

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

www.orthodoxbutler.org

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SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

2 October 2011

*Hieromartyr Cyprian, Martyrs Justina and Theoctistus, of Nicomedia (+ 304);
Martyrs David and Constantine, Princes of Georgia (+ 740); Andrew, the Fool-
for-Christ, at Constantinople (+ 936); Ven. Cassian of Uglich (+ 1504).*

LIVING: Diane, Abie (Abraham), Sula, Bill, Norm, Fran, George (Botsis),
Dolores (Sipos), Leatrice (Totin), Dolores (Bingham), Angelica, Karyn, Brian,
Maria, Marius, Justin, Sara, Miguel, Christine.

DEPARTED: priest James, Eduard, Lance, Nancy, Petruța, Peter, Michael,
William, Mariana, James, Mary Ann, Michael.

FIRST ANTIPHON

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

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

*Upright is the Lord our God and there is no unrighteousness in Him **(R.:)***

*Glory... Now and ever... **(R.:)***

SECOND ANTIPHON

The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength and hath girt Himself! (R.:) 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! (R.:)

Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days! (R.:)

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

AT 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 7): Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross; Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the mourning of the ointment-bearing women into joy, and didst bid Thine Apostles to proclaim that Thou hast risen, O Christ, granting the world great mercy!

TROPARION OF ST. CYPRIAN (Tone 4): Thou hast become like the Apostles in their states, a successor to their throne, finding indeed the intelligential ladder, O thou God-inspired. Therefore, thou best followed the Word of God in righteousness, and striven unto blood for the Faith. O Martyr among Priests Cyprian, intercede with Christ God to save our souls.

Glory... TROPARION OF SAINT ANTHONY (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.

Now and ever ... KONTAKION FOR ORDINARY SUNDAYS (Tone 4): O Undisputed intercessor of Christians, the mediatrix who is unrejected by the Creator, turn not away from the voice of our petitions, though we be sinners. Come to us in time with aid, as we cry unto thee in faith; for thou art good. Hasten to us with intercessions O Theotokos, who dost ever intercede for those who honor thee

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *The Lord will give strength to his people.
Bring to the Lord, O sons of God, bring to the Lord honor and glory.*

The Reading is from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians
(2 Cor 6:1-10)

Brethren, as we work together with Him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For it says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, the acceptable time is now; see, the day of salvation is now! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see— we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Saint Paul didn't have an easy time with the Corinthians. In the two epistles sent to them, one can easily see how he constantly had to defend his apostolic ministry in the face of all kinds of denigrations and challenges to his spiritual authority. Throughout his ministry, he never grew bitter or cynical, despite his afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, labors, sleepless nights, and hunger. We read instead that by cooperating with the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle used these challenges as a breeding ground—a compost of sorts!—for wonderful fruits, such as patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech!

We might not be Saint Paul. But we can heed his fervent plea: **do not accept the grace of God in vain.** In other words, we are to take seriously that which we have received in Baptism, and allow the grace of God to work in us.

This must be, as the very first words of today's Epistle make it clear, a "working together," a cooperation. It is by "synergy" (Greek for "cooperation") that Saul the persecutor became Paul the Apostle; and it is out of his own experience of cooperating with God's grace that he gives us counsel.

Saint Paul shows us how to read Scripture and use it for our furtherance of our life with God. He is quoting Isaiah 49:8 ("At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you") and then applies this text to himself: "the acceptable time" *is now*, "the day of salvation" *is now*. Indeed, when read as the word of God, Scripture is not about some other people at some time in the past; it is always *now*, and always *about us*. The ancient Hebrews knew this truth very well: "**The Lord did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, with all those of us alive here today**" (Deut 5:3).

If that is so, let us hear the words of Saint Paul not as being addressed to the Corinthians two thousand years ago, but to us, who are alive here today: **we urge you also not to receive the grace of God in vain!**

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

The Reading is from the Gospel according to Saint Luke
(Luke 6:31-36)

The Lord said, "And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

"Mercy": it is hard to find a word more frequently used in our services. If there is anything we ask of God, it surely is mercy. Sometimes we even repeat "Lord, have mercy!" twelve times or forty times—not that God really

needs such constant and insistent reminders, but to make sure that *we* understand how much we are in need of God's mercy.

Our relationship with God and our relationship with fellow-humans are two sides of the same reality. Scripture speaks plainly. In the Old Testament: **"I desire mercy, not sacrifice!"** (Hosea 6:6); and in the New: **"if you don't love your brother, whom you see, how can you imagine to love God, whom you don't see?"** (1 John 4:20) And in today's Gospel these two dimensions our Christian life are again brought together. To paraphrase the last line of our text: **"Be merciful to your fellow-humans, just as God is a merciful Father to you!"**

And just how merciful should we be? For Christians, the standard is higher than for others, as the Gospel calls for a measure of mercy that seems, at first, unreasonable: be merciful *like God*, forgive like God forgives, love like God loves. Clearly, this is not easy (to put it mildly). In fact, the Gospel does recognize that most of the things that Christ asks of us are impossible for any human being on earth. However, if the standard is so high for Christians, it is because we ought to have learned that God has come to dwell *among us*, in order to live *in us*, and make the impossible possible.

We are not called to manufacture or "squeeze out" our mercy and love towards others, but to pass on and extend the mercy of God that we have received at Baptism and that we continue to receive every day. In short, it is because we have been forgiven that we are able to forgive, and it is because God is merciful to us that we become free and able to extend His mercy to others.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: meeting of the parish council.

Next Saturday: Vespers 6pm, followed by Discussion Group. We read Nicholas Cabasilas, *The Life in Christ* (on our website).

Sunday School is for Grown Ups, Too! While teaching our children, we should also be mindful of the fact that grown ups are also in need of learning more about Orthodoxy. Let us find a Saturday in October, November, or December in which we can meet for a half day. We can have two 1-hour “lectures” of sorts, a couple of breaks, and then questions and answers. The point is that we all make some progress in our understanding of the faith.

Fr. Bogdan would be available on the following Saturdays:

Oct 15, Oct 29, Nov 5, Nov 12, Nov 29, Dec 12, Dec 19.

Donations for the Chalice: We need to replating our larger chalice, in preparation for our patronal feast of St. Anthony (Jan 17). This is our common cup, to which we are all called to “draw near in fear of God, with faith and love.” As a symbol of that unity and equality, we are collecting no more than 5 dollars per person.