

# The Voice of Saint Anthony

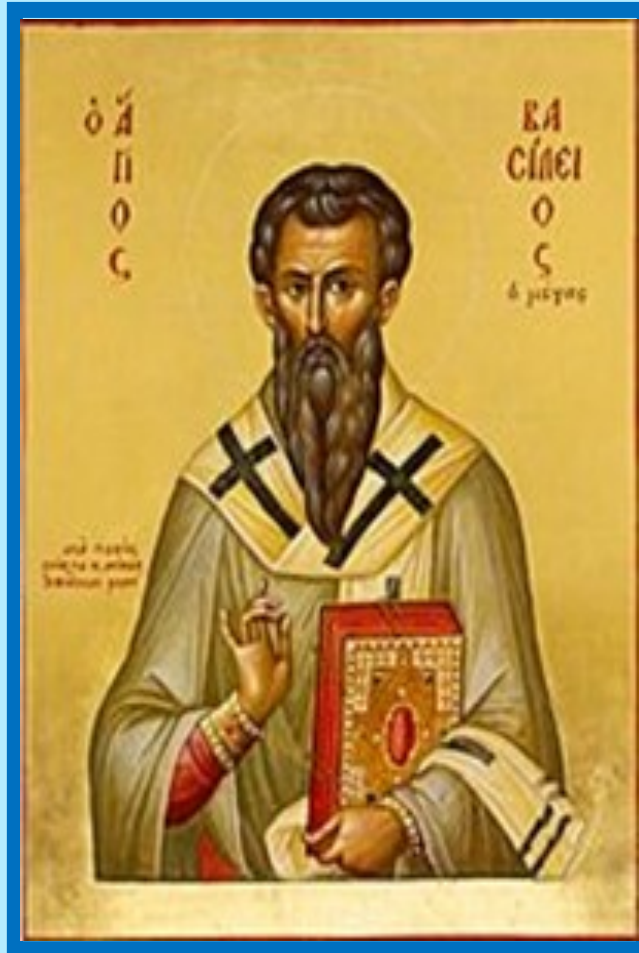
## Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church

January 2026

[www.saint-anthonys.org](http://www.saint-anthonys.org)

(626) 449-6943 Office

**Saint Basil**  
**1 January**



**DEADLINE for  
FEBRUARY  
Newsletter is  
SUNDAY  
25 JANUARY**

**Please send to:  
newsletter\_church  
@aol.com**

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Circumcision of Christ & Saint Basil	1 January
Holy Theophany/ Epiphany	6 January
Saint John the Baptist	7 January
St. Anthony the Great	17 January
Gregory the Theologian	25 January
Three Hierarchs	30 January

## Message from Father Peter

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On New Year's Day we celebrate the feast day of **St. Basil the Great**, who was a renowned Archbishop of Caesarea (Cappadocia) in the 4th Century. He was born into a pious, saintly family around the year 330 AD. His grandmother was **St. Marina the Elder**, his brother **St. Gregory of Nyssa**, and his sister was **St. Marina the Younger**. His other siblings are also considered saints of the Church. St. Basil was a brilliant student, studying in Constantinople and later in Athens with his friend Gregory of Nazianzus (who would also become a saint: **Gregory the Theologian**). Saint Basil was baptized a Christian when he was approximately 27 years old, after which he devoted his entire remaining life to the Church. Basil wrote many articles and books explaining the Christian faith. His teachings are still relevant and used today.

St Basil was a powerful advocate and supporter of the poor, establishing soup kitchens, hospitals, and orphanages. He organized the first communal monasteries and wrote the rules for monks and nuns to live by and follow. He wrote many prayers for use in worship services and a text for the Divine Liturgy. The Orthodox Church continues to celebrate the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great on ten occasions each year. He fell asleep in the Lord on January 1, 379.

