

The Voice of Saint Anthony

JANUARY 2019

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**Deadline for
February Newsletter is
Friday, 25 January**

Please send to:

**frchris@saint-anthonys.org
newsletter_church@aol.com**



Reverend Father Peter Stratos, Pastor

Reverend Father Christopher Retelas, Associate Pastor

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PRIEST'S MESSAGE

In January we begin a new calendar year filled with many uplifting and fulfilling church services and events. The first of these is the **Feast Day of Theophany**. This feast day is one of the greatest days of the Christian year. It ranks in importance with Christmas, second only to Easter. In many parts of the Christian world, this feast day is celebrated with even greater solemnity than Christmas Day itself. In the English language the feast day is called **Epiphany**, a word associated with *manifestation* or *appearance*. The Greek naming is more precise as it is known as *Theofania* or Theophany, which means "*God shows himself to us.*" On this day, the Holy Trinity was revealed to mankind for the first time.

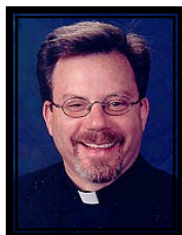
When Jesus Christ was baptized in the Jordan River, a voice was heard from heaven saying, "**This is my Son in whom I am well pleased.**" It was the voice of God the Father proclaiming Christ as His Son. The white dove that descended upon Christ from the heavens was the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Holy Trinity was revealed on that glorious day. The Greek Orthodox Church describes this day as the day of "illumination (light) and manifestation (appearance)". The Greek Orthodox Church also calls this day "*Ta Fota*," which means the "Day of Lights." We, as Christians, have been illuminated by the appearance of the Holy Trinity. God has shown Himself to us as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is the day in the life of the Church that we celebrate the traditional blessing of the waters. Since Christ blessed the waters of the Jordan by his physical presence in the water, we too bless ourselves and our homes with blessed and sanctified water received at the "Sanctification Services" celebrated on **January 5th and 6th**.

The first service, on January 5th (Saturday this year), is known as *Aghiasmos*, or Service for Blessing Holy Water. On this day all Holy Water bottles are filled and given to the faithful for use in their homes throughout the coming year. The service on January 6th (Sunday this year) is called *Megas Aghiasmos*, or Great Service for Blessing Holy Water. The water that is blessed at this service is given by the priest, for the faithful to drink. The priest also blesses all Orthodox homes with the sanctified water that is blessed at the Epiphany Services.

It was our joy to bless some of your homes last year. It is a beautiful way for us to become better acquainted with one another. A form to request a home blessing will be included in this newsletter. The home blessing is a wonderful way to bring God and his protection and sanctification into our homes. It is the ideal way to show our family members how important God is in our lives, by inviting Him in through this blessed tradition of the Orthodox household. This is the first step, in the new calendar year, of practicing the principle of "family as church." As our homes are blessed, we can sing the hymn "*Save o Lord, Your people,*" along with our priest and pray that the blessing of this Epiphany Season will remain with us throughout the year. What a perfect way to start our calendar year!

Kali Hronia

Fr. Peter



PRIEST'S MESSAGE - CONTINUED*Blessing of Homes – 2019*

The Feast of the Holy Theophany of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, one of the 12 Great Feasts of our Church, is celebrated each year on January 6th, commemorating the Baptism of Christ and divine revelation of the Holy Trinity. The services for this great feast are accompanied and made even more joyful with the Blessing of the Waters, in which Holy Water is distributed to the faithful to use and partake in their homes throughout the coming year. With this same sanctified water, the priest also blesses the homes of the faithful, so that the blessings and protection of our Lord will be with us throughout the year and that our homes may be sanctified with our prayers.

With this tradition in mind, both Fr. Peter and Fr. Christopher will be offering the opportunity to have your homes blessed with the Holy Water of Theophany. This will be offered from **January 8th through February 15th.**

If you wish to have your home blessed, please complete and return this form or contact the church office at (626) 449-6943.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone # _____ E-mail _____

We would like to have our home blessed and will be available on the following week days:

THE PURPOSE OF THE HOLY WATER

The purpose of Holy Water is deeply intertwined with the purpose of Baptism. And the purpose of Baptism is to bring about salvation in the Eternal kingdom of Heaven. As the month of January unfolds before us, we celebrate the Baptism of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the River Jordan by St. John the Baptist and, in connection with this celebration, we will perform the Service of the Great Blessing of the Waters, through which each Orthodox communicant is imparted with Holy Water from which to partake and with which to sanctify homes and establishments.

The Service of Blessing the Waters is inseparably connected with our Lord's Baptism in the Jordan, because, with His Baptism the Holy Trinity is manifested to the human race. Along with this manifestation (called "Theophany" - the appearance of the True Triune God), there are two things that occur to the waters of the Jordan:

1) as Christ enters into the River Jordan, the waters are turned back. This is at once an image of repentance and renewal. The turning back of the waters is a turning back to the original purity of God's creation and a turning back from sin to virtue. In partaking of Holy Water, we intend to repent, while at the same time dedicating our homes and our businesses to the work of God.

