

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (27 October 2013)

TONE 8 — Martyr Nestor of Thessalonica (ca. 306); Ven. Demetrius the New, in Bucharest (13th 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 ...)

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.

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!

The Reading is 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 management of their earthly resources. Indeed, money is always part of what makes any human institution work; and St. Paul 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.

St. 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 Christian, and especially 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—we should *be cheerful in giving*, as we realize that by giving we are returning to our proper "functioning" as sons and daughters of God.

St. Paul then quotes 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

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke
(Luke 8:41-56)

At that time, there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at Jesus’ feet he besought him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. As he went, the people pressed round him. And a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years and had spent all her living upon physicians and could not be healed by any one, came up behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment; and immediately her flow of blood ceased. And Jesus said, “Who was it that touched me?” When all denied it, Peter and those who were with him said, “Master, the multitudes surround you and press upon you!” But Jesus said, “Some one touched me; for I perceive that power has gone forth from me.” And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well go in peace.” While he was still speaking, a man from the ruler’s house came and said, “Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more.” But Jesus on hearing this answered him, “Do not fear; only believe, and she shall be well.” And when he came to the house, he permitted no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. And all were weeping and bewailing her; but he said, “Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But taking her by the hand he called, saying, “Child, arise.” And her spirit returned, and she got up at once; and he directed that something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed; but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

Today’s Gospel is, clearly, about miracles: a chronic disease that no doctor has been able to cure goes away instantly at a mere brush with the Lord’s garment—even *the fringes* of His garment; a dead child, soon to be taken to the grave, is brought back from death to

life. The rapid and overwhelming succession of these miracles speaks of the divine identity of Christ. It is no less important, however, to consider the other characters in the text: Jairus, the father of the dying child, the woman who comes seeking healing, and the crowd of followers and bystanders. They all represent *me*, who hear the story *today* and who am called to receive the universal Gospel as a word addressed specifically *to me*.

When Christ reaches the house of Jairus, the family is already weeping, crushed by the tragic and untimely death of the child. One of the bystanders suggests that, under the circumstances, Jairus should no longer “trouble the Teacher.” This seems to be a common-sense observation, perhaps even an attempt to help the father deal with the loss, and focus on what needs to be done: accept the reality of his daughter’s death, make sure that a proper burial is performed, organize the funeral meal. A bit later, others are ridiculing “the Teacher” for his “unrealistic” denial of the obvious fact that the child is dead. Similarly, we hear the disciples appealing to good common sense: when the crowd is pressing all around Jesus, who could identify the particular individual who touched Him?

By contrast, Jairus and the woman act with a holy foolishness, deciding, against all common sense, to trust Christ. It is this trust that allows the miracle to occur: “*your faith* has made you well,” Christ tells the woman; “Do not fear, only *believe!*,” he says to Jairus. Indeed, common sense is blind in these instances, because it is paralyzed by fear: fear that we are alone in a hostile world, reduced to surviving, suffering, and “getting over it” in a reality abandoned by God (if there ever was a God).

Today’s Gospel exorcizes this kind of fear. Like Jairus and the suffering woman, we are invited to be bold in “troubling the Teacher,” to approach Him with our open wounds, without fear and with full certainty that the Good News is true: “the Kingdom of God has drawn near!” God has already taken the first step towards us.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: - memorial service for departed family members of Sula Dipento.
- Fr. Bogdan meets with the teenagers of our parish.

Next Sunday (11/3): "Stump the priest!" instead of a sermon.

Sunday 11/10: Panorthodox divine Liturgy at Sts. Peter and Paul and pre-Advent dinner.

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: pr. Joseph, Sam, Richard (Johns), George (Georgiades) and family, Bill, Maura, Georgia and Scot, Karyn, Victoria, Diane, Sula, Dollie, Lawrence, Linda, Barbara, Mike, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Ignatius and Amy, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka, Brooke.

DEPARTED: Mariana, Alex (Julie Smolen’s brother), Connie (Svolos), Hilda, Andy (Michaels), Jeannie (Ferver), David (Sipos), Edmund, Richard, Dolores Patricia (Thompson), Leatrice (Totin), Abie, Nicolae (Silviu’s father), Joseph (Rose’s father), Fred (Dollie’s uncle), Bob (Diane’s father), Eugenia (Cristina’s godmother), Faynasia.