### Vasilopita for the New Year:

One of the stories attributed to St. Basil gives Orthodox Christians the tradition of the **Vasilopita**, which is celebrated for the feast of St. Basil and at other times during the month of January. According to the story, the people of Caesarea gave St. Basil their treasures to safeguard. Once the danger had passed, there was doubt and disagreement about what exactly belonged to whom. St. Basil ordered that loaves of bread be baked and that the treasures be placed inside the bread. When the loaves were distributed to the residents of the city, a miracle occurred. Each person received exactly what they had given to St. Basil to protect. From that time forward, Orthodox Christians have baked a Vasilopita loaf with a coin inside. As the pita or bread is cut, the person who receives the piece with the coin is blessed and promised to experience a good and fortunate year.

In honor of this beautiful tradition our community we will gather directly following the Divine Liturgy on **Sunday January 11** for the cutting of the Vasilopita. We will offer prayers and petitions for the New Year (2026). We will pray as a community for health and peace in the world. There will be a Vasilopita at each table along with cheese, olives and clementines provided and hosted by our Philoptochos ladies. There will be one large pita that will be cut and distributed to our ministry leaders. It is an afternoon of great joy and happiness. I invite you to attend this beautiful Saint Anthony tradition.

Praying for a blessed New Year,

Fr. Peter





### Vasilopita

#### Saint Basil's Bread

Orthodox Christians bake Vasilopita for January 1<sup>st</sup>, New Year's Day. St. Basil hid gold coins in loaves of bread and gave them to the poor. Today, we make Vasilopita to thank God for all of our blessings and to remember and emulate St. Basil's kindness. A coin is wrapped and placed in the bread before it is baked. The person who finds the coin in their slice of bread is considered to be especially blessed for the New Year.

### HOW TO CUT VASILOPITA

Using a knife, make the sign of the cross over the bread, saying:

*"In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen."*

The bread is then cut into pieces in the following order:

- First piece is for **Christ** – place this piece on the family's Ikonistasi – the family altar.
- Second piece is for the **Virgin Mary** – again this can be placed on the family altar.
- Third piece is cut for **St Basil** – if the Vasilopita is cut at midnight, then leave this piece out on the table for St Basil to come and visit.
- Fourth piece is cut for the **needy**.
- The remaining pieces of Vasilopita are cut for members of the **family**, in a special order. Head of the household, then each member of the family in order from eldest to youngest.
- Include those who are absent.
- The last piece for the **house** and/or family business.

**HOLY SERVICES PROGRAM – January - THEOPHANY, FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY**  
**SAINT ANTHONY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**JANUARY 2026**

Sunday, Jan. 4	SUNDAY BEFORE EPIPHANY Orthros ..... 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom ..... 10:00 a.m.
Monday, Jan. 5	THE FOREFEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (THEOPHANY) OF CHRIST AGHIASMOS (GREAT BLESSING OF THE WATERS) Orthros..... 9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom ..... 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 6	THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY (THEOPHANY) OF CHRIST AGHIASMOS (GREAT BLESSING OF THE WATERS) Orthros ..... 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy of St. Basil ..... 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 7	SYNAXIS OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST Orthros ..... 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy ..... 10:00 a.m.
Sunday, Jan. 11	Orthros ..... 8:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom ..... 10:00 a.m. VASILOPITA after Services hosted by Philoptochos.
Friday, Jan. 16	EVE OF THE FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY Great Vesper Service w/ Artoklasia ..... 6:00 p.m. Dinner will follow, hosted by Philoptochos.
Saturday, Jan. 17	FEAST OF ST. ANTHONY Orthros ..... 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy ..... 10:00 a.m.

***JOIN US IN PRAYER VIA LIVE-STREAM: SAINT-ANTHONYSPASADENA.ORG/LIVESTREAM***

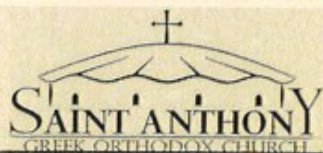
***FACEBOOK.COM/STANTHONYSPASADENA***

***YOUTUBE.COM/CHANNEL/UCXSG4uJFWmElsOEIjx96pCA***





## Stewardship



## 2026 Stewardship Financial Commitment

*"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another,  
as good stewards of God's grace." (1 Peter 4:10)*

2026

LAST NAME

FIRST NAME(S), PLEASE INCLUDE CHILDREN UNDER 18.