2) as Christ comes out of the waters of the River Jordan, the Holy Spirit descends upon Him and upon the waters. The prayers that are read by which the waters are blessed are prayers by which we call upon God to "send down the Holy Spirit and sanctify these waters". Many of the same words which appear in the prayer for the Sanctification of the Waters also appear when we bless the waters during the Sacrament of Holy Baptism just before we baptize any individual. By virtue of the Holy Spirit, the waters are made Holy and the blessed waters are "carriers" (or vessels) of the Holy Spirit by which people are sanctified individually and homes and businesses are sanctified, as well. As the Service of Blessing the Waters is inseparably connected with our Lord's Baptism in the Jordan, so, too, is Holy Water inseparably connected with our own baptism in Christ. As with the Water of our Baptism, we are, with Holy Water, renewed through repentance and purified by the Holy Spirit. Far from being magic, it becomes, in reality, the real story of our lives.

In fact, there are two versions of Holy Water, which stem from the celebration of our Lord's Baptism in the River Jordan. The Holy Water from which we consume and with which we dedicate our homes is just one form of Holy Water that is destined to be a great part of any Orthodox Christian's life. The other version of Holy Water arises from within our souls --the "holy water" of tears of repentance. The "holy water" of our tears of repentance actually is known as the "second baptismal font" and this "font" is found through the Sacrament of Holy Confession.

Our Lord's own Baptism in the Jordan is, in essence, the baptism of the human race - a recreation of the original Adam in the original Eden. With the disobedience of Adam, all of creation was tainted. The ultimate result is seen in our own day with the abuse of nature that is commonly seen and which prompts us to want to save the environment. But, it all begins with water, because water itself is the physical "sign of life." In fact, our Lord's Baptism in the River Jordan turned everything "right-side up" again. As Bishop Kallistos Ware once noted, "our Lord, being Perfect God and Pure, stepped into waters that were muddy and unclean. By doing so, He crushed the heads of the invisible dragons that lurked therein", as we say in the prayers of Baptism. But, as the Holy Spirit descended upon Christ and the waters, the River Jordan was made pure so that we who are muddy and unclean can become pure for God through the blessed Waters of Holy Baptism. As we sanctify our homes, we find ourselves sanctifying those who live in our homes - our spouses and children - as well as those who visit our homes. As is our Church the House of Salvation, so is our home a House of Salvation. As Holy Water is sprinkled upon farms and vineyards, so is Holy Water sprinkled upon businesses - so that our work can be the Lord's work; so that the Holy Spirit Who descended upon Christ as He came out of the River Jordan can also descend upon all of our efforts & upon each of us as newborn people of God.



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Saint Anthony 2019 Parish Council

Joe Akrotirianakis	James Pappas
Philip Ted Attalla	Sophia Syrengelas
John Buzas	Mary Udria
Tony Christopoulos	Tashia Vagenas
Roberto Crespo	John Vidalakis
Pete Gallanis	Perry Vidalakis
Tom Grafos	Vincent Zarian
Christos Ioannou	

(listed in alphabetical order)



STEWARDSHIP

2018 STEWARDSHIP SUMMARY

OUR STEWARDSHIP GOAL: \$425,000

308 PLEDGES TOTALING: \$387,021

COLLECTED AS OF 12/20/18: \$348,701

AVERAGE PLEDGE GOAL: \$1,500

CURRENT AVERAGE PLEDGE: \$1,257

Breakdown Pledges		
Amount Pledge	# of Pledges	% of Pledges Breakdown
\$ 20 - \$299	49	16%
\$300 - \$499	41	13%
\$500 - \$799	71	23%
\$800 - \$999	10	3%
\$1,000 - \$1,499	62	20%
\$1,500 - \$1,999	22	7%
\$2,000 - \$3,999	35	11%
\$4,000 - \$5,999	10	3%
\$6,000 - \$7,999	3	1%
\$8,000 - \$9,999	0	0
\$10,000 - \$14,999	4	1%
\$15,000 - \$99,999	1	0.3%
TOTAL PLEDGES	308	100%

\$425,000 (goal)

**\$387,021 Pledged
(91% of goal)**

**\$348,701
Amount Collected
(82% of goal)**

***SOMETHING TO NOTE: OUR CURRENT STEWARDSHIP GOAL IS \$1,500 PER STEWARD/FAMILY.
RIGHT NOW, 76% OF OUR STEWARDS ARE UNDER THAT GOAL***

NEWS FROM THE LOFT

On Thursday, December 13th, many choir members who were in town held our traditional holiday gathering and rehearsal in the community center. Delicious hot and cold appetizers along with many desserts were enjoyed by all attendees prior to our rehearsing hymns for the Advent and Christmas season and carols.

We all want to congratulate our chanters Patrick and Katerina Lynch who recently announced that they are expecting their first child in June 2019!

As we in the loft continue to strive to enhance the worship experience for our beloved Saint Anthony community, we send our heartfelt best wishes to all for a happy, healthy and most prosperous New Year!

Kali Xronia!!



CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS to the following students who had Perfect Attendance in November:

Alexander Zarian	Michael Georgiou
Alexia Saigh	Michael Vidalakis
Alexis Vidalakis	Nicholas Voyagis
Chloe Georgiou	Nicholas Akrotirianakis
Eleni Katsafados	Nicoletta Kazaltzes
Evangelia Kleissas	Nicolette Vidalakis
Faye Koulos	Noah Nuñez
Gia Balntas	Orion Georgiou
Gianna Koulos	Soteri Katsafados
John Ioannou,	Talia Grafos
Kostadina Ioannou	Tessa Grafos
Kostantinos Tsigkounis	Theodora Trigonis
Mary Nuñez	Vasili Kazaltzes
Melina Zoumas	Zoe Petropoulos
Michael Akrotirianakis	

CONGRATULATIONS to the following students who had Perfect Attendance in December:

Alexie Syrengelas	Gia Balntas
Anastasia Ananiades	Gianna Koulos
Athanasios Mitis	Kosta Koulos
Christina Martin	Kostantinos Tsigkounis
Dylan Udria	Nicholas Akrotirianakis
Ekaterini Nastri	Nicholas Voyagis
Evangelia Kleissas	Niko Udria
Faye Koulos	Theodora Trigonis
Gabriella Carpenter	Wesley Courter

The Church School staff encourages more children to participate in lessons each Sunday in 2019!

