

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



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## Sunday of the Fathers at the First Ecumenical Council 27 May 2012

*TONE 6. Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council; Hieromartyr Therapon, Bishop of Sardis (3rd c.); Virgin Martyr Theodora and Martyr Didymus the Soldier, of Alexandria (304); St. John the Russian, the Confessor (1730).*

### FIRST ANTIPHON

*Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with songs of rejoicing! (R.:)*  
Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!  
*For the Lord, the Most High, is awesome, a great king over all the earth! (R.:)*  
*Glory... Now and ever... (R.:)*

### SECOND ANTIPHON

*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain! (R.:)* O Son of God, Who didst ascend in glory from us to heaven,  
save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!  
*God is known in her palaces, when He undertakes to help her. (R.:)*  
*For behold, the kings of the earth assembled, they came together. (R.:)*  
*Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son ...)*

## THIRD ANTIPHON

TROPARION OF ASCENSION (see below) with the following verses:

*Hear these words, all you nations; give ear, all you that dwell upon the earth. My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall bring forth understanding.*

*I will incline my ear to a parable, I will open my riddle on the harp.*

## AT THE LITTLE ENTRANCE

**Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!**

TROPARION OF 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 ASCENSION (Tone 4): Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and gladdened Thy Disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit, having become confident of the blessing. Verily, Thou art the Son of God, and Deliverer of the world.

TROPARION OF THE HOLY FATHERS (Tone 8): Thou, O Christ, art our God of exceeding praise Who didst establish our holy Fathers as luminous stars upon earth, and through them didst guide us unto the true Faith, O most merciful One, glory to Thee.

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 OF THE ASCENSION (Tone 6): When Thou hadst fulfilled the dispensation for our sake, and united earth to heaven, Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God! In no way wast Thou parted from those who love Thee, but Thou didst remain with them, saying: "I am with you and no one will be against you!"

## TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers.  
Thou art just in all Thou hast done.*

*The Reading is from the Acts of the Apostles*

(Acts 20:16-18, 28-36)

In those days, Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. And when they came to him, he said to them: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" And when he had spoken thus, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

We are hearing today the words Saint Paul addressed to "the elders of the church": words of advice from one who knew the crucial importance of the ministry of a priest or bishop. "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son.

Obviously, the job of the "overseer" is not simply one of administration! Saint Paul speaks of the *Holy Spirit* assigning certain individuals to that ministry. Nor is the community ("the flock") simply an association of pious individuals: The very existence of the Church is the work of God, who has

established it “with the blood of His own Son.” Consequently, this flock is a community of people who have responded to God’s call, deciding to become collaborators with Christ, allowing Him to complete His work of salvation in them.

Finally, the Christian life is nothing but the continuation of Christ’s life in us and among us. This is not only a matter of fidelity to some lofty ideal, but the way to make life truly beautiful and meaningful; in short, one who practices generosity, forgiveness, and love is the first to benefit from it: **It is more blessed to give than to receive!**

The words of Jesus Christ about the joy of giving are not recorded in the Gospels; Saint Paul must have learned them from the first eye-witnesses of the Lord. He quotes them not as something new and unknown, but as a saying that was quite familiar to the Christians in Ephesus. Let it become a saying familiar to us as well: if we are living as brothers and sisters, taking care of each other, in turn forgiving and asking forgiveness, comforting and being comforted, it is because, as our Master said, **“You’re far happier giving than getting!”**

## TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

*The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint John*  
(John 17:1-13)

At that time, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son that the Son may glorify Thee, since Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him. And this is eternal life, that they know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent. I glorified Thee on earth, having accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do; and now, Father, glorify Thou Me in Thy own presence with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was made. I have manifested Thy Name to those whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept Thy word. Now they know that everything that Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from Thee; and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom Thou hast given Me, for they

are Thine; all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name, which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one. While I was with them, I kept them in Thy Name, which Thou have given Me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.”

By ascending to heaven, Christ reenters the glory of God. As the Church proclaims in singing “O Son of God, Who didst ascend into glory from us to heaven, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!” Yet, there is nothing new or extraordinary in the fact that the Son should share the glory of the Father, because He took on human being without forsaking His divinity, and He is now returning, as the Gospel says, “**to the glory which I had with Thee before the world was made.**”

The new and extraordinary reality is that the One who ascends is fully human, not only God. He takes into the presence of God—into God’s very glory—the humanity He shares with us. As such, He truly is our representative, our forerunner, going to prepare a room for us in the Kingdom of our Father: “**If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to Myself, so that where I am you also may be**” (Jn 14:2-3).

In the meantime, however, we are on earth while He is in heaven. It feels, as it felt for the Apostles, as though we are orphaned, or widowed, or left behind by our closest friend. The Lord knew this well, and His prayer to the Father is precisely for us: **And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name.** And to His disciples and to us, He spoke these words of reassurance: “**I will not leave you orphans**” (John 14:18).

We see this fulfilled at Pentecost. For now, let us note that “being kept in God’s Name” (that is, abiding in the presence of God) is measured by a very visible and concrete indicator. **Father, keep them in Thy Name *that they may be one, even as We are one.*** In other words, we abide in God to the extent to which we, the Church, mirror the unity of love that constitutes the very glory shared by the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Today:** Jonathan and Joanna invite the parish to a celebration of their marriage.

**Next Sunday, 3 June:** meeting of the parish council.

**GET YOUR PICTURE TAKEN FOR THE NEW DIRECTORY!** Susannah Harrison will be setting up a screen and take pictures (individually or entire families) for our new parish directory. Please see her after Liturgy. And smile, and “cheeeese!”

**Saturday evening, June 9: “Saints and Sinners”** Ignatius and Amy will start a video-based presentation of important and influential figures in the life of the Church. We will learn about people such as St. John Maximovich, the bishop and wonderworker of San Francisco, who died recently in 1966; Saint Anthony the Great, our patron saint; Saint Athanasius, the archbishop of Alexandria during the time of St Anthony; and Arius, the heretic whose theology denied the very evidence of St Anthony’s saintly life.

**Parish picnic:** We have received an invitation from Chris Abraham (Abie’s widow) to again have out picnic on their beautiful property. Possible dates: 1 July, 29 July, 19 August.

### *Remember in your prayers*

**LIVING:** John (Smolen), Richard (Michaels), Sam, Bill, Jennifer, Karen (Joanna’s mother), Victoria (Frank’s mother), Diane, Sula, Fran, Dolores (Sipos), Leatrice (Totin), Ed, Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Brian, Justin, Sara, Lorine, Stella, Ignatius and Amy, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei and Nyoka.

**DEPARTED:** Ed (Joanna’s grandfather), Tillie, Helen, Abie, Nicolae (Silviu’s father), Joseph (Rose’s father), Fred (Dollie’s uncle), Bob (Diane’s father), George (Botsis), Michael, priest James, Gabriel, Eduard, Lance, Nancy.