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PREFERRED PHONE

OTHER/SECOND PHONE

E-MAIL

SIGNATURE

DATE

[For office use only]

**ST. ANTHONY GIVING LEVELS:****CONTRIBUTOR: \$499 & below**

\$9.60/week OR \$42/month &amp; below

**FRIEND: \$500 - \$999**

\$9.60-\$19/week OR \$42-\$83/month

**SUPPORTER: \$1,000 - \$1,999**

\$19-\$38/week OR \$83-\$167/month

**\* FAITHFUL: \$2,000 - \$3,999**

\$38-\$77/week OR \$167-\$333/month

**\* DISCIPLE: \$4,000 - \$6,999**

\$77-\$135/week OR \$333-\$583/month

**\* GUARDIAN: \$7,000 - \$9,999**

\$135-\$192/week OR \$583-\$833/month

**\* ANGEL: \$10,000 - \$14,999**

\$192-\$288/week OR \$833-\$1,249/month

**\* ARCHANGEL: \$15,000 and up**

\$288/week OR \$1,250/month &amp; up

*Review your stewardship commitment prayerfully, consider what you offer to Christ's Church  
in comparison to your monthly utility/service payments.*

**Please return your completed commitment card to church by December 31, 2025**

*Your card must be on file for you to be considered in 'Good Standing'*

**In response to God's blessings, I/we pledge a 2026 offering of:**

**My Total Commitment for 2026: \$\_\_\_\_\_**

**I will fulfill and pay my pledge: (CHECK ONE)**

☐ Weekly at \$\_\_\_\_\_/week

☐ Monthly at \$\_\_\_\_\_/month ☐ Annually

Contact the Church office to set up easy recurring electronic payments  
-OR- set up your own recurring giving at [saint-anthonys.churchgiving.com](http://saint-anthonys.churchgiving.com)

***\*To fully cover our operating expenses, our goal is to  
have our average stewardship be \$2,000 per family or above***



# Commitment of Time and Talents



Families should mark "H" for husband, "W" for wife, "C" for Children.

## Council of Ministries

_____ Acolytes	_____ Kouvouklion	_____ Stewardship Committee
_____ Bible Studies	_____ Little Lambs	_____ Studies in the Faith
_____ Bookstore	_____ Myrrh Bearers	_____ Sunday School
_____ GOYA Basketball	_____ OCF (Orthodox Christian	_____ Vacation Bible School
_____ GOYA/Jr. GOYA	_____ Fellowship)	_____ VIPs
_____ Greek Dance	_____ Office Volunteers	_____ Volleyball Tournament
_____ Greek Language School	_____ St. John Chrysostom	_____ Welcoming Committee
_____ JOY/HOPE	_____ Oratorical Festival	_____ Other

## Parish Events

_____ Palm Sunday Luncheon	_____ Resurrection Magiritsa	_____ Summer Family Picnic
_____ Pasadena Golf Classic	_____ Dinner	_____ Other
_____ Pasadena Greek Fest	_____ Saint Anthony Feast Day	

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# Ministries



## 2025 PARISH COUNCIL

Perry Vidalakis	President
Pete Gallanis	1st Vice President
Joe Akrotirianakis	2nd Vice President
Kosta Papavasiliou	Secretary
Tashia Vagenas	Treasurer
Tony Christopoulos	AssiSaintTreasurer

Christian Balas  
Tom Grafos  
Louie Kades  
Pete Katsafados  
Jonathan Nassos  
Jim Pappas  
Dino Vagenas  
Vincent Zarian  
Nikole Zoumberakis