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT NEWS



St. Anthony's Bowling League

For more information, contact **Pana Gelt** (626) 278-2808 or **Anthia Lucas** (626)274-6133



GOYA Basketball

Mark your calendars for March 2019.

For more information, contact **Anthia Lucas** (626)274-6133

TENTATIVE FDF SCHEDULE

Regular meetings will commence following FDF (Folk Dance Festival) 2019. Meetings will take place the first Sunday of the month and will begin 10 minutes after Church School ends.

Meeting location — Rooms 1A and 1B.

March 4

April 1

May 6

June 3

July 1

August 5

September 2

To volunteer to help, serve and/or prepare a simple lunch, provide a snack or donate to help defray costs (not required). **Contact: Irene Albeck, mcmg2a@aol.com**

PHILOPTOCHOS NEWS

After months of planning and hours of hard work, the **St. Anthony Christmas Benefit Luncheon/Fashion Show**, "*Hark*," took place on Saturday, December 8th. Thank you to our St. Anthony Benefit Chair, **Christine Pappas**, and the entire committee for their hard work and dedication to making this year's fashion show such a beautiful and successful day. We would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the St. Anthony community for their support. This year, the two charities that will receive a portion of our net proceeds are **Youth Moving On** and **Family Promise**. *Youth Moving On* provides support to transition-age youth while *Family Promise* deals with the issues related to homelessness.

We also provided a gift to the boys who are part of **Trinity Youth Services**. Philoptochos also provided them the opportunity to have breakfast and a movie on Christmas Day. St. Anthony Philoptochos has supported the children at the El Monte facility for a number of years. Many of our parishioners were generous in helping us to provide these gifts for the boys. Thank you to everyone who donated to the boys at Trinity Home. You helped make their Christmas a little brighter.

Metropolis Philoptochos has the **Adopt A Seminarian** ministry. Each seminarian from our metropolis is "adopted" by two or more chapters. During various holidays and other times throughout the year, we send gifts to our **seminarian Anthony Cornet** and his family. We recently sent them Christmas gifts.

Thank you to **Julie and Dino Balas** for opening their beautiful home for the **Annual Philoptochos Christmas Party**. Everyone had a wonderful time. We had 70 people in attendance and raised \$2000 for PCC's homeless students.

January will also be a busy month for Philoptochos. We will be hosting the **Vasilopita reception** on **Sunday, January 6th following Liturgy**. Please contact **Maria Kypreos** to help. Proceeds from this event will benefit Saint Basil Academy.

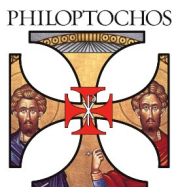
On **Wednesday, January 16th**, we will host dinner following **Great Vespers for the Feast of Saint Anthony**. Please contact **Maria Kypreos**, mkypreos@gmail.com, if you can assist.

Included in the many donations we make every month is the National and Metropolis Philoptochos commitments. Our National commitments for December were the **National United Nations International Children's Fund** and the **Philoptochos General Medical Fund**.

The National commitments for January are **Saint Basil Academy** and **Social Services & Cancer/Other Major Illnesses Fund**. The *Social Services Fund* lies at the heart of the Philoptochos ministry by providing outreach, support and financial assistance to those in need.

Volunteers are needed to serve dinner at **Union Station Adult Center** (412 S. Raymond Avenue Pasadena) the first Wednesday of every month. We need 3-4 volunteers for Wednesday, March 6 and also April 3 from 6:30 to approx. 8:30pm. Please contact **Nicolette Fuerst** at nicolette8868@yahoo.com if you are available.

Thank you.



VIP NEWS

The VIPs had a wonderful Christmas breakfast meeting at The Monrovia Restaurant in December. We were very happy that Father Peter and Father Christos were able to join us. One of our VIPs, Helen Reese, played her accordion and led us singing Christmas carols.

We meet on the **2nd Tuesday of each month at 10:00 a.m.** in the Trinity Ballroom. Our dues are very reasonable—\$12.00 per year. Refreshments or lunch is usually served.

Please join us for our next meeting on **Tuesday, January 8th, at 10:00 a.m.**

We're looking forward to an eventful year.

