

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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## TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

20 November 2011

*On this day, we celebrate the Forefeast of the Entry into the Temple of the Most-holy Theotokos and we commemorate Martyr Dasius of Durostorum (3rd c.); Martyrs Eustace, Thespesius, and Anatolius of Nicæa (312); Martyrs Azades the Eunuch, Savonius, Thecla, Anna, and many others in Persia (343); St. Proclus, Archbishop of Constantinople (446); Ven. Gregory Decapolites (816).*

**LIVING:** Diane, Abie (Abraham), Sula, Bill, Norm, Fran, Dolores (Sipos), Leatrice (Totin), Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Brian, Justin, Sara, Miguel, Christine, Jeaneen, Lorine, Ignatius and Aimilia, Jonathan and Joanna.

**DEPARTED:** Gabriel, priest James, George (Botsis), Eduard, Lance, Nancy, Petruța, Peter, Michael, William, Mariana, James, Mary Ann, Michael.

## 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.:) Save, O Son of God Who art risen from the dead, 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 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 FOREFEAST (tone 4): Today holy Anna doth betroth us all unto joy instead of our former grief, by blossoming forth the only Ever-virgin as fruit. Today she doth fulfill her vows to the Most High, leading with joy into the Lord's holy temple the tone who truly is the true Temple and pure Mother of God the Word.

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.

KONTAKION FOR THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS (Tone 4): The all-pure temple of the Savior, the most precious bridal-chamber and Virgin, the treasure-house of the glory of God, today entered the Temple of the Lord, bringing with her the grace which is in the divine Spirit: whom also the angels of God do celebrate in song; for she is the heavenly tabernacle.

## TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon:

*O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.  
To Thee, O Lord, have I cried, O my God!*

*The Reading is from the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Ephesians  
(Eph 2:4-10)*

**Brethren:** God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, brought us to life with Christ (by grace you have been saved!), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved, through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

This Sunday's Gospel brings us the story of the foolish rich man, who lost his soul by failing to care for poor Lazarus. Quite fittingly, the Apostle reading also speaks of riches: this time, however, we hear of *God's* way of being rich. Indeed, we hear that our God is "rich," that He holds "immeasurable riches." Yet, God is immeasurably rich *in mercy*; His immeasurable riches are matched by His immeasurable generosity and by "the great love with which He loved us." As we hear at Confession: "Just as Your greatness is beyond compare, so also is Your mercy without limit."

God's way of being rich is the exact opposite of petty and calculated exchange. He does not balance a budget of give-and-take; rather, "**out of His great love with which He loved us,**" He squandered His trust on us "**even when we were dead through our trespasses.**" He did not share His glory only with the angels: He came to us—creatures "dead in our sins, "following the spirit of disobedience," "children of wrath" (read Eph 2:1-3, the verses right before our passage)—and He took us and "seated us with Him in the heavenly places." Unlike the rich man in today's Gospel, God squanders His

riches on a humanity that is so often sick, disgusting, and as good as dead, dresses us in the garment of glory, seats us at His rich-laden table, and feeds us the food of immortality. Think of what we experience in the Eucharist!

All of the above, of course, happens “in Christ.” It is, in other words, not the fruit of our goodness, but the gift of God’s generosity; not of our own making, but the Maker’s grace of re-creating us “in Christ.” What, then, is our part? Saint Paul leaves us with a stunning answer: our part is simply (although it is not simple at all!) *not to miss* the many opportunities to perform the good works that God has prepared beforehand. Even our good works are laid before us as a gift, meeting us with every new day: our duty is not to avoid “walking in them.”

## TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

*The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke*

(Luke 12:16-21).

The Lord spoke this parable: “The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” As He said this, Jesus called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

The man in today’s Gospel receives a very harsh verdict from God: “you *fool!*” What was so foolish in what he had done? The land had given him good crops—a blessing, something to be happy and thankful about! The man had started to plan an expansion of his storage facilities, so as to be ready for the abundant crop. This, too, is a good thing; it would have been foolish *not* to have acted in this way. So far, the man should be praised, not called a fool.

In fact, the parable does not say that God objected to any of the good and reasonable things the man did. There is something else, however, that is “foolish.” The man seems to have measured his calling as a human being with

only one measure: wealth. He says, **“Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry!”**

This is foolish: to think that one’s “soul”, one’s deepest longing, can be satisfied with grains or gold or eating and drinking. It is foolish, first, because we are “wired” in such a way that the meaning of who we are is found in God. We are made “after the image of God”—that is, in relation to a godly prototype; and God has placed in us the thirst for eternity. No amount of earthly goods can fill our deep longing; and looking for all kinds of substitutes for God only leads to a pathological craving and abuse of wealth, power, and pleasure. It is foolish.

“God” is not confined to “religion”; He is, rather, present in all aspects of our lives. One sure way to experience God is by extending ourselves to our neighbor. Here we see that the man acted foolishly because he completely left out his fellow humans. **“Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years”** suggests that wealth was to him a matter of *him* enjoying *his* little fortune. But don’t we know that the tastiest meal is a *shared* meal? The Gospel hints at another possible use of wealth when it says **“This night your soul is required of you. Now, the things you have prepared, whose will they be?”**

If the man had included his neighbor in his elaborate management plan, wealth would have become an asset. Whatever is shared enriches our soul—and it is our soul, our heart, that stands before the Lord in judgment.

We hear this Gospel today, on the first Sunday of the Nativity Fast. It is a reminder that fasting cannot be divorced from opening ourselves up for God and for our neighbor. To fast without seeking God is to completely miss the point. Let’s not be foolish!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Tuesday, Nov. 29, 7:30 pm, at Perkins:** Bible Study in Cranberry. We are planning to meet once a month.

**Wed, Nov. 30, 10 am:** Divine Liturgy at St Andrew's (OCA) for the feast of Saint Andrew, the first-called apostle of the Lord.

**Sunday, Jan. 15:** The nuns of Holy Transfiguration Monastery have confirmed that they will join us for the celebration of our patron saint, Anthony the Great, the father of monasticism. In light of last year's experience, we should think about the type of hospitality we want and are able to extend to the nuns as well to our brothers and sisters from the other two Orthodox parishes.