## OFFICE STAFF

Alma Vorgias – Office Administrator



## CUSTODIAL STAFF

Carlos Sosa



## CHANTERS

Michael Kontaxis  
Liam McCann

## READERS

Nicholas Kokoris  
Rebecca Russo



## SUNDAY SCHOOL STAFF

Sophia Syrengelas – Director

Little Lambs:  
Krystina Vagenas

PK & TK:  
Irene Albeck, Larissa Maslen, Jenni Nassos

Kindergarten & First:  
Elena Tsianos, Theoni Vagenas

Second & Third:  
Sophia Syrengelas, Andrianna Lareau

Fourth & Fifth:  
Mary Udria & Athena Serban

Middle School:  
Polly Vagenas & Chris Syrengelas

High School:  
Presvytera Aida Stratos

**PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY**

**ADDITIONAL MINISTRIES**

**Executive Board**

**President**

Nicolette Fuerst

**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**

Liz Skandale

**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

Carolina Kokoris

Sophia Syrengelas

**Corresponding Secretary**

Tanya Christodoulelis

**Recording Secretary**

Fontaine Malisos

**Treasurer**

Maria Kypreos

**Assistant Treasurer**

Mary Dewar

**Philoptochos Advisor**

Judith Din

**Spiritual Advisor**

Father Peter Stratos

**Board of Directors**

**Beautification**

Connie Becker

Andrea Patzakis

**Community Outreach**

Mary Dewar

**Fellowship**

Mary Udria

Noula Serban

**Operation Classroom**

Helen Skandale

Lisa Xanthos

**Publicity**

Christine Pappas

**Scholarship**

Presbytera Aida Statros

**Sunshine and Visitation**

Maria Hronas

**Union Station**

Maria Kokoris



**Acolytes**

Pres Aida Stratos

**Bible Study**

Fr. Peter Stratos

**Bookstore**

Christiana Kontaxis  
Michael Kontaxis

**Bowling**

Anthia Drulias Lucas

**Golf Tournament**

Jimmy Christos

**GOYA**

Anthia Drulias Lucas  
Maria Katsas Gittings  
Polly Vagenas

**GOYA Basketball**

Pana Gelt

**GOYA Volleyball**

Anthia Lucas  
Pana Gelt

**Greek Dance Groups**

Nikole Zoumberakis

**Greek Festival**

Christian Balas

**Greek Language**

Anastasia McClain

**JOY/HOPE**

Irene Albeck

**Myrrh Bearers**

Irene Albeck

**Oratorical Festival**

Pres Aida Stratos

**Prayer Shawls**

Maria Kypreos

**Psalter Group**

Fr. Peter Stratos

**Vacation Bible School**

Sophia Syrengelas  
Mary Udria

**VIPs**

Irene Albeck



## Parish Council

### ENTERING CHURCH

Please make every effort to arrive for services a little early.  
If you arrive late, it is important to observe the following moments in the Divine Liturgy when you should not enter the Nave but wait quietly in the Narthex:

During the Small Entrance  
During the Epistle Reading  
During the Gospel Reading  
During the Homily  
When the Priest is censuring just before the Great Entrance  
During the Great Entrance  
From the Creed until after the Consecration of the Gifts  
During the Lord's Prayer

A Parish Council member will gladly assist you with any question about the appropriate times to enter the Nave.

### HOLY COMMUNION PROCEDURE

For the benefit of our Sunday School students, their teachers and the **TIMELY** start of their Sunday School Classes please allow all the children to receive Holy Communion first.

- ♦ Please remain standing while following the directions of the ushers.
- ♦ The ushers will release the children by pew from Front to Back.
- ♦ Only parents of the smallest, youngest Sunday School children, who need assistance, should receive Holy Communion with their children.
- ♦ If you are not in a pew when Holy Communion begins, please quietly find a spot in the back rows. Your children will be released in turn.
- ♦ Please do not attempt to send your children down the side aisles to the front alone or down the center aisle.
- ♦ After all children have received, the ushers will release the adults, again from the front pews.
- ♦ Please cooperate with our ushers. Please do not ask to be allowed to proceed ahead of others or enter the center aisle ahead of the pews in front of you.
- ♦ When receiving Holy Communion, make the Sign of the Cross, state your name (baptismal name) and naturally receive as if being fed.
- ♦ Non-Orthodox Christians may not receive Holy Communion, but they may receive the Holy Bread at the end of the service.
- ♦ All Orthodox Christians must be spiritually prepared to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Please see your priest if you have any questions.



