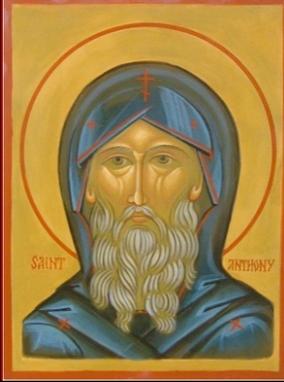


SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese
www.orthodoxbutler.org

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

PASTOR: Rev. Bogdan Gabriel Bucur

CONTACT: Tel. : 724.287.6893 (church); 412.390.8208 (priest);

E-mail: frbogdan@orthodoxbutler.org

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

12 October 2014

Tone 8 — Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council; Martyr Domnica of Anazarbus (286); Martyrs Probus, Tarachus, and Andronicus, at Tarsus in Cilicia (304); Martin the Merciful, Bishop of Tours (ca. 400); St. Cosmas the Hymnographer Bishop of Majuma (ca. 787).

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

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"!

RESURRECTION TROPARION (Tone 1): While the stone was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. Therefore, the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O Giver of life: "Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom! Glory to Thy Providence, O Thou who alone art the Lover of mankind!"

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.

Glory...

TROPARION OF THE HOLY FATHERS (Tone 8): Thou, O Christ, art our God of exceeding praise Who didst establish our Holy Fathers as luminous stars upon earth, and through them didst guide us unto the true Faith, O most merciful One, glory to Thee.

Now and ever ...

KONTAKION OF ORDINARY SUNDAYS (Tone 4): O undisputed intercessor of Christians, the mediatrix who is unrejected by the Creator: turn not away from the voice of our petitions, although 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 do ever intercede for those who honor thee!

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous!

From the Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

(2 Cor 9:6-11) Brethren, this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And

God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: “He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness endures forever.” Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

Saint Paul was not only a holy apostle, the early Church’s most effective missionary, a loving spiritual father and guide to so many, and a man blessed to have heavenly visions and revelations from the Lord—he was also a very practical person. Although he wrote and preached so often about the Church as a mystical, divine-human reality—“the body of Christ”—he also knew that the survival and thriving of the early Christian communities depended in significant measure on good stewardship of their earthly resources. Indeed, money is always part of what makes any human institution work; and the holy Apostle was a very good organizer on this front. As we hear from him today, we would do well to listen attentively and think about taking his advice.

Saint Paul assumes we already know that the model for everything we are called to do is God. God is abundantly rich and abundantly generous, and He shares his gifts with creation freely, **not grudgingly, nor out of any necessity**. The love that God is *in himself*, as relation between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, overflows towards creation, so that we experience God as Giver and as Gift. This is why Orthodox theology speaks about the *personal* character of our relation to God (he is the Giver) and about how God’s interaction with us is experienced concretely as *divine energies* (the Gift). What, then, about money and other resources?

He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. “Sowing bountifully” is true of God first. And it must become true of the Church, as a whole, and of every disciple of Christ, individually. Imitate God by *giving*.

God loves a cheerful giver. Giving is God’s manner of existence; naturally, then, *it is good to give*. To us, *giving* is part of healing our terrible state of separation from God. Therefore, we should realize that giving is, first of all, an opportunity for us. And since by giving we are returning to our proper “functioning” as sons and daughters of God, let us *be cheerful in giving*.

Saint Paul goes on to quote from Psalm 112: **“He has given to the poor, His righteousness endures forever.”** Again, the first one to fit the description is God. But the Psalm is a recommendation for us: if you want “righteousness” (the kind of intimacy with God that befits a human being), then *practice giving*.

Finally, the Apostle assures us, God is not simply standing by and watching from a distance: as you give, rest assured that He will supply you with **sufficiency in all things, that you may have an abundance for every good work.** And what is more, He will also **increase the fruits of your righteousness.** In other words, as we practice God’s generous mode of existence, God is at work in us, transforming us. With every act by which we extend ourselves to others, we are being renewed and made *ever more capable* of tasting God’s grace and sharing it with others.

TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

From the Gospel according to Saint Luke

(Luke 7:11-16) Jesus went to a city called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. As he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a large crowd from the city was with him. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her “Do not weep.” And he came and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say to you arise.” And the dead man sat up and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all; and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has arisen among us!”

Some of the miracles of Christ might strike us as “unfair” because of their partiality: why did he heal some people, and not all sick people? And, in case of today’s Gospel, why did he raise *this* boy, and not *all* children who, to this day, die before their parents’ eyes? “He had compassion,” Saint Luke says; the boy was the only son of her mother, and she was a widow who would have been left alone, powerless to care for herself in the society of that day and age—so Jesus

had compassion. Well, why *then* and not *now* and *always*? Why did He have compassion on *that* widow mother and not on *all* those in similar circumstances?

Sometimes the Church does not have easy or soothing answers. And that is because the Church is preaching the Gospel, not fairy tales. Part of the Good News is that the Kingdom has *already* come, but *not yet* “in full power.” *Already but not yet!* We are still waiting for the world to be transformed into the image and likeness of the risen Christ; we are still praying, “Thy Kingdom come!”; and our Liturgy is already a foreshadowing, but not yet *that day*.

Miracles are most valuable not in themselves, but as signs pointing to something greater. Christ changed water into wine at the wedding in Cana, and multiplied bread and fish so that five loaves and two fish became the food of thousands. Still, the people who ate of the bread that had been miraculously multiplied eventually became hungry again; the guests at the wedding went back to drinking regular water and wine the next day; and, in today’s Gospel, the son of the widow, like Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, eventually died. Christ did what we call “miracles” drawn by compassion and, in the case of Cana, at the intercession of his mother. And yet, these are only a foreshadowing of the true miracle: the Resurrection of Christ, which opens the door for our resurrection.

Lazarus, the friend of the Lord, as well the young boy from Nain, and each and every one of us who believe and confess Christ, are going to be like He is: “risen”—that is, freed from mortality, so that we no longer die; feasting in the age to come with love and joy that never grow sour and are ever renewed. This is what we confess in the Creed: “I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life *of the world to come!*”

All of this, however, begins here and now. It begins, as—again—the Creed states, with “I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.” Whether baptized as children or coming to the faith later in life, this is our first resurrection, when the grace of God reveals Christ in us: “**Young man, I say to you arise!**” and we start on a journey from this first resurrection—“conversion”, if you wish—to the Resurrection we expect in the age to come. The young man in Nain stands for each one of us.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Today:** memorial for Angeliki Steriopulos.
- **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).
- **Saturday, 11/8: Kibbee Bake Sale!** We do need volunteers to work hard a few hours so as to have the kibbee ready for pick-up by 2pm. For details please see Georgia.
- **Sunday, 11/9: pan-Orthodox Liturgy** (last Sunday before the Nativity Fast) at Sts Peter and Paul.

We will try to “mix-and-match” the music—some Byzantine, some Slavic. To make sure that we truly “make a joyful noise unto the Lord,” all singers—from our three parishes—are asked to rehearse the music that will be sung at the pan-Orthodox Liturgy. We will hold two **choir practices at St. Anthony’s on Saturday, 11/1 and 11/8, 6-7:30.**

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).