Helen Treantafelles

VIP President



MINISTRIES

Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church

Reverend Father Peter Stratos

Reverend Father Christopher Retelas

2018 PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Rev. Fr. Peter Stratos	Pastor
John Vidalakis	President
Pete Gallanis	1 st Vice President
Mary Udria	2 nd Vice President
Tashia Vagenas	Secretary
Tony Christopoulos	Treasurer

Joseph Akrotirianakis

Philip 'Ted' Attalla

John Buzas

Roberto Crespo

Tom Grafos

Chris Ioannou

Jim Pappas

Sophia Syrengelas

Perry Vidalakis

Vince Zarian

CHOIR

Choir Director Jim Hronas

Sherese Akrotirianakis	Maria Hronas
Dean Athans	Elias Kalivas
Tina Athans	Stavrula Kiotas
George Babbes	Dr. Rodanthi Kitridou
Christina Becronis	Kathy Lucas
Tom Bouras	Liam McCann
Judie Christopoulos	Bess Mechalas
Leah Cokias	Elizabeth Moreno
Rebecca Courter	Iliana Orozco
Athena Dallas	Alexandra Patzakis
Maria Ganis	Gena Pegadiotes
Georgia Loutsos Grajeda	Katerina Petrossian
Aliki Haralambos	Litsa Stavropoulos
	Pres. Aida Stratos

CHANTERS

Patrick Lynch

Katerina Lynch

Demetrios Baliotis

Mike Abi-Farah

Please notify us of any misspellings or omissions.



OFFICE STAFF

Alma Vorgias – Office Administrator

Athena Serban – Events Coordinator (Trinity Ballroom)

CUSTODIAL STAFF

Carlos Sosa



CHURCH SCHOOL STAFF

Fotene Trigonis - Director

Anastasia Kalivas - Director

Irene Albeck - Preschool

Nikolitsa Vagenas - Preschool

Kathy Tsigkounis - Kindergarten & 1st

Kyriaki Tsigkounis - Kindergarten & 1st

Michael Nunez - 2nd & 3rd

Anna Nunez - 2nd & 3rd

Maria Prantzikou - 2nd & 3rd

John Vagenas - 4th & 5th

Maria Pappas - Middle School

Fotene Trigonis - Middle School

Anastasia Kalivas - High School



MINISTRIES (CONTINUED)**PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY****Panagia Chapter Board 2017-2019*****President***

Maria Kypreos

1st Vice President

Elizabeth Skandale & Lisa Xanthos

2nd Vice President

Judith Din & Konstantina Paziouros

Corresponding Secretary

Tanya Christodoulelis & Maria Grover

Recording Secretary

Fontaine Achilles Malisos & Mary Dewar

Treasurer

Maria Kokoris

Assistant Treasurer

Katherine Skandale

Beautification

Presbytera Aida Stratos & Esther Vavoulis

Community Outreach

Mary Dewar, Stephanie Soewers & Presbytera Aida Stratos

Fellowship

Athena Dallas

Publicity / Webmaster

Terese Caire & Nicolette Fuerst

Scholarship

Irene Albeck & Judith Din

Sunshine and Visitation

Jeanne Karaianoglou

Union Station

Irene Albeck

Welfare

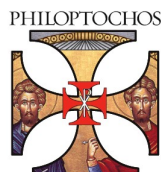
Presbytera Maria Mylonas

Advisor

Connie Becker

Spiritual Advisor

Father Peter Stratos

**OTHER MINISTRIES**

Acolytes

Fr. Christopher Retelas

Bible Study

Fr. Peter Stratos

Bookstore

Jeremiah Courter

GOYA

Fr. Christopher Retelas

GOYA Basketball

Anthia Lucas

Pana Gelt

Greek Dance Groups

Christine Pappas

Greek Festival

John Vidalakis

Nick Demopulos

Julie Balas

Greek Language School Anastasia McClain

JOY/HOPE

Irene Albeck

Moms & Tots

Rebecca Courter

Myrrh Bearers

Irene Albeck

Oratorical Festival

Maria Grover

Pasadena Golf Classic

Jimmy Christodoulelis

Roberto Crespo

Prayer Shawls

Aliko Haralambos

Vacation Bible School

Sophia Syrengelas

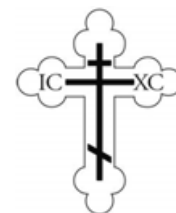
Mary Udria

VIPs

Helen Treantafelles

Young Adults

Mike Abi Farah



COMMUNITY NEWS**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LECTURE SERIES**

Hosted by St. Anthony Greek Orthodox Church, Pasadena, CA

January 19, 2019

THE POLITICAL DIVIDE

Tim Muehlhoff

Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

How are we called to communicate with one another on hot topics? This session focuses on getting along with family and friends in a hostile world.

February 23, 2019

MARRIAGE & RELATIONSHIPS

Philip Mamalakis

Saturday 5 p.m.

How can we use scripture to strengthen our marriages, our friendships, and our family relationships?

March 23, 2019

PARTICIPATORY LITURGY

Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Fr. Peter Stratos and Fr. Chris Retelas

What does church history teach us about participation during the Divine Liturgy? Learn the liturgy and then take part in what we hope will be an amazing service.

April 13, 2019

THE HABIT OF HAPPINESS

Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

George Papageorge

The United States is currently immersed in an epidemic of depression. How can we experience happiness when things often seem bleak?

Typical Daily Schedule

9-10 a.m. Registration and continental breakfast

10-12:30 Morning session

12:30-1:30 Luncheon

1:30-4:00 Afternoon session

SAINTS OF THE MONTH

Saint Basil

1 January

On the first day of the New Year our Church commemorates the memory of one of her greatest fathers, Saint Basil the Great: a theologian, hierarch, philanthropist, defender of the Faith, nurturer of the poor and sick, and a man dedicated with all his heart and soul to Jesus Christ. What an example of faith, love, and devotion!