Sunday School resumes  
January 11th



## Youth & Young Adults

Saint John Chrysostom Oratorical Festival-2026

Parish Level

Sunday, March 8, 2026

12:30pm

at

Saint Anthony

Greek Orthodox Church

Jr. and Sr High School Speech Divisions

Essay and Poetry Divisions

Topic Questions, Tips, Guidelines and details at:

[www.goarch.org/oratorical](http://www.goarch.org/oratorical)

PLEASE ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILDREN TO PARTICIPATE! YOU WILL BE AMAZED, IMPRESSED AND INSPIRED BY THEIR THOUGHTS AND BY THEIR POISE WHEN THEY PRESENT THEIR SPEECHES!

\*A great experience for all participants.

\*Scholarship Opportunities.

\*Participation letter submitted to their school for inclusion in their academic files.



## **JUNIOR DIVISION (GRADES 7-9)**

**Select one of the five following topics:**

### **TOPIC 1**

Select a hymn that is chanted in the Divine Liturgy and explain its meaning and theological significance.

### **TOPIC 2**

Choose a Saint who was a child or young person. How did their faith influence their life, and what can we learn from them?

### **TOPIC 3**

Who is the Ecumenical Patriarch, and why is he significant in the Orthodox Church today?

### **TOPIC 4**

Choose an Old Testament story (such as David and Goliath, Daniel in the lion's den, or Joseph and his brothers) and explain how it teaches us important lessons that apply to young people today.

### **TOPIC 5**

Select a major Orthodox feast day and explain why we celebrate it and how participating in this celebration deepens our understanding of Christ and our faith.





## **SENIOR DIVISION (GRADES 10-12)**

**Select one of the five following topics:**

### **TOPIC 1**

Pick a common icon type that is found in Orthodox churches (for example Christ Pantocrator, Virgin Hodegetria, the Resurrection icon) and explain its meaning and theological significance.

### **TOPIC 2**

Why is the feast of Pentecost important and what does the story of Pentecost teach us about the Holy Spirit?

### **TOPIC 3**

Saint John frequently contrasts light and darkness in his Gospel and letters. Choose one of his teachings about light (such as "God is light" or Christ as "the light of the world") and discuss how this imagery helps us understand our Christian calling and witness.

### **TOPIC 4**

Throughout history, Orthodox Christians have faced persecution for their faith, from ancient martyrs to modern confessors. How does the witness of martyrs, both ancient and contemporary, strengthen and guide the Church today?

### **TOPIC 5**

Orthodox funeral services speak of death as "falling asleep" and emphasize the hope of resurrection. How does Orthodox teaching about death and eternal life influence how we live and how we care for the dying and grieving?

# Philoptochos

## Good Works

### **EATON FIRE DISASTER RELIEF SUPPORT**

Philoptochos has been working to provide support and assistance to those who have been affected by the Eaton Fire.

Recovery Relief Buckets are available to anyone who has been displaced or is recovering from the after-effects of the fire.

Buckets contain essential cleaning supplies to help you clean and neutralize the lingering ashes and residue of the fire.

Contact a Board member if you or someone you know needs a Disaster Relief Bucket.

Philoptochos is here to help those affected by the Eaton Fire.

If you need assistance or aid, please let us know.  
The Army of Agape is here for you.

Questions: Judith Din (626) 676-1240 or [jnda810@gmail.com](mailto:jnda810@gmail.com)

### ***Union Station Homeless Service (USHS)***

USHS is in need of sack lunch donations. The prepared lunches can be dropped off at the Adult Center (412 S. Raymond Ave., Pasadena) from 8:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Please, email [volunteer@unionstationhs.org](mailto:volunteer@unionstationhs.org) to schedule delivery.

Philoptochos prepares a nutritious dinner, funded through the generosity of our donors. USHS has requested packaged dessert (cookies), single serve beverages (10 oz.), and single serve bottles of milk. You may continue to volunteer by donating towards the purchase of individual packaged items.

The estimated costs are: Chicken – \$75, Rolls – \$15, Dessert – \$17, and Beverages – \$40.

