

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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## TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

23 November 2014

*TONE 7 —Afterfeast of the Entry Into the Temple; Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium (394); Gregory, Bishop of Agrigentum (6th-7th c.); Martyr Sisinius, Bishop of Cyzicus (3rd c.); Martyr Theodore of Antioch (4th c.).*

### FIRST ANTIPHON

*Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised: in the city of our God and in His holy mountain.*

**(R.:)** *Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!*

*Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. (R.:)*

*God is known in her palaces for a refuge. As we have heard, so have we seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God. (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.:)** *Son of God, Who art risen from the dead: save us who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!*

*The Most High hath sanctified His tabernacle. Holiness and majesty are in His sanctuary. (R.:)*

*This is the gate of the Lord, by which the righteous shall enter. (R.:)*

*Holy is Thy temple, and wonderful in righteousness. (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"!*

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 7): Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world great mercy.

TROPARION FOR THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS IN THE TEMPLE (Tone 4): Today the Virgin is the foreshadowing of the pleasure of God, and the beginning of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. Thou hast appeared in the Temple of God openly and hast gone before, preaching Christ to all. Let us shout with one thrilling voice, saying, Rejoice, O thou who art the fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation.

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 FOR THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS IN THE TEMPLE (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 enters 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: *The Lord will give strength to his people.*  
*Ascribe to the Lord, O sons of God, ascribe to the Lord honor and glory.*

### *From the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Ephesians*

(Ephesians 2:14-22) **Brethren: Christ is our peace, He who made both groups one and broke down the dividing wall of enmity, through His flesh, abolishing the Law with its commandments and legal claims, in order to create in Himself one new person in place of the two, thus establishing peace, and to reconcile both with God, in one body, through the cross, putting that enmity to death by it. He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone. Through Him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord; in Him you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.**

The two groups that are mentioned in this text are the people of Israel and the Gentiles. For the longest time God had been erecting a fence around Israel, to keep them as his "treasured possession" (Exod 19:5), as the people chosen to know God and bear witness to him before all the families of the earth. With the advent of Christ, however, the dividing wall is abolished, and both groups are joined into the One Church: both Jews and Gentiles, all those who confess that God has visited His people, becoming flesh for our sake. Saint Paul does not insist on the newness that this tearing down of the wall brought *to Israel*; since he is writing to a community of Gentile Christians in Asia Minor, his message is tailored primarily *for us*, former pagans.

We were "far off" from God, and are given most intimate "access to the Father"; we were "strangers and sojourners," and are now counted as "fellow citizens with the holy ones." In short, we have been taken in, adopted into Israel, and God no longer differentiates between Israel, his first born, and the Gentiles: as long as any Jews or Gentiles are "in Christ," they are equally part of the people of God.

Of course, the gate of Baptism through which one enters "in one Spirit" into the new reality of the One Church, is merely the beginning. Our calling is to become "a temple sacred in the Lord," to "grow

into a dwelling place of God.” In other words, Jews and Gentiles alike are called to be, individually, what the ancient Temple was: a receptacle and abode of the divine Glory; called to be, individually, what the Theotokos is: a Christ-bearer; or, like the bread and the wine that we bring to the altar, called to be transformed by the Holy Spirit, Who does not shy away from descending upon us and our gifts.

## 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.

Since we are now struggling to keep the Nativity, today's Gospel reading 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 us not be foolish!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Next Sunday, 30 November: Divine Liturgy** at St. Andrew Orthodox Church, to celebrate the Holy Apostle and Evangelist Andrew.

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**Next Saturday, 29 November, 5:15pm: Reading Group (at Church), followed by Vespers.**



We are starting a series of meeting to discuss texts of Orthodox spirituality. We begin with five short essays by Mother Maria Skobtsova (+1944), one of the most recently canonized saints of the Church. Please see Cristina for these texts.

The next meetings will be hosted on Wednesday evenings by Frank and Stacey Harrison at their house in Cranberry. This is wonderful opportunity to gather for soup and salad and fellowship at 6:15, and then move on with study and discussion until 8pm (since the next day is a school day...).

- **Wednesday, December 3, 6:15-8pm: Fellowship and Study Group in Cranberry**
  - **Wednesday, December 17, 6:15-8 pm: Fellowship and Study Group in Cranberry**
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### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24:

- **9am:** service of Royal Hours of Nativity
- **6pm:** Vespers Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil, followed by parish potluck

### *Remember in your prayers*

**LIVING:** Bill and Ann, Ron, 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 (and newborn Judson), 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).