Saint Basil the Great was born about the end of the year 329 in Caesarea of Cappadocia, to a family renowned for their learning and holiness. His parents' names were Basil and Emily. His mother Emily and his grandmother Macrina are also Saints of the Church, together with all his brothers and sisters: Macrina, Gregory of Nyssa Peter of Sebastia and Naucrati. Basil studied in Constantinople and then in Athens, where also he formed a friendship with Gregory, later called "Gregory the Theologian." Through the good influence of his sister Macrina, he chose to embrace the ascetical life, abandoning his worldly career. He visited the monks in Egypt, in Palestine, in Syria, and in Mesopotamia, and upon returning to Caesarea, he departed to a hermitage on the Iris River in Pontus, not far from Annesi, where his mother and his sister Macrina were already treading the path of the ascetical life; here he also wrote his ascetical homilies.

About the year 370, when the bishop of his country reposed, he was elected to succeed to his throne and was entrusted with the Church of Christ, which he tended for eight years, living in voluntary poverty and strict asceticism, having no other care than to defend holy Orthodoxy as a worthy successor of the Apostles. The Emperor Valens and the Eparch of the East, who were of one mind with the Arians, tried with threats of exile and of torments to bend the Saint to their own confession, because he was the bastion of Orthodoxy in all Cappadocia, and preserved it from heresy when Arianism was at its strongest. But their malice was for nothing, because his willingness to give himself up to every suffering for the sake of the Faith, showed himself to be a martyr by volition. The Emperor Valens was almost won over by Basil's dignity and wisdom. When Valens' son fell gravely sick, he asked Saint Basil to pray for him. The Saint promised that his son would be healed if Valens agreed to have him baptized by the Orthodox; Valens agreed, Basil prayed, and the son was restored. But afterwards the Emperor had him baptized by Arians, and the child died soon after. Later, Valens, persuaded by his counselors, decided to send the Saint into exile because he would not accept the Arians into communion; but his pen broke when he was signing the edict of banishment. He tried a second time and a third, but the same thing happened, so that the Emperor was filled with dread, and tore up the document, and Basil was not banished.

The truly great Basil, spent with extreme ascetical practices and continual labors, at the helm of the church, departed to the Lord on the 1st of January, in 379. at the age of forty-nine.

His writings are replete with wisdom and intellect, and rich are these gifts he set forth the doctrines concerning the mysteries both of the creation and of the Holy Trinity. Because of the majesty and keenness of his eloquence, he is honored as "the revealer of heavenly things" and "the Great."

Today, Orthodox Christians bake Vasilopita on New Year's Day. Saint Basil hid gold coins in loaves of bread and gave them to the poor. Today we make the Vasilopita to thank God for all of our blessings and to remember Saint Basil's kindness. The person who finds the coin in their slice of bread is considered to be especially blessed for the New Year.

SAINTS OF THE MONTH (CONTINUED)**Holy Theophany/Epiphany****6 January**

About the beginning of our Lord's thirtieth year, John the Forerunner, who was some six months older than Our Saviour according to the flesh, and had lived in the wilderness since his childhood, received a command from God and came into the parts of the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. Then our Saviour also came from Galilee to the Jordan, and sought and received baptism, though He was the Master and John was but a servant. Whereupon, there came to pass those marvelous deeds, great and beyond nature: the Heavens were opened, the Spirit descended in the form of a dove upon Him that was being baptized and the voice was heard from the Heavens hearing witness that this was the beloved Son of God, now baptized as a man (Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:1-22). From these events the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ and the great mystery of the Trinity were demonstrated. It is also from this that the present feast is called "Theophany," that is, the divine manifestation, God's appearance among men. On this venerable day the sacred mystery of Christian baptism was inaugurated; henceforth also began the saving preaching of the Kingdom of the Heavens.

Saint Anthony**17 January**

Saint Anthony the Great is known as the Father of Monasticism. He was born in Egypt in the village of Coma, in the year 251. His parents were pious Christians of illustrious lineage. Anthony was a serious child and was respectful and obedient to his parents. He loved to attend church services, and he listened to the Holy Scripture so attentively, that he remembered what he heard all his life.

When St Anthony was about twenty years old, he lost his parents, but he was responsible for the care of his younger sister. Going to church about six months later, the youth reflected on how the faithful, in the Acts of the Apostles (4:35), sold their possessions and gave the proceeds to the Apostles for the needy.

Then he entered the church and heard the Gospel passage where Christ speaks to the rich young man: "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me" (Mt.19:21). Anthony felt that these words applied to him. Therefore, he sold the property that he received after the death of his parents, then distributed the money to the poor, and left his sister in the care of pious virgins in a convent. Leaving his parental home, St Anthony began his ascetical life in a hut not far from his village. By working with his hands, he was able to earn his livelihood and also alms for the poor. Sometimes, the holy youth also visited other ascetics living in the area, and from each he sought direction and benefit. He turned to one particular ascetic for guidance in the spiritual life. In this period of his life St Anthony endured terrible temptations from the devil. The Enemy of the race of man troubled the young ascetic with thoughts of his former life, doubts about his chosen path, concern for his sister, and he tempted Anthony with lewd thoughts and carnal feelings. But the saint extinguished that fire by meditating on Christ and by thinking of eternal punishment, thereby overcoming the devil.

