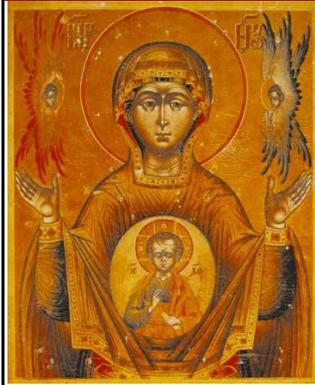


SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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SUNDAY OF ANNUNCIATION

25 March 2012 — *Tone 8*

FIRST ANTIPHON

Give the King Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the King's Son. (R.: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

Tell forth from day to day the glad tidings of the salvation of our God. (R.:

The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, and will not turn from it: "One of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." (R.:

Glory... Now and ever... (R.:

SECOND ANTIPHON

He shall come down as rain upon the fleece: and as the dew which falls upon the earth. (R.: O Son of God, Who art incarnate of the Virgin, save us who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!

The Most High hath sanctified His tabernacle; our God shall plainly come, and shall not keep silence. (R.:

In His days righteousness shall shine forth: and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. (R.:

Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

His Name shall be blessed forever: His Name shall continue longer than the sun. TROPARION OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who does wondrous things; blessed be His glorious Name unto the ages of ages!

TROPARION OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Glory ... Now and ever...

TROPARION OF THE ANNUNCIATION

LITTLE ENTRANCE

Tell forth from day to day the glad tidings of the salvation of our God!

*O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead,
save us 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 might deliver us from passion. Thou art our Life and our Resurrection: O Lord, glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF THE ANNUNCIATION (Tone 4): Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the manifestation of the mystery from the ages; for the Son of God becometh the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaimeth grace. Therefore we shout with him to the Theotokos: "Rejoice, O full of grace! The Lord is with thee!"

KONTAKION OF THE ANNUNCIATION (Tone 8): To thee the champion leader, I thy servant offer thanks for victory, O Theotokos, thou who hast delivered me from terror. As thou hast power invincible, free me from every danger, that I may cry unto thee: Rejoice, O Bride without bridegroom!

Special Hymn to the Theotokos

Receive, O earth, the glad tidings of great joy, and ye heavens, praise the glory of God!

(Tone 4): The Theotokos, being the living tabernacle of God, shall never be touched by an unclean hand. But the lips of believers shall sing unto her ceaselessly with the voice of angels, crying joyfully: "Rejoice, O full of grace. The Lord is with thee!"

Special Koinonikon (Communion Hymn)

The Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath chosen it for His dwelling. Alleluia!

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *My soul doth magnify the Lord.
For he hath regarded the humiliation of his handmaid.*

The Reading is from the Epistle to the Hebrews
(Heb 2:11-18)

Brethren: He Who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I will proclaim Thy Name to my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee." And again, "I will put my trust in Him." And again, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." Since, therefore, the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. For surely it is not with angels that He is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because He Himself has suffered and been tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted.

Last Sunday we heard the wonderful, encouraging words about our Jesus, our High Priest: **We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.**

Today we hear more about how our God also came to be our brother. The Apostle explicitly says that God is concerned not with angels, but with us, descendants of Abraham, because it is not the angels, but we who are groaning in bondage to sin and mortality. Therefore, God was made flesh of our flesh, and tasted our suffering and death. As we hear today, **“He is not ashamed to call us brothers.”** Not as an alien, but as truly our brother, he came to fight on our behalf: **He Himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.**

As we journey through Lent, the liturgical time that so well concentrates our life’s journey of crucifixion and resurrection, our High Priest also travels with us, to strengthen and correct us in our failings: **Because He Himself has suffered and been tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted.**

TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke

(Lk 1:24-38)

At that time, Elizabeth, the wife of Zachariah, conceived, and for five months she hid herself, saying, “Thus the Lord has done to me in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.” In the sixth month the archangel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the archangel came to her and said, “Rejoice, O favored one, the Lord is with thee! Blessed art thou among women!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the archangel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou wilt conceive in thy womb and bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord

God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the archangel, “How shall this be, since I have known no man?” And the archangel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon thee, and the power of the Most High will overshadow thee; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the archangel departed from her.

The Annunciation—the celebration of the Archangel’s announcing the Good News to the Virgin Mary—is a bright feast: it marks, as the festal hymn says, “the beginning of our salvation”! How so? Let us examine the hymn.

Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the manifestation of the mystery from the ages; for the Son of God becometh the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaimeth grace. Therefore we shout with him to the Theotokos: “Rejoice, O full of grace! The Lord is with thee!”

The Annunciation is the beginning of our salvation because it is at the Annunciation that “the Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin.” In other words, it is now that the God takes on the flesh of our humanity. Conversely, at the Annunciation the sons of Adam are once again called to be sons of God. Indeed, the seed of the restored humanity are planted at the Annunciation, because it is now that our humanity, through the Virgin, becomes a “God-bearer.”

The Archangel proclaims the great work of grace that occurs in the Virgin. His words addressed to the Theotokos are also our words to her (“we shout with him”): Rejoice, O Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee!”

The Annunciation is, like everything in Church, also about us, individually. The Virgin’s free choice of submitting to God—“Let it be to me according to your word”—are the pattern that we are, individually, called to reproduce ourselves. The words of the archangel, “Rejoice! The Lord is with you!” are also spoken to us (just remember that the angels brought the same Good New to the shepherds in Bethlehem!).

So, when is the beginning of *my* salvation? When I finally accept that God is speaking to *me*; when I finally accept that “God came into this world to save sinners, of whom *I* am first”; when I believe that “nothing is impossible with God,” not even saving me. When? The hymn urges us not to delay, not to postpone, not to procrastinate the beginning of journey home.

“*Today* is the beginning of our salvation!”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuesday, 27 March, 9:30am: Funeral service for Abie Abraham

Saturday, 31 March: Vespers (6:30 pm)

Sunday, 1 April: Matins (9:15), Divine Liturgy (10:00)

Special parish meeting to approving a new Constitution and elect a new parish council.

WED 3/28, 6pm: Presanctified Liturgy at [*St. Anthony*]

TH 3/29, 6pm Canon of Repentance [*St. Andrew*]

WED 4/4, 6pm: Presanctified Liturgy [*Sts Peter and Paul*]

Bishop’s Visit: April 21/22 (“Thomas Sunday”!)

LIVING: Chris, Bill, Jennifer, Karen (Joanna’s mother), Victoria (Frank’s mother), Diane, Sula, Fran, Dolores (Sipos), Leatrice, Ed, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Brian, Justin, Sara, Lorine, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka.

DEPARTED: Abie, Nicolae, Joseph, Fred, Bob, George, Michael, priest James, Gabriel, Eduard, Lance, Nancy.