We welcome your donations to help offset our costs of large aluminum pans with lids. We invite you to consider helping us feed the needy by making a contribution towards this ministry. ***We are most grateful for your generous support.***

Please make checks out to: ***Philoptochos of Saint Anthony.***

Please write USHS on the memo line.

Thank you for being a part of the solution to homelessness.

For further information, please contact:

Irene Albeck	<a href="mailto:mcmg2a@aol.com">mcmg2a@aol.com</a>
Maria Kokoris	<a href="mailto:nmkokoris@gmail.com">nmkokoris@gmail.com</a>
Christina Kades	<a href="mailto:christinekades@gmail.com">christinekades@gmail.com</a>

***"Break your bread for the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
If you see a naked man, cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh."***

Isaiah 58:7

### ***“CHRISTMAS FOR THE KIDS” In Conjunction with Friends In Deed***

Once again, Philoptochos and the St. Anthony community helped **Friends In Deed** to provide Christmas presents for some of Pasadena’s most vulnerable children. In some cases these gifts were the only presents they received this Christmas. We are grateful for your support! Thank you to all our generous donors who participated in this event and provided gifts for these children.



### ***HILLSIDES – Youth Moving On (YMO) Program***

Philoptochos also donated gift-filled holiday stockings to the 19 young adults in YMO transitional housing program in Pasadena.

Hillsides has helped children, youth and families heal through trauma-informed care, behavioral health treatment, and foster care and adoption services. Hillsides supports young adults with life-changing services through the Youth Moving On (YMO) program.

YMO transitional housing program provides youth ages 18 – 24 with up to two years of affordable, quality housing. The safe and comfortable apartment complex offers one-bedroom units complete with new bedding, food, and essentials.

As part of the program, participants receive the tools necessary for independent living and benefit from daily support provided by a multidisciplinary on-site team. Additionally, program participants have access to educational and career support, on-site tutoring, substance abuse counseling, mentors, financial literacy training, and therapeutic services.

### ***Year-end Donations***

In addition to the gifts for **Friends In Deed** and **Hillsides**, Philoptochos made end of year donations to the following charitable organizations:

Forever Kids, Foothill Unity Center, Friends In Deed Women’s Shelter, Children of the Night, Wells Bring Hope, Project Mexico/St. Innocent Orphanage, and Elizabeth House.





## Community Happenings

### *Annual Christmas Benefit 2025*

Thank you to everyone who made our 56th Annual Christmas Benefit, *A Timeless Christmas*, a tremendous success! This year's event was a delicious luncheon and fashion show held at The Sheraton San Gabriel on Saturday, December 6. Over 400 guests enjoyed entertainment by the Pasadena Civic Ballet. The Christmas Boutique, Santa's Kitchen, and gift vendors provided a delightful shopping experience for all.

Proceeds will benefit a very worthy local organization, **San Gabriel Valley Habitat for Humanity**, as well as other Philoptochos charities in our community, Metropolis and National. SGV Habitat for Humanity has been leading long-term recovery efforts since the 2025 January devastation in our local community of Altadena. They are working with The Foothill Catalog Foundation and Altadena Builds Back Foundation to create pre-approved designs and rebuild homes for the underinsured homeowners.



### *Philoptochos Christmas Party* - December 17 - Trinity Ballroom

All attendees enjoyed a delicious dinner and desserts, good fellowship, and Christmas cheer. The festivities also included a fun and entertaining ornament gift exchange game.





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## Upcoming Philoptochos Events

*Vasilopita Celebration* - Sunday, January 11

Philoptochos will host the Vasilopita celebration in the church hall following Divine Liturgy.

*Great Vespers Dinner* - Friday, January 16

Philoptochos along with the Parish Council will host a light dinner following the Great Vespers for the Feast Day of Saint Anthony.

*Souper Sunday* – Sunday, February 1

6<sup>th</sup> Annual Cookoff in support of Friends In Deed's Bad Weather Supplies Program.

More details will be forth-coming.

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## Upcoming Philoptochos Meetings

*January Board Meeting*                      Wednesday, January 14 at 7:00 PM

*January General Meeting*                Wednesday, January 21 at 6:30 PM. More details to follow.

