

# SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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*The 23rd Sunday after Pentecost (31 October 2010)*

## FIRST ANTIPHON

*It is good to give praise unto the Lord, and to chant unto Thy Name, O Most High! Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!*

*To proclaim in the morning Thy mercy, and Thy truth by night! (Refrain)*

*Upright is the Lord our God and there is no unrighteousness in Him (Refrain)*

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

## SECOND ANTIPHON

*The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength and hath girt Himself! Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee, "Alleluia"!*

*For He established the world which shall not be shaken! (Refrain)*

*Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days! (Refrain)*

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

## THIRD ANTIPHON

*Come let us rejoice in the Lord, let us shout with jubilation unto God our Savior! (Ps. 94:1) 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 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. O, Thou who art risen from the dead: Lord, glory to Thee!

TROPARION OF THE APOSTLES, Tone 3: O Holy Apostles, intercede with our merciful God to grant our souls forgiveness of sins!

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 THE THEOTOKOS, Tone 4: O undisputed intercessor of Christians, mediatrix unrejected by the Creator: turn not away from the voice of our petitions, although we be sinners. Come to us with help in time, when we call for thine assistance, for thou art good! Hasten to us with intercessions, O Theotokos, who dost ever intercede for those who honor thee.

*Today we commemorate Stachios, Apellos, Amplias, Urban, Aristoboulos, and Narcissos, Apostles among the Seventy; Martyr Epimachos of Alexandria; St. John Kochurov (the first priest killed for confessing the Christian faith during the Russian Revolution).*

LIVING: We pray for the health and well being of Sula, Dolores (Sipos), Dolores (Bingham), Diane, Karyn, Rodolphe, Brian, Gina, the hieromonk Alexander, and the baby Christina.

DEPARTED: Mariana, James, Dale, Mary Ann, Joseph, Katherine, Ștefan.

## TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

(Eph 2:4-10)

Prokeimenon:

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

*The Reading is from the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Ephesians*

**Brethren: God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, brought us to life with Christ (by grace you have been saved!), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved, through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**

This Sunday's Gospel brings us the story of the foolish rich man, who lost his soul by failing to care for poor Lazarus. Quite fittingly, the Apostle reading also speaks of riches: this time, however, we hear of *God's* way of being rich. Indeed, we hear that our God is "rich," that He holds "immeasurable riches." Yet, God is immeasurably rich *in mercy*; His immeasurable riches are matched by His immeasurable generosity and by "the great love with which He loved us." As we hear at Confession: "Just as Your greatness is beyond compare, so also is Your mercy without limit."

God's way of being rich is the exact opposite of petty and calculated exchange. He does not balance a budget of give-and-take; rather, "out of His great love with which He loved us," He squandered His trust on us "even when we were dead through our trespasses." He did not share His glory only with the angels: He came to us—creatures "dead in our sins, "following the spirit of disobedience," "children of wrath" (read Eph 2:1-3, the verses right before our passage)—and He took us and "seated us with Him in the heavenly places." Unlike the rich man in today's Gospel, God squanders His

riches on a humanity that is so often sick, disgusting, and as good as dead, dresses us in the garment of glory, seats us at His rich-laden table, and feeds us the food of immortality. Think of what we experience in the Eucharist!

All of the above, of course, happens “in Christ.” It is, in other words, not the fruit of our goodness, but the gift of God’s generosity; not of our own making, but the Maker’s grace of re-creating us “in Christ.” What, then, is our part? Saint Paul leaves us with a stunning answer: our part is simply (although it is not simple at all!) *not to miss* the many opportunities to perform the good works that God has prepared beforehand. Even our good works are laid before us as a gift, meeting us with every new day: our duty is not to avoid “walking in them.”

## TODAY’S GOSPEL READING

(Luke 16:19-31)

*The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke*

The Lord said: "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear

them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if some one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead.'"

It is easy to blame the rich man in this story: he shares nothing with poor Lazarus, he does not care for his sick and dying fellow-human, he is a monster! And yet, judging things on a strictly social and political level, the rich man may have some sort of justification. After all, some would say, the rich man was not responsible for the poverty and sickness of Lazarus; besides, Lazarus should be grateful for the crumbs he is getting! But the story requires us to approach it differently.

As always with parables in the Gospel, we are called to ask ourselves: who are *we* in this story? The answer has nothing to do with the amount of money one has accumulated, or one's social status. Theologically speaking, *all of us*—rich and poor, men and women, citizens and foreigners, etc— are Lazarus. In relation to God, we are all a Lazarus, suffering from the incurable sickness of mortality, covered with the boils of sinful and destructive habits, barely alive through our own choice of separating ourselves from the divine source of life. Now, since God is not responsible for our fallen state, could he not just tolerate us, the way the rich man tolerates the poor who eats crumbs from his table? But God shows us a different way.

He does not ask whether we "truly deserve" a better state; in dealing with our shortcomings, as the Psalmist says, He does not keep score: "If You should mark our iniquities, who could stand? But with You there is forgiveness." And, unlike the rich man in the parable, God does not feed us mere crumbs. Remember the invitation we receive on Pascha night: "You that have kept the fast, and you that have not, rejoice today, for the table is richly laden! The calf is a fatted one, let no one go away hungry! Enjoy all the riches of His goodness! Let no one grieve at his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one mourn that he has fallen again and again; for forgiveness has risen from the grave."

If we refuse to be like God, we automatically separate ourselves from Him, and choose the same miserable hell as the foolish rich man. God does not wish for this; therefore He sets before us many opportunities to share with others the gifts that we ourselves have so richly received from Him.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **FOOD FOR HUNGRY PEOPLE:** Our parish is collecting non-perishable items (cans, etc), to be donated to the Society of St. Vincent DePaul, which distributes them on Thanksgiving directly to the needy persons of Butler. Please give with a generous heart, remembering St. John Chrysostom's powerful word: **"Feeding the hungry is a greater work than raising the dead!"**
- On **Sunday, November 14**, the three Orthodox parishes in the area (ours, St. Andrew [OCA], and Sts. Peter and Paul [Ukrainian]) will be coming together for Divine Liturgy followed by a pre-Advent meal. On that Sunday, instead of having Liturgy at St. Anthony's, we will meet at Sts. Peter and Paul. Such a con-celebration of the Divine Liturgy, with all three priests and the three congregations worshipping God together, is a wonderful opportunity to experience the greater Orthodox family of the Butler area. Christ is in our midst! He is and ever shall be!
- Our patron saint, **St. Anthony the Great, is celebrated on January 17.** Let's talk to each other about what we could do. Fr. Bogdan's suggestions: invite the other two parishes to join us at Liturgy on the Sunday before, January 16? Invite Mother Christophora from the Transfiguration Monastery?
- Fr. Paisius McGrath (Sts Peter and Paul) holds a Bible study every other Wednesday at 6:30pm, and a "Basics of Orthodoxy" class every other Thursday at 6:30pm. If interested, call Fr. Paisius at (724) 549-6651.
- Sundays around 9:30: Psalm singing; Vespers on Saturday is at 6:00 pm.



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