

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

www.orthodoxbutler.org

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Sunday, 5 September 2010

TROPARION OF THE 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 didst lead hell captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin, and didst give life to the world. Thou who art risen from the dead: O Lord, glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF THE HOLY PROPHET ZECHARIAH, Tone 4: In the vesture of a priest, according to the law of God, thou didst offer unto Him well-pleasing whole-burnt offerings, as it befitted a priest, O wise Zachariah. Thou wast a shining light, a seer of mysteries, bearing in thyself clearly the signs of grace; and in God's temple, O wise Prophet of Christ God, thou wast slain with the sword. Hence, with the Forerunner, make entreaty that our souls find salvation.

TROPARION OF ST. 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 AT THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS, Tone 4: By thy holy birth-giving, O pure one, Joachim and Anna were delivered from the reproach of barrenness; and Adam and Eve were delivered from the corruption of death; thy people doth celebrate it, having been saved from the stain of iniquity, crying unto thee: "the barren doth give birth to the Theotokos, who nourisheth our life!"

Saints we commemorate today: the Prophet Zechariah and the righteous Elizabeth, the parents of the Saint John the Baptist; Saint Obadiah of Persia; the holy Passion-Bearer Gleb.

“Passion-bearers” are, especially in Russian piety, persons venerated for having died in a Christ-like manner, regardless of the reason of their death. Passion-bearers differ from martyrs in that they were not killed because of their confession of the Christian faith. Even though—as is the case with Boris and Gleb, commemorated today—their deaths might have occurred because of political, economic, or some other reasons, they reflect the innocence, piety, and non-resistance with which our Lord received His death.

NEWLY DEPARTED: Joe (Sipos), Kay (Thomas), Ștefan. After Liturgy we will serve the 40-day memorial for Joe (Sipos). May God remember him and grant him eternal rest!

We pray for the health and well being of Sula, Dollie (Sipos), and Dolores (Bingham), as well as for Katina, the hieromonk Alexander, and the baby Christina. (Christina Khalil is a three-months baby in Pittsburgh, born with an incurable illness).

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING (2 Cor 4:6-15)

Prokeimenon:

*O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance.
To Thee, O Lord, have I cried, O my God!*

The Reading is from St. Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians

Brethren, it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted,

but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believed, and so we speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

The first sentence of today's Apostle reading speaks about *what* and *how* we Christians believe. To paraphrase the Creed, we believe in one God, the unique maker of heaven and earth, the almighty Creator who in his love has adopted us as his children so that we may call him "Father." Yet, we know him not only as the Creator who in the beginning said "let there be light" and it was light: He also renews the same act of creation, individually, with anyone who entrust his or her life to God. As St. Paul says, the same God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," also comes and dwells in us and shines in our hearts, so that our darkness is illumined, our sins are wiped out, and our lives made new. To receive this divine illumination—the light of God's glory—is made possible by the fact that the very "light of the holy glory" (as we sing at Vespers) has come into this world in Jesus Christ. In other words, we meet the luminous Face of God when we behold Jesus Christ, "light of light, very God of very God", who for our sake and for our salvation has become one of us, that we may become more and more like Him. The very fact of knowing God, the Creator, as our Father, is possible only in and through Christ.

The end of the reading reminds us of our ultimate goal: God's luminous glory will not cease working in us until it has overcome the last enemy, the last aberration of the Fall: death. Indeed, together with St. Paul and the Corinthians to whom his letter is addressed, we believe that the Creator who said in the beginning "let there be light" (and it was light), and who is now at work in us, to transform us into children of the light, will eventually also raise us from the darkness of death and take us into the "resurrected life" that we see in Jesus Christ.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING (Matt 22:35-46)

The Reading is from the Gospel according to St. Matthew

At that time, a lawyer asked him a question, to test him. "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" And he said to him, *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.* This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it, *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying "What do you think of Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I put your enemies under your feet'? If David thus calls him Lord, how is he his son?" And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Sometimes we fall into the trap of thinking that "religion" is about us and God, and about doing things or abstaining from things that pertain to God. By contrast, our relations with other human beings would be something-else-than-religion. This is why we sometimes start contrasting love of God with love of this or that person: What is more important, God or one's spouse? God or one's children? God or the poor? God or one's monastery?

These kinds of questions get everything wrong! The Lord Himself states that *You shall love the Lord your God* is "the greatest and first commandment"; but "the second one"—*You shall love your neighbor as yourself*—"is like it". In other words, we cannot think of God without thinking of our neighbor, just as we cannot think of a human being without remembering that it is made in the Image of God. Any kind of "Christian religion" that neglects the crucial engagement with our fellow humans is idolatry. Our access to God is found primarily through our neighbor; our Liturgy, says St. John Chrysostom, is primarily to recognize Christ in our brothers and sisters. As we read in Matthew 25, at the final and dread judgment, our fidelity to Christ will be measured by our commitment to our neighbor. Or, in the words of the holy apostle James, "religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction ..." (James 1:27).

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Sundays around 9:30, we will be singing Psalms before Divine Liturgy. If you enjoy singing and would like to learn, please join Dollie, Steve, and Fr. Bogdan. The more, the merrier!
- Vespers on Saturday is at 6:00 pm. Please plan on arriving a few minutes early, so as to become familiar with the order of the service and the ways you can participate. **We need to find out what the best times for a Saturday evening service are; if necessary, we can have something at 5pm and another one at 6:30.** Please tell Fr. Bogdan what your preference is!
- From the parish council:
 - (1) we are looking at purchasing and installing an elevator that would make it easier for elderly parishioners to attend the services;
 - (2) we are also considering new carpeting for the church.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Today, 12:30 – 9:00 PM:** St. Elias in New Castle (Fr. Gregory Long's new parish) organizes the "Old-Fashioned Syrian Picnic". 5 dollars/person.
- **Next Saturday, September 11, starting 9:00 AM:** St. George in Pittsburgh is hosting Fr. Thomas Hopko, retired professor of Theology at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary. The topic of the lecture and subsequent discussions is *What Happens After We Die?*
- **Next Sunday, September 12:**
 - Sunday School starts, led by Stephanie Trbovich. Stephanie and the children will receive Holy Communion first, then go to the Church hall for about 30 minutes. The congregation will finish Liturgy, and the sermon will be at the very end of the service.
 - Pastoral visit from our dean, Fr. John Abdallah from St George Cathedral in Pittsburgh. Let us show hospitality: please bring a dish to share, and join us for the potluck!

Let all that we do be done with love.

ST. GEORGE CATHEDRAL PITTSBURGH

Saturday, September 11, 2010

Fr. Thomas Hopko

(Retired Professor and Dean at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary)

What Happens After We Die?



9:00 Divine Liturgy;
continental breakfast

10:15 First Presentation

12:30 Lunch

1:15 Second Presentation

4:00 Third Presentation

5:30 Light dinner

6:30 Vespers

Separate program for children
(ages 6-12)

SUGGESTED DONATION:
\$ 10.0

Reservation required.
Tel: 412.681.2988

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