

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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Hymns at the Little Entrance:

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION, TONE 4: Having learned the joyful message of the resurrection from the angel, the women disciples of the Lord cast from them their parental condemnation, and proudly broke the news to the disciples, saying: Death hath been spoiled. Christ God is risen, granting the world great mercy!

TROPARION OF THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS, TONE 1: In thy birth-giving, O Theotokos, thou didst keep and preserve virginity; and in thy falling asleep thou hast not forsaken the world; for thou wast translated into life, being the Mother of Life. Wherefore, by thine intercessions, deliver our souls from death!

TROPARION OF ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT, RUSSIAN MELODY: 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 DORMITION, TONE 2: Neither the tomb nor death could hold the Theotokos, who is constant in prayer and our firm hope in her intercessions. For being the Mother of Life, she was translated to life by the One who dwelt in her virginal womb.

Saints commemorated today:

We continue to celebrate the Dormition of the Theotokos; this is why we sing, again, the troparion and kontakion of the Dormition. Today we remember the martyr Agathonicus of Nicomedia (today Izmit, in Turkey); the martyrs Zoticus, Theoprepus, Acindynus, Severian, Zeno from the Black Sea (today in Romania); St Anthusa the Nun of Seleucia, in Syria, her servants, the martyrs Charesimus and Neophytus, and the hieromartyr Athanasius of Tarsus, who baptized Anthusa; the holy martyrs Eulalia and Felix of Barcionum, in Spain; the Venerable Isaac of Optina, in Russia.

Note the geographical diversity of these Christian witnesses—Turkey, Syria, Russia, Romania, Spain! As a community of some diversity (we have American converts to Orthodoxy as well as “cradle Orthodox” of Syrian, Greek, Slavic, and Romanian ancestry) we are given a beautiful model to emulate.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING:

1 Corinthians 16:13-24

*Prokeimenon: In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be put to shame!
Be Thou a God of protection for me, a house of refuge, in order to save me!*

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

Brethren, be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love. Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and laborer. I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicos, because they have made up for your absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men. The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Like any letter, this epistle to the Christians in Corinth shows a number of very personal elements: there are references to specific persons known to the addressee and the addressor (and whom we have no way of knowing), personal greetings are conveyed, and there is even an invitation to acknowledge the authenticity of this letter: "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand." And yet, there are things in this passage that remain valid over the centuries, even today, for us in Butler. "Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong!" And above all: "Let all that you do be done in love." Indeed, this word of St Paul's should always accompany us. There are so many reasons and goals for what we do, many of them honorable, justified, important. In Church, however, our actions are measured in this way only: all that we do should be done with love.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING:

Matthew 21:33-42

³³ "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. ³⁴ Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. ³⁵ And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. ³⁷ Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸ But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' ³⁹ So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰ "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?" ⁴¹ They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons." ⁴² Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'

To the hearers of this parable, the meaning of what Jesus had said was pretty clear: a few verses after the end of the parable, it says, “Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.” How was he speaking of them? In short: the landowner is God, the vineyard is the revelation to the people of Israel, the vinedressers are the religious establishment of Israel, the servants sent out by the landowner are the prophets sent by God to Israel. And the son of the landowner? You probably guessed already that it is the Son of God, Jesus himself. Understood in this way, the parable is a strong indictment of the hard-heartedness with which Israel’s priests and theologians kept opposing the proclamation of the Good News, and their determination to kill the messenger rather than to accept the message and be transformed into children of God. For us, today, however, the parable is no less relevant. Where are *we* in this parable? The parable pushes us to determine our place in this story. Are we the servants of God, sent out to extend the Liturgy into our daily lives and our interaction with family, friends, neighbors? Or are we those who fancied themselves owners of the vineyard, and who set themselves against God? We should never forget that the Christian Church—the living organism where we gradually change course, repent, and accept God’s work in us—is not something we can take credit for or boast about. If “it is marvelous in our eyes”, it is because “this was *the Lord’s* doing”! The cornerstone of the Church is Jesus Christ, his coming from God, his becoming man, his suffering, death, and resurrection. Everything is here as a gift from God, to be received with open heart, like a child: take, eat, see that the Lord is good; rejoice, and pass it on.

Announcements:

- Please join us for a light meal prepared by the Bucur family (Fr. Bogdan, Cristina, Irina, and Andrei Bucur).
- Parish council meeting.
- Please help Fr. Bogdan gather all contact information from members, friends, and visitors of our parish. A piece of paper with the relevant data would be greatly appreciated; if you are using e-mail, please provide that as well.
- A new website for our parish is up and running. Visit www.orthodoxbutler.org

Upcoming Events:

- **September 5, 12:30 – 9:00 PM:** The community of St. Elias in New Castle (Fr. Gregory Long’s new parish) is organizing their “Old-Fashioned Syrian Picnic”. Admission is 5 dollars/person.
- **September 11, starting 9:00 AM:** The community of St. George in Pittsburgh is organizing an all-day event with 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?* If interested, please see Fr. Bogdan.
- **September 12, Liturgy:** Pastoral visit from our dean, Fr. John Abdallah

A NOTE TO PARENTS: We owe it to our children to share with them the Good News of God’s love, and the teaching of the Church. Sunday school will start on September 12, and will be led by Stephanie Trbovich. Stephanie is a student at Slippery Rock University (majoring in childhood education) and a counselor at Antiochian Village summer camp.

Let all that we do be done with love.