Realizing that the devil would undoubtedly attack him in another manner, St Anthony intensified his prayers. He prayed that the Lord would show him the path of salvation and he was granted a vision. The ascetic beheld a man, who by turns alternately finished a prayer, and then began to work. This was an angel, which the Lord had sent to instruct His chosen one. St Anthony tried to accustom himself to a stricter way of life. He partook of food only after sunset, he spent all night praying until dawn. Soon he slept only every third day. But the devil would not cease his tricks, and trying to scare the monk, he appeared under the guise of monstrous phantoms. The saint however protected himself with the Life-Creating Cross. Finally the Enemy appeared to him in the guise of a frightful looking black child, and hypocritically declaring himself beaten, he thought he could tempt the saint into vanity and pride. The saint, however, vanquished the Enemy with prayer.

SAINTS OF THE MONTH (CONTINUED)***Saint Anthony—continued***

For even greater solitude, St Anthony moved farther away from the village, into a graveyard. He asked a friend to bring him a little bread on designated days, then shut himself in a tomb. Then the devils pounced upon the saint intending to kill him, and inflicted terrible wounds upon him. By the providence of the Lord, Anthony's friend arrived the next day to bring him his food. Seeing him lying on the ground as if dead, he took him back to the village. They thought the saint was dead and prepared for his burial. At midnight, St Anthony regained consciousness and told his friend to carry him back to the tombs. St Anthony's staunchness was greater than the wiles of the Enemy. Taking the form of ferocious beasts, the devils tried to force the saint to leave that place, but he defeated them by trusting in the Lord. Looking up, the saint saw the roof opening, as it were, and a ray of light coming down toward him. The demons disappeared and he cried out, "Where have You been, O Merciful Jesus? Why didn't You appear from the very beginning to end my pain?"

The Lord replied, "I was here, Anthony, but wanted to see your struggle. Now, since you have not yielded, I shall always help you and make your name known throughout all the world." After this vision St Anthony was healed of his wounds and felt stronger than before. He was then thirty-five years of age.

Having gained spiritual experience in his struggle with the devil, St Anthony considered going into the Thebaid desert to serve the Lord. He asked the Elder (to whom he had turned for guidance at the beginning of his monastic journey) to go into the desert with him. The Elder, while blessing him, decided not to accompany him because of his age. St Anthony went into the desert alone. The devil tried to hinder him, by placing a large silver disc in his path, then gold, but the saint ignored it and passed by. He found an abandoned fort on the other side of the river and settled there, barricading the entrance with stones. His faithful friend brought him bread twice a year, and there was water inside the fort.

St Anthony spent twenty years in complete isolation and constant struggle with the demons, and he finally achieved perfect calm. The saint's friends removed the stones from the entrance, and they went to St Anthony and besought him to take them under his guidance. Soon St Anthony's cell was surrounded by several monasteries, and the saint acted as a father and guide to their inhabitants, giving spiritual instruction to all who came into the desert seeking salvation. He increased the zeal of those who were already monks, and inspired others with a love for the ascetical life. He told them to strive to please the Lord, and not to become faint-hearted in their labors. He also urged them not to fear demonic assaults, but to repel the Enemy by the power of the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord.

In the year 311 there was a fierce persecution against Christians, in the reign of the emperor Maximian. Wishing to suffer with the holy martyrs, St Anthony left the desert and went to Alexandria. He openly ministered to those in prison, he was present at the trial and interrogations of the confessors, and accompanying the martyrs to the place of execution. It pleased the Lord to preserve him, however, for the benefit of Christians.

At the close of the persecution, the saint returned to the desert and continued his exploits. The Lord granted the saint the gift of wonderworking, casting out demons and healing the sick by the power of his prayer. The great crowds of people coming to him disrupted his solitude, and he went off still farther, into the inner desert where he settled atop a high elevation. But the brethren of the monasteries sought him out and asked him to visit their communities.

Another time St Anthony left the desert and arrived in Alexandria to defend the Orthodox Faith against the Manichaeian and Arian heresies. Knowing that the name of St Anthony was venerated by all the Church, the Arians said that he adhered to their heretical teaching. But St Anthony publicly denounced Arianism in front of everyone and in the presence of the bishop. During his brief stay at Alexandria, he converted a great multitude of pagans to Christ.

SAINTS OF THE MONTH (CONTINUED)***Saint Anthony—continued***

People from all walks of life loved the saint and sought his advice. Pagan philosophers once came to Abba Anthony intending to mock him for his lack of education, but by his words he reduced them to silence. Emperor Constantine the Great and his sons wrote to St Anthony and asked him for a reply. He praised the emperor for his belief in Christ, and advised him to remember the future judgment, and to know that Christ is the true King.

St Anthony spent eighty-five years in the solitary desert. Shortly before his death, he told the brethren that soon he would be taken from them. He instructed them to preserve the Orthodox Faith in its purity, to avoid any association with heretics, and not to be negligent in their monastic struggles. "Strive to be united first with the Lord, and then with the saints, so that after death they may receive you as familiar friends into the everlasting dwellings."

The saint instructed two of his disciples, who had attended him in the final fifteen years of his life, to bury him in the desert and not in Alexandria. He left one of his monastic mantles to St Athanasius of Alexandria and the other to St Serapion of Thmuis. St Anthony died peacefully in the year 356, at age 105, and he was buried in the desert by his disciples.

