

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

[www.orthodoxbutler.org](http://www.orthodoxbutler.org)

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

RECTOR: Rev. Bogdan Gabriel Bucur

CONTACT: 724-287-6893 (church); 412.390.8208 (priest);

[frbogdan@orthodoxbutler.org](mailto:frbogdan@orthodoxbutler.org)

## TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

25 November 2012

— TONE 8. Leavetaking of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple; Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria (303); Mercurius the Great, martyr of Caesarea in Cappadocia (260); Hieromartyr Clement, Pope of Rome (101); Hieromartyr Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria (311); Clement, Bishop of Ochrid and Enlightener of the Bulgarians (916).

### 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; God is known in her palaces for a refuge. (R.):*

*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 Most High hath sanctified His tabernacle. Holiness and majesty are in His sanctuary. (R.):* O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead: save us who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!

*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 ...)*

## THIRD ANTIPHON

TROPARION OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE (Tone 4)



To-day is the pre-lude of God's good will and the he-rald-ing of the sal-va-tion of man-kind.



In the tem - ple of God, the Vir - gin is pre - sent - ed o - pen - ly,



and she pro - clai - meth Christ un - to all.



To her, then, with a great voice let us cry a-loud: "Re-joice, O thou ful-fill-ment of the Cre-a-tor's

## 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 RESURRECTION (Tone 8): From the heights Thou didst descend, O compassionate One; and Thou didst submit to the three-day burial, that Thou mightest deliver us from passions. Thou art our Life and our Resurrection, O Lord: glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS (Tone 4): See above

*Gloria ...* 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 OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS (Tone 4): The sacred treasury of God's holy glory, the greatly precious bridal chamber and Virgin, the Savior's most pure temple, free of stain and undefiled, into the House of the Lord on this day is brought forward and bringeth with herself the grace of the most divine Spirit; her do God's angels hymn with songs of praise, for she is truly the heavenly tabernacle!

## TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *God is wondrous in His saints. In the churches bless ye God!*

*The Reading is from the Epistle to the Galatians*

(Gal 3:23-4:5)

Brethren before faith came, we were preserved under the Law, enclosed within, until the faith would afterward be revealed. The Law then was our tutor leading us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is no male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise. Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ much from the bond-servant, though he is lord of all; but he is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world: But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order to redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Today's reading from the Apostle Paul does not belong to the sequence of Epistle readings appointed on Sundays of the Advent. This is a special Epistle reading in honor of the saint we commemorate today—the holy martyr Catherine.

Nevertheless, this passage from the Epistle to the Galatians ends with a sentence that couldn't be more relevant for our Advent journey: **“when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman ... in order that we might receive the adoption as sons.”** God did not send us an extra-terrestrial, an angel, or some heavenly spirit—he sent *his Son*: his very own Word, the very Light of his glory, the very light of his Face. Neither did He come in the fullness of His glory: He came to be **born of a woman**. A real human baby, nourished on his mother's milk; one of us.

And, surely, God became one of us not because *He* needed it; rather **“in order that we might receive the adoption as sons.”** Now, this adoption as sons had, for the first Christians, a very concrete, even “technical” meaning: adoption into the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, grafting into the olive tree of Israel. To be “sons of God” means, in the Bible, to be part of the covenant—the binding mutual agreement—between God and Israel. And with the advent of the Messiah,

the Christ, even the Gentiles were invited in, and made “sons.” In the words of the Apostle, **if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, heirs according to promise.**

We will hear more on this topic in the Advent Sundays to come, as the Church recalls the ancestors of Christ according to flesh.

## TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

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

(Luke 18:18-27)

At that time, a man came testing Jesus and asking, “Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Honor your father and mother.’” And the man said, “All these I have observed from my youth.” And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when the man heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. Jesus, seeing him sad, said, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?” Jesus said, “What is impossible for human beings is possible for God.”

Here is a man who, by any standards of human morality, is a pretty decent person: he does not cheat on his wife, he behaves well with his parents, he does not steal, he does not slander or bring false accusations against others, and he did and most likely never will kill anyone. We can assume that there many other good things to be reported about him. For one, he is a deeply religious person (his concern here is “how to inherit eternal life”), who shows appropriate respect for teachers of the Law (note how politely he addresses Jesus); and there probably are many vices that he has managed to avoid. Moreover, he’s acted like that “since his youth”! A decent person, whom we would do well to emulate.

And yet, even while we recite the litany of this man’s qualities, the Gospel seems to sets him forth as an example of *what to avoid*. The word this man receives from Christ comes as a hard blow to his self-esteem: what he has been doing is far from enough, and what he needs to do is impossibly hard for him. A

very depressing answer, indeed, because Jesus puts his finger on a raw nerve: this man was very rich (and liked it), and he would have to give everything up. “The man heard this he became sad, for he was very rich.”

Had the man not been terribly attached to money, but instead sexually promiscuous, the answer would probably been different; perhaps something like “One thing you still lack. Cut out your promiscuity, start living in chastity as of right now, and you will have treasure in heaven.” And the man would have become sad, imagining himself unable to remain faithful to a single woman (chastity in marriage) or faithful to a vow of abstinence (as in monastic chastity). Had he been under the control of vanity, Jesus would have proposed the practice of humility; had he been plagued by anger or violence, the answer would have pointed to *that* problem, and proposed the appropriate spiritual medicine.

In short, the Gospel is not about a particular rich man unwilling to part with his riches; and it is not singling out riches as the major impediment to salvation. In truth, the Gospel applies to each and every one of us. There is no “objective” scale of sins, and no “objective” greatest sin: the greatest sin is always *my* sin. And the word of Christ is not easy to swallow: “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for *you* to enter the kingdom of God.” When Jesus spoke these words to the rich man, those around him were positively shocked: “In this case, who can be saved?” Obviously, nobody; it is, as the Lord states, “impossible for human beings.”

Before speaking to the rich man about his salvation, the Lord points to the goodness of God: “No one is good but God alone!” We should therefore not react like the rich man, who became sad and preferred to leave as soon as he realized that God was not offering him a confirmation of his decent life, but a call to radical change. Note the encouragement: the very impossibility of our salvation and life in God is made possible for us by God himself. The call of today’s Gospel is echoed by our Liturgy, again and again: “let us commit ourselves and all our life to Christ our God ... for You are a good God and You love humankind”! In other words, deny yourself and your sins, entrust yourself to Christ, allow Him to clothe you with His grace (for details, see today’s Apostle reading), allow Him to make possible that which is impossible.

The Nativity of Christ for which we have started our preparations is the joyous event of the beginning of our salvation: the Virgin prepares to give birth, the Son of God prepares to become one of us, our salvation draws near.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next Sunday, December 1, from 1-3pm: Intro to Orthodoxy



*“Make ready, O Bethlehem,  
for Eden has been opened for all!”*

LEARNING THEOLOGY  
FROM THE ANCIENT HYMNS

**Sunday, 2 December 2012, 1-3pm.**

Audio-video presentation followed by Q&A.

**Pledges for our seminarian:** If you have pledged your monthly support for Ignatius and Amy at St Vladimir’s Seminary, please remember to fulfill your pledge this Sunday or the next. We are sending the money next Sunday after Liturgy.

*Remember in your prayers*

LIVING: Bill, Fran, Sula, Ed and family, Peter and family, Georgia and Scot, Richard (Michaels), Karen (Joanna’s mother), Victoria (Frank’s mother), Diane, Dollie, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Ignatius and Amy, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka, Jackie (Ed’s friend), Leah, Donald, Gregory, Daniel, Nicole, Kera, Julie, Christina, Dustin, Nathan, John, Ryan and Jeremy, Benjamin.

DEPARTED: Lance, 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, Eugenia (Cristina’s godmother).