

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

www.orthodoxbutler.org

ADDRESS: 400 S. Sixth Avenue, Butler, PA 16001

RECTOR: Rev. Bogdan Gabriel Bucur

CONTACT: 412.390.8208; frbogdan@orthodoxbutler.org

The 33rd Sunday after Pentecost (9 January 2011)

On this Sunday after Theophany, we also commemorated the martyr Polyeuktos of Armenia, the Venerable Eustratios the Wonderworker, the New-martyr Parthenas, and Philip, metropolitan of Moscow .

FIRST ANTIPHON

When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language, Judah was in his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion! Refrain:

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

The sea saw Thee and fled: Jordan was driven back. What ailed thee, O sea, that thou fleddest, and thou Jordan, that thou wast driven back? (Refrain)

Glory... Now and ever... (Refrain)

SECOND ANTIPHON

I am well pleased for the Lord will hear the voice of my prayer. He hath inclined His ear unto me; therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live!

Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!

The sorrows of death encompassed me, and the pains of hell took hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow, and called upon the Name of the Lord. (Refrain)

Gracious is the Lord and righteous; yea, our God is merciful! (Refrain)

Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son and Word of God ...)

THIRD ANTIPHON

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth forever! Let the house of Israel confess that He is good, for His mercy endureth forever! Let the house of Aaron confess that He is good, for His mercy endureth forever! Let all who fear the Lord confess that He is good, for His mercy endureth forever! [Troparion of the Resurrection](#)

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 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 THEOPHANY (Tone 1): When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity wast made manifest. For the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee, calling Thee His beloved Son; and the Spirit in the likeness of a dove confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God, Who hath appeared and enlightened the world, glory to Thee!

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 OF THEOPHANY (Tone 4): Today Thou hast appeared to the universe, Lord, and Thy light hath been shed upon us, who praise Thee with knowledge, saying, "Thou hast come and appeared, O unapproachable Light!"

LIVING: We pray for the health and well being of Sula, Dolores (Sipos), Dolores (Bingham), Angelica (Georgia's mother), Diane, Karyn, Rodolphe, Brian, Maria, Marius, and the baby Christina.

DEPARTED: Michael, William, Mariana, James, Mary Ann, Joseph, Katherine.

Today we will have Trisagion prayers for Mariana, followed by a memorial meal prepared by the Șerbănescu family.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous.
Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven.*

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians

(Eph 4:7-13) Brethren: grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unit of the faith and of the knowledge of the son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Today's epistle echoes something that we confess in the Creed: that Christ died, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven *for us and for our salvation*. He is not the Messiah (Hebrew for "the anointed one") to impress us with His wisdom and power, to parade God's glory before our eyes without benefiting us in the least. Quite the contrary is true: **"grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift."** In other words, whatever He has, he gives to us. As we hear in the many parables about God's generosity, He does not hold back from us the fatted calf, the best wine, the finest robe—the full measure of Christ's gift is a grace *for us*.

If God came to be with us in the flesh (as we have just celebrated at Christmas), he did so in order to take up before God the very human nature he had taken on: **"He who descended is the same who also ascended far above the heavens."** Whatever He touches, He sanctifies; therefore, if he came to be one of us, he also made it possible for us to be like Him: "as many as received the Son of God, He gave the power to become sons of God" (John 1:12).

It is on the basis of this theology that Saint Paul speaks of the grace given to all believers in Christ. The Giver is one, yet the gifts are many and

of many kinds: “some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers” (and, in fact, we can add many more and varied gifts).

Note, however, that these gifts from God have a definite purpose. They are not the enjoyment of the recipient, they are not some magical powers, so that we feel good about ourselves and become puffed up. The grace of God is not some “cosmic energy” that we can tap into to boost our well-being, and Christians are not in the business of “white magic”! Rather, the gifts are “**for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain ... to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.**” In other words, the many kinds of gifts are given *for our brothers and sisters*, and they serve our individual and communal common spiritual growth in the Spirit.

As we read from the Epistle to the Ephesians, let us keep in mind that the events we have just celebrated—the birth, circumcision, and baptism of our Lord—are the beginning of our salvation, the door through which “**grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.**”

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Matthew

(Matt 4:12-17): At that time, when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth he went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulon and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Today is the Sunday after Theophany—we are, in other words, still under the light of the celebration of Christ’s Baptism. The Gospel text selected for today speaks of the transition between the Baptist and the Lord.

Christ continues the proclamation of the Baptist: “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!**” This means something like “Change your life: God's kingdom is here!” and it is, first, the good news that God has come to

be with us, and, second, that we *can*, therefore, change our life and turn around to meet Him.

Even though the words of Christ's proclamation are the same ones that John the Baptist had used before, there is now also a sense of fulfillment, because the prophecies announcing that God *would come* have now been fulfilled: the One so long awaited has arrived!

The Gospel (or "Good News") is indeed *good* news, and it concerns every one of us: "the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Vespers and confessions on Saturdays, 6pm.tyu566
- Despite the late hour, the cold, and the lengthy service, we had a beautiful Vespers Liturgy on Wednesday evening, celebrating the Baptism of our Lord and performing the Great Blessing of water. If you haven't done so already, please make sure to take some blessed water home. The custom is to take a sip in the morning, before eating or drinking anything else.
- Several families have had their houses blessed between New Year and Theophany. Other house blessings can be scheduled from now until the beginning of Great Lent.



NEXT SUNDAY, JANUARY 16:

Celebration of Saint Anthony the Great, our patron saint.

Our fellow Orthodox at Sts Peter & Paul and St. Andrew will be with us for a glorious Matins (9 AM) followed by Divine Liturgy (10 AM). We can probably count on 80-100 persons eating with us after the service, so please bring lots of food! The categories to which you can contribute are as follows: 1. meat; 2. potatoes /rice /pasta; 3. veggies; 4. salad; 5. sweets/ fruit. **See the sign-up sheet in the basement.**