In the year 544 the relics of St Anthony the Great were transferred to Alexandria, and after the conquest of Egypt by the Saracens in the seventh century, they were transferred to Constantinople. The holy relics were transferred from Constantinople in the tenth-eleventh centuries to a diocese outside Vienna. In the fifteenth century they were brought to Arles, France, to the church of St Julian.

Gregory the Theologian***25 January***

This great Father and Teacher of the Church was born in 329 in a village of the second district of Cappadocia. His father, who later became Bishop of Nazianzus, was named Gregory, and his mother was named Nonna. Both are among the Saints, along with his brother Caesarius and his sister Gorgona. At first he studied in Caesarea of Palestine, then in Alexandria, and finally in Athens. As he was sailing from Alexandria to Athens, a violent sea storm put in peril not only his life but also his salvation, since he had not yet been baptized. With tears and fervour he besought God to spare him, vowing to dedicate his whole self to Him, and the tempest gave way to calm. At Athens the young Gregory was later joined by Basil the Great, whom he already knew. Their acquaintanceship grew into a lifelong brotherly love. Another fellow student of theirs in Athens was the young Prince Julian, who later as Emperor was called the Apostate because he denied Christ and did all in his power to restore paganism. Even in Athens, before Julian had thrown off the mask of piety, Gregory saw what an unsettled mind he had, and said, "What evil the Roman State is nourishing".

After their studies at Athens, Gregory became Basil's fellow ascetic, living the monastic life together with him for a time in the hermitages of Pontus. His father ordained him presbyter of the Church of Nazianzus, and Saint Basil consecrated him Bishop of Sasima (or Zansima), which was in the archdiocese of Caesarea. This consecration was a source of great sorrow to Gregory and a cause of misunderstanding between him and Basil; but his love for Basil remained unchanged, as can be plainly seen from his Funeral Oration on Saint Basil.

About the Year 379, Saint Gregory came to the assistance of the Church of Constantinople, which had already been troubled for forty years by the Arians; by his supremely wise words and many labors he freed it from the corruption of heresy, and was elected Archbishop of that city by the Second Ecumenical Council, which assembled there in 381, and condemned Macedonius, Archbishop of Constantinople, the enemy of the Holy Spirit. When Saint Gregory came to Constantinople, the Arians had taken all the churches and he was forced to serve in a house chapel dedicated to Saint Anastasia the Martyr.

SAINTS OF THE MONTH (CONTINUED)***Gregory the Theologian—continued***

From there he began to preach his famous five sermons on the Trinity, called the Triadica. When he left Constantinople two years later, the Arians did not have one church left to them in the city. Saint Meletius of Antioch who was presiding over the Second Ecumenical Council, died in the course of it and Saint Gregory was chosen in his stead; there he distinguished himself in his expositions of dogmatic theology.

Having governed the Church until 382, he delivered his farewell speech before 150 bishops and the Emperor Theodosius the Great. It was called the Syntacterion, in which he demonstrated the Divinity of the Son. In this speech he requested and received from all, permission to retire from the jurisdiction of Constantinople. He returned to Nazianzus, where he lived to the end of his life. He reposed in the Lord in 391, at sixty-two years old.

His extant writings, both prose and poems in every type of metre, demonstrate his lofty eloquence and his wondrous breadth of learning. In the beauty of his writings, he is considered to have surpassed the Greek writers of antiquity, and because of his God-inspired theological thought, he received the surname "Theologian." Although he is sometimes called Gregory of Nazianzus, this title belongs properly to his father. He himself is known by the Church only as **Gregory the Theologian**. He is especially called "Trinitarian Theologian," since in virtually every homily he refers to the Trinity and the one essence and nature of the Godhead.

Three Hierarchs***30 January***

Synaxis of the **Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom** celebrated on this day as a result of the disputes that raged in Constantinople about which of the three hierarchs was the greatest. In as much as these great teachers each have their own Saint's Day, this common feast of these three teachers was instituted a little before the year 1100, because of the strife that arose among the notable and virtuous men of that time. Some of them preferred Basil, while others preferred Gregory, and yet others preferred John Chrysostom, quarreling among themselves over which of the three was the greatest. Furthermore, each party, in order to distinguish itself from the others, assumed the name of its preferred Saint; hence, they called themselves Basilians, Gregorians, or Johannites. Desiring to bring an end to the contention, the three Saints appeared together to the saintly John Mavropous, a monk who had been ordained Bishop of Euchaita, a city of Asia Minor. They revealed to him that the glory they have at the throne of God is equal, and told him to compose a common service for the three of them, which he did with great skill and beauty, celebrated annually on this day.

This special commemoration offers us a special opportunity each year to examine closely the lives and teachings of these holy men and to recognize how they spoke in unison concerning truth, holiness and love based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Their accord in matters of faith, theology, and the mission of the Church was unquestionably influenced by their upbringing, education, and the relationships they shared with each other. Of particular importance are their teachings and their actions related to offering care and love to those in need, something absolutely relevant to our contemporary situations.

Let us examine some of the most beautiful points of their teachings. First, they emphasized the priority of charity in the Christian life. **Saint John Chrysostom** states, "For nothing can so make a man an imitator of Christ as caring for his neighbors. Indeed, even though you fast, or sleep on hard ground, or even suffer unto death, but should you take no thought for your neighbor, you have done nothing great. **Saint Gregory** affirms that charity and mercy are essential to our relationship with God. "I suggest that the main part of charity is the love for the poor and mercy and compassion for our fellow brethren. There is no better sacrifice that can be offered to God than mercy.... And God, who measures justly and puts mercy in the balance, will with kindness repay kindness."

