

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

14 October 2012

— **Tone 2.** Today we commemorate the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council; Martyrs Nazarius, Gervasius, Protasius, and Celsus, of Milan (1st c.); Hieromartyr Silvanus of Gaza (4th c.); Ven. Paraskevi the New (11th c.).

FIRST ANTIPHON

*It is good to give praise unto the Lord, and to chant unto Thy Name, O Most High! **R.:** 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! Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee: "Alleluia"!

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 2): When Thou didst submit Thyself unto death, O Thou deathless and Immortal One. Then Thou didst destroy hell with Thy Godly power; and when Thou didst raise the dead from beneath the earth, all the powers of Heaven did cry aloud unto Thee: O Christ God, Thou Giver of life, glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF THE HOLY FATHERS (Tone 8): Most glorified art Thou, O Christ our God, who hast established our holy Fathers as luminous stars upon the earth, and through them didst guide us all to the true Faith! O most merciful One: glory be to Thee!

TROPARION OF ST. PARASKEVA (Tone 8): In thee, O Mother, was the Image preserved with exactness; for taking up thy Cross, and following Christ, by thine own example thou didst teach to remember that the flesh passes away, and to attend to the soul, for it is immortal. Therefore, O most venerable Mother Paraskeva, with the angels thy spirit rejoiceth!

Glory ... TROPARION OF SAINT ANTHONY (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 (Tone 4): O 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: *Blessed art thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers.
Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us.*

*The Reading is from the Epistle of Saint Paul to Titus
(Titus 3:8-15)*

Titus, my son, this saying is trustworthy. I want you to insist on these points, that those who have believed in God be careful to devote themselves to good works; these are excellent and beneficial to others. But avoid foolish arguments, genealogies, rivalries, and quarrels about the law, for they are useless and futile. After a first and second warning, break off contact with a factious person, realizing that such a person is perverted and sinful and stands self-condemned. When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, try to join me at Nicopolis, where I have decided to spend the winter. Send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey soon, and see to it that they have everything they need. But let our people, too, learn to devote themselves to good works to supply urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive. All who are with me send you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with all of you!

Whether baptized as children or becoming Orthodox later in life, we are all called to “come to believe” and to entrust ourselves and our whole life to Jesus Christ our Lord, God, and Savior. But we do not come to the Faith in order to be “right,” members in the most correct, most orthodox of Christian churches—as opposed to everyone out there who “doesn’t get it.” This arrogant attitude usually leads one pretty soon to question even the Orthodoxy of the Orthodox; and one starts speaking of “true Orthodox” and arguing about all kind of elements by which “correctness” of faith is to be assessed—the calendar, the dress code of clergy, the length of services, the length of the beards, the type of food used during fasting periods, even some intimate details of family life.

These, Saint Paul writes forcefully, are all “foolish arguments, rivalries, and quarrels about the law”; they are *foolish* because “they are useless and futile.” Instead, we should be focusing on things truly useful, excellent and beneficial to others: let those who have believed in God be careful to devote

themselves to good works ... Let our people learn to devote themselves to good works to supply urgent needs!" God knows that the urgent needs of the broken world around us are not healed by *more* disagreements and *more* bitterness. There are persons who become addicted to constantly arguing one's correctness against the errors of others. Such a person, Saint Paul instructs his disciple, should be confronted and stopped from spreading foolishness; if there is no repentance, "break off contact with the factious person, realizing that he is perverted in himself and sinful and stands self-condemned."

The Church is a training-ground for the Kingdom of Heaven: it is not about proving ourselves right and others wrong, but a training in humility, love, and service to others.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke

(Luke 8:5-15)

The Lord spoke this parable: A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path and was trampled, and the birds of the sky ate it up. Some seed fell on rocky ground, and when it grew, it withered for lack of moisture. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell on good soil, and when it grew, it produced fruit a hundredfold." After saying this, he called out, "Whoever has ears to hear ought to hear." Then his disciples asked him what the meaning of this parable might be. He answered, "Knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God has been granted to you; but to the rest, they are made known through parables so that 'they may look but not see, and hear but not understand.'" This is the meaning of the parable. The seed is the word of God. Those on the path are the ones who have heard, but the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts that they may not believe and be saved. Those on rocky ground are the ones who, when they hear, receive the word with joy, but they have no root; they believe only for a time and fall away in time of trial. As for the seed that fell among thorns, they are the ones who have heard, but as they go along, they are choked by the anxieties and riches and pleasures of life, and they fail to produce mature fruit. But as

for the seed that fell on rich soil, they are the ones who, when they have heard the word, embrace it with a generous and good heart, and bear fruit through perseverance.

This beautiful and famous parable seems, at first sight, to speak of different types of persons: some refuse to hear the Gospel; others hear it but are superficial and lazy; others always seem to put God and their salvation last; and others, again, receive the Gospel like a seed that planted in rich soil, where it continues to grow and to bring forth the fruit of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

But with parables we always have to ask ourselves: where are *we* in this story? If we take the seed that fell on good soil as being about us, we start to look a bit like the Pharisee (“God, I thank you that I’m not like other people!”). And if we identify with one of the other categories, do we mean that we are in a certain type of relation with God and cannot change? Such a theology would be profoundly un-Christian; and would lead to despair.

In fact, the parable of the sower describes a dynamic, ever-changing reality: our heart is like *all* those types of soil—sometimes like barren ground, oblivious to God and our neighbor, sometimes reducing God to some shallow feeling or thought, sometimes too anxious about this or that to be still for God. But the point of the parable is precisely that we are called *to change*, to become good soil for the seed sown by the divine sower.

And change begins here and now. The Word of God is sown during Liturgy, read in the Psalm verses, the Epistle, and the Gospel, preached in the sermon, and tasted in the Eucharist. Today’s reading invites us to become hospitable for the Word of God who is searching for us and searching out our heart.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Sunday: memorial service for Mariana (Ileana Serbanescu's sister) and 1-year memorial for George Botsis.

Q: Is there anyone who can drive to church a student from Slippery Rock?

FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE: please remember that we are collecting non-perishable items (cans, etc), to be donated to the Society of St. Vincent DePaul, which will distribute them directly to the needy persons of Butler. There is a special collection for Thanksgiving.

Ignatius and Amy at St Vladimir's Seminary: Our community has pledged to offer a monthly support of 170 dollars. We have already collected and sent the money for September. Please remember to fulfill your pledge before the end of the month!

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Ed and family, Peter and family, Georgia and Scot, Richard (Michaels), Karen (Joanna's mother), Victoria (Frank's mother), Diane, Sula, Fran, Dollie, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Ignatius and Amy, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka, Jackie (Ed's friend).

DEPARTED: David (Sipos), Edmund (Ed's uncle), Richard, Dolores Patricia (Thompson), Leatrice (Totin), Ed (Joanna's grandfather), Abie, Nicolae (Silviu's father), Joseph (Rose's father), Fred (Dollie's uncle), Bob (Diane's father), Michael, Gabriel, Lance, Nancy (Dunkle), Eugenia (Cristina's godmother).