I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them,” says the Lord, “and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, and I will be a father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

God seems to require *the impossible!* How realistic is it to expect that we “cleanse ourselves from *every* defilement of body and spirit”? How can we “make holiness *perfect*”? If you think this is just a radical expression of the Apostle, remember the similar words of the Divine Liturgy: “the holy things are for *those who are holy!*”

God seems to require *the impossible!* True. But it is also true that if we are thinking of God “over there” making such requirements of us “over here”—well, then we are missing the whole point. Let us start with the Orthodox confession of faith: “God became man, so that man may be deified.” He did not simply *order* us to “be like God,” or make a heavenly proclamation that we should; rather, He came among us, became one of us, so as to lead the way to God; and He sent the Holy Spirit to “dwell in us” and assist us on the way.

It is true that the Liturgy proclaims “the holy things are for the holy”; but we also hear at Liturgy, “*You* – that is God – are our sanctification.” And the Apostle begins by telling us that we are temples of the living God, and that God lives and moves in us. Not some lofty *concept* of God or some

pious emotions, but the living God, the fire unconsumed who comes to purify, enlighten, and transform us.

Yes, God demands the impossible. But He is himself at work in us, to make the impossible possible—to cleanse us from every defilement of body and spirit” and to perfect His holiness in us. The point is simply to allow Him to live and move in us.

How do we do this concretely? The Church teaches us the three first steps: **first**, that we believe firmly that Christ does not despise the sinner, but came into this world to save sinners, and that each think of oneself as the only sinner standing face to face with the Savior; **second**, that we confess our sins and shortcomings courageously and trusting in God’s goodness (this is where having the priest present, as a witness, is very helpful); and, **third**, that we receive the gift of God Himself given to us in the Holy Eucharist: *Receive the Body of Christ, taste the fountain of immortality!*

TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

From the Gospel according to Saint Luke

(Luke 6:31-36) The Lord said: “As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.”

We are not called to manufacture and squeeze out some of “our” mercy and love towards others. Rather, we are called to share a Gift that we have ourselves in abundance: to pass on and extend the mercy of God—the mercy received at Baptism, which we continue to receive as our daily bread from

God. It is because we have been forgiven that we are able to forgive, it is because God is merciful to us that we become free and able to extend His mercy to others.

“Mercy”: it is hard to find a word more frequently used in our services. If there is anything we ask of God, it surely is mercy. Sometimes we even repeat “Lord, have mercy!” twelve times or forty times—not that God really needs such constant and insistent reminders, but to make sure that we understand how much we are in need of God’s mercy.

Our relationship with God and our relationship with fellow-humans are two sides of the same reality. Scripture speaks plainly. In the Old Testament: **“I desire mercy, not sacrifice!”** (Hosea 6:6); and in the New: **“if you don’t love your brother, whom you see, how can you imagine to love God, whom you don’t see?”** (1 John 4:20) And in today’s Gospel these two dimensions our Christian life are again brought together. To paraphrase the last line of our text: **“Be merciful to your fellow-humans, just as God is a merciful Father to you!”**

And just how merciful should we be? For Christians, the standard is higher than for others, as the Gospel calls for a measure of mercy that seems, at first, unreasonable: be merciful *like God*, forgive like God forgives, love like God loves. Clearly, this is not easy (to put it mildly). In fact, the Gospel does recognize that most of the things that Christ asks of us are impossible for any human being on earth. However, if the standard is so high for Christians, it is because we ought to have learned that God has come to dwell *among us*, in order to live *in us*, and make the impossible possible.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Last Appeal for Supporting our Seminarian:** if you can, please make a donation—however small or large—to help our seminarian, Ignatius Green, pay the tuition for his last year of seminary. Place your gift in the white box “for needy people” at the entrance into the church.
- **Saturday, 10/11, 5:30pm: Bible Study.** We will read Leviticus 16 and learn about the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) in the Old Testament, and reflect on what it signifies for us Christians.
- **Saturday, 10/25: Rummage and Cookie Sale.** Volunteers are needed for baking cookies, and for set-up, clean-up, and the day of the sale. For any info on the Rummage and Cookie Sale, please contact Seba Michaels (724.285.1540).

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Ron (upcoming surgeries), George (Georgiades), Christine (Abraham), Jim, Tony, Samantha, Luke (relatives of Dollie's), 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), Karyn, Ignatius and Amy, John, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka, Benjamin, John, Janet, Craig, Christy (relatives of Jean).

Shea and Katie, Timothy and Carolyn – seeking for the true faith.

DEPARTED: Angeliki, Metropolitan Philip; Joe and David Sipos; Bill (Georgia's father-in-law), Glenn (Jean's grandson); 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).