SAINTS OF THE MONTH (CONTINUED)

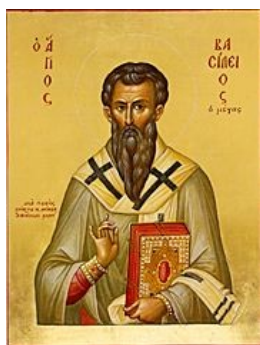
Three Hierarchs—continued

Second, the Three Hierarchs acknowledged the divine truth that showing mercy and sharing with those in need is related to our identity as being created in the image and likeness of God. Commenting on the exhortation of Christ to give to the person who asks of you (Matthew 5:42), **Saint Basil** states, “This saying of our Lord invites us to adopt the spirit of sharing, mutual love, and what is proper to our nature.” **Saint Gregory** exhorts us to look to the example of Christ and ask ourselves what we should do for those in affliction around us. “Are we going to look down upon them, pass them by, abandon them as dead, as abominable...? No way, my brethren! We who are the flock of Christ will not be allowed to do so by the Good Shepherd, who looks for those who have gone astray, goes in search of those who are lost and strengthens the weak.”

Third, these wise shepherds guide us to see the spiritual consequences of what we do for others. This concerns not only the blessings of generosity, but also our salvation. **Saint John Chrysostom** states simply and directly, “Almsgiving is an art and better than all arts.... It procures life everlasting....” **Saint Gregory** uses the teachings of Christ on the Great Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46) to emphasize: “Let us welcome Christ, let us honor Christ.... Offer to Him through the poor and those who are spread throughout the earth, so that, when we leave this world, we will be welcomed by them into the eternal dwelling with the same Christ.”

When we contemplate these great teachings on Christian charity, we see the significance of the superb and beautiful way in which these three Holy Fathers offer us guidance in caring for those in need.

As we find spiritual guidance in the teachings of **Saints Basil, Gregory, and John Chrysostom**, may we also honor their intellectual and linguistic abilities in the service of Christ and His Church. We are truly inspired by their words and examples to offer comfort, healing, care, and love to others. May we also show through their witness the truth of the Gospel, the power and beauty of language, and the blessings of eternal communion with God.



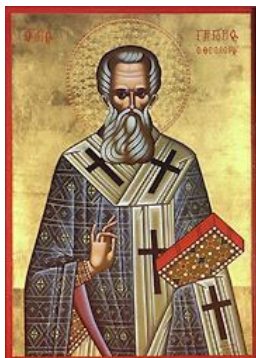
Saint Basil



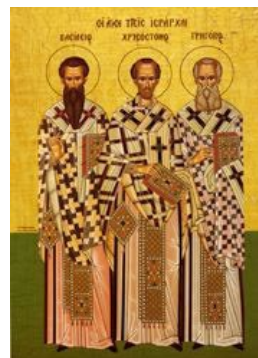
Holy Theophany/Epiphany



Saint Anthony



Gregory the Theologian



Three Hierarchs

Orthodox Calendar

JANUARY 2019

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 New Year's Day St. Basil Circumcision of Christ	2 7pm Union Station Philoptochos	3 7pm Choir Rehearsal	4 NO Greek School	 5 9am Agiasmos Vespertal Liturgy of St. Basil
6 Holy Theophany Vasilopita Sunday 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 11am Church School & Blessing of Classrooms 1pm Greek Dance	7 Synaxis of John the Baptist 9am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 4pm Greek School	8 10am VIPs 5pm Greek Dance 6:30pm Greek Dance 7pm PC Meeting 7:30 AHEPA Mtg	 9 7:15 Philoptochos Board Meeting	10 7pm Choir Rehearsal	 11 4pm Greek School	12 10am Greek Dance
13 Sunday after Theophany 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 11am Church School 1pm Greek Dance	14 4pm Greek School	15 5pm Greek Dance 6:30 Greek Dance	 16 7pm Vespers for Saint Anthony Dinner to follow	17 Saint Anthony 9am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 7pm Choir Rehearsal	 18 Athanasios & Cyril 4pm Greek School	19 10 am Part 1 Lecture Series: The Political Divide
20 12th Sunday of Luke 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 11am Church School 1pm Greek Dance 1pm Financial Peace Class	21 Office Closed for MLK Holiday 4pm Greek School	22 5pm Greek Dance 6:30 Greek Dance	 23 7pm Philoptochos General Meeting	24 7pm Choir Rehearsal	 25 Gregory the Theologian 4pm Greek School	26
27 15th Sunday of Luke 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 11am Church School 12:30 FDF Luncheon 1pm Financial PeaceClass 5pm Past Presidents Dinner	28 4pm Greek School	29 5pm Greek Dance 6:30 Greek Dance	 30 Three Hierarchs 9am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy	31 7pm Choir Rehearsal		
		Strict Fast 	Fish Allowed 	Wine and Oil Allowed 	Dairy, Eggs, and Fish Allowed 	Fast Free

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Greek Orthodox Community
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January 2019

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Did You Know?

The "12 Days of Christmas" is the period from Christmas (Dec. 25) to Epiphany (Jan. 6) – not, as some mistakenly believe, the 12 days *before* Christmas. In traditional Christianity, this season is one great celebration of the appearance of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh.