

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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

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## TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

11 December 2011

*On this day, we commemorate the Ven. Daniel the Stylite of Constantinople (489); Ven. Luke the New Stylite of Chalcedon (ca. 970-980); Martyrs Mirax, Acepsius and Aithalas, of Egypt (7th 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.):* 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 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. For which cause 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 THE FOREFATHERS (Tone 2): Thou hast justified by faith the ancient forefathers, and through them Thou hast gone before and betrothed unto Thyself the Church of the Gentiles. Let the saints, therefore, take pride in glory; for from their seed sprouted forth a noble fruit, and she it was who gave birth to Thee without seed. Wherefore, by their pleadings, O Christ God, save our souls!

*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 FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE NATIVITY (Tone 3): The Virgin cometh today to the cave to give birth, ineffably to bring forth the Word eternal. Therefore, rejoice, O world, at the message; with the angels and shepherds, give glory to Him Who shall appear by His own will as a young child—He Who is from eternity God.

### PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

**LIVING:** Bishop John (Abdallah), Abie (Abraham), Victoria (Frank's mother), Diane, Sula, Bill, Norm, Fran, Dolores (Sipos), Leatrice (Totin), Ed, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Brian, Justin, Sara, Miguel, Christine, Jeaneen, Lorine, Ignatius and Amy, Jonathan and Joanna.

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

## TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers.  
For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done to us!*

*The Reading is from the Epistle to the Colossians*  
(Col 3:4-11)

**Brethren:** when Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away; anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian and Scythian, slave and free man, but Christ is all and in all.

Today's Epistle speaks about cutting out anger, malice, lies, slander, foul talk, all manner of sexual impurity, and greed. It is important, however, to note that "basic Christian morality" is not simply about doing certain things and abstaining from others. If we avoid cursing, lying, and slandering, it is not merely because they are "not nice" or "bad for society." (Note also that covetousness—greed—is *a form of idolatry!* Recall Matt 6:24 -- one can serve only one master, God or mammon, but not both).

Christian morality is not about keeping a certain set of rules, but about exercising here and now "the life of the age to come" (the last item we confess in the Creed). The life of the age to come is, in fact, communion with Christ Himself. That is why, being with Christ in the age to come is possible only if we practice living "in Christ" *in this age*. Note the wording of the Apostle: "**when Christ *who is our life* appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.**" In other words, when Christ appears in glory, either He will be the very content of our lives, or we will find ourselves outside of the life of the Kingdom. It is for this reason that our day-to-day existence matters tremendously: either we struggle to make Christ's life our own, anticipating

the full glory of the Kingdom to come, or we are increasingly sabotaging our chances in the age to come.

Our life in Christ is a return to true humanity. With his becoming man (as we celebrate at Christmas), the Word of God has taken on our human nature and healed it. What is more, this renewed humanity is not His personal privilege, but a gift He shares with us: “**Christ *in all!***” Christian morality means, therefore, to give ourselves and all our live to Him, “trading in,” as it were, our fallen humanity for the life of the “new Adam.” In the words of the Apostle, “**put off the old nature with its practices** (anger, malice, lies, slander, foul talk, sexual impurity, etc) **and put on the new nature renewed after the image of the Creator.**”

## TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

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

(Luke 14:16-24)

Then Jesus said to him, “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.’ Another said, ‘I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.’ So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’ And the slave said, ‘Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.’ Then the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, ‘none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.’”

The Church uses the image of a rich banquet, with food and drink and much rejoicing, to convey God’s generous call addressed to all of us. As we hear on Pascha night: *Rejoice today for the Table is richly laden! Feast royally on it, the calf is a fatted one. Let no one go away hungry. Partake, all, of the cup of*

*faith. Enjoy all the riches of His goodness!* Let us recapitulate: a “great dinner” is organized; the dinner is free; “everything is ready,” we hear; “many” are invited (and it turns out, in the end, that *everyone* is invited).

The parable also portrays the petty excuses that humanity makes when receiving this call. By contrast with the greatness of the person organizing the banquet (Matthew 22 speaks of a king and a kingly banquet!), the magnitude of the celebration, and the attention devoted to sending out the invitations you, the response is embarrassing. People make their excuses arguing (unconvincingly) that they have to attend to various less pressing and much less important duties.

In its original context, those who first receive the invitation represent the people of Israel; the second group—the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame—to whom the call goes out afterwards, are the nations, the pagans. In the life of the Church, however, the parable also speaks about the ongoing practice of receiving God in our lives, individually, by responding to the invitation to join the banquet of the Church. *With fear of God, with faith and love, draw near!*

How do we respond to such an invitation? If we did take the first step, some of us by our baptism as children, others by joining the Orthodox Church later in life, how do we live out this fellowship with Christ? A Christian life (“putting off the old nature with its practices, and putting on the new nature,” as today’s Epistle says) is not easy, the journey is hard, the world is full of snares, and we are flawed creatures. And yet, we draw strength by reminding ourselves that we are at the Lord’s Table, called by a good and generous Lord to share in the light of His goodness. *Christ is among us! He is and ever shall be!*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Sunday, Jan. 15:** The nuns of Holy Transfiguration Monastery will join us for the celebration of our patron saint, Anthony the Great, the father of monasticism. We will also extend hospitality to our brothers and sisters from the other two Orthodox parishes. Note that the nuns do not eat meat (but everyone else *does*)!

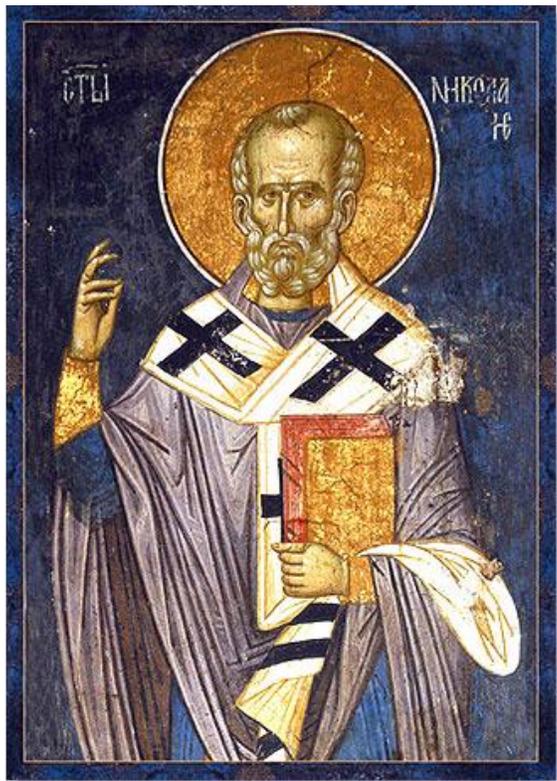
**Nativity services:** we will celebrate Christmas on Saturday evening, with Matins and Divine Liturgy, with Christmas party following.

SAT, 12/24, 5PM – Nativity Matins and Liturgy, followed by Potluck Dinner  
SUN, 12/25: no service (since Liturgy is celebrated on Saturday evening)

SAT, 12/31: No Vespers!

SUN, 1/1: No Matins! Divine Liturgy and blessing of the civil new year, 10 am.

THURSDAY, 5 January, 7pm: Vespereal Liturgy for the feast of Theophany.



As all of us, children and adults, remember Saint Nicholas, let us also try to emulate his deeds.

- **FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE:** 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. Please give with a generous heart, remembering St. John Chrysostom's powerful word: **"Feeding the hungry is a greater work than raising the dead"**!