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## Upcoming Scholarship Opportunities in 2026

**Attention High School Seniors** – Philoptochos of Saint Anthony Scholarship Applications will be available in Spring 2026. Applications will be open for graduating seniors who are active members of our parish.

**Patzakis Scholarships for Nursing and Medical Studies** - Applications will be available next year in March and due in May. Any student pursuing a degree in nursing, medicine, healthcare profession, or dentistry and is a member in our Saint Anthony church community may apply.

Philoptochos wishes to support our young people in their academic advancement.

Additional announcements forth-coming in future Voice newsletters.

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## Events in our Metropolis

2026 Saint Sophia Philoptochos 56<sup>th</sup> Debutante Presentation Ball will be held on **Sunday, January 18, 2026** at the Four Season Beverly Wilshire Hotel. Please join Saint Sophia and friends in celebrating the young women of our Metropolis by attending the Ball and recognizing their plentiful philanthropic, academic, and extracurricular accomplishments and by raising funds for Philoptochos charities via submitting a donation and message to the Presentation Album.

**Saint Anthony Church Debutantes:** *Evangeline Bicos, Mariella Bicos, Valentina Bicos, Madeline Gallanis, Madison McNulty, Nancy McNulty, Sophia McNulty, and Maria Syrengelas.*

For more information on Reservations or -Donations, [presentation@saintsophia.org](mailto:presentation@saintsophia.org) (323)737-2424

## 2026 Philoptochos Scholarship for Graduating HighSchool Seniors

Announcing the Applications and Rules & Regulations Sheets for the Philoptochos Scholarship for Graduating High School Seniors. All forms will be available at the Community Center entry table next to the Church Office beginning Sunday, January 11, 2026.

Please note that the deadline for submission of applications and recommendation letters is April 3, 2026.

All letters of recommendation can be mailed to the Church office or emailed to

[frpeter@saint-anthonys.org](mailto:frpeter@saint-anthonys.org) and addressed:  
“Attention Philoptochos Scholarship Committee”

If you have any questions, please contact Presvytera Aida at [presaida7@gmail.com](mailto:presaida7@gmail.com)

**PLEASE SEE NEXT 2 PAGES...**

- ♦ ***Philoptochos Scholarship Rules and Regulations***
- ♦ ***Philoptochos Scholarship and Award Application***





## PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY OF SAINT ANTHONY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

778 South Rosemead Boulevard • Pasadena, California • 91107 • 626.449.6943

### PHILOPTOCHOS SCHOLARSHIP AWARD - 2026 RULES & REGULATIONS

1. The parents of the applicant (or the applicant him or herself) must be members in good standing of Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church for at least one year preceding the date of the scholarship application.
2. A parent of the applicant must be a member of Philoptochos Society of Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church, Panagia Chapter.
3. Applicant must be planning to continue their education for the upcoming 2026-2027 school year. Education goal may be a four-year institute, technical or career training program.
4. The applicant must have a minimum 3.0 GPA.
5. Applicants will be evaluated on the following criteria:
  - a. Academic achievement/and or merit
  - b. Church and participation in Saint Anthony youth activities
  - c. Community service and/or leadership qualities.
  - d. Citizenship
6. Applicants must:
  - a. Complete and submit all required application documents by **Friday, April 3, 2026**. Documents may be submitted by conventional mail or through email.
  - b. Arrange for his or her current academic transcript to be mailed from the academic institution to the church office (Attention: Philoptochos Scholarship Committee);
  - c. Submit an autobiographical essay, approximately 300 words double spaced, 12-point font size, stating influences on the applicant's life and addresses future goals;
  - d. Submit two (2) letters of recommendation, one of which must be from a high school counselor or teacher;
  - e. Report for a personal interview if requested by the Scholarship Committee.
  - f. Attach a recent photo of themselves to the application form.
7. The Philoptochos Society of Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church is not obligated to grant any scholarships in a given year. The Scholarship Committee and Father Peter will carefully review all applications. The Committee's decision shall be final.
8. Scholarship recipients will be notified by mail. Scholarships will be presented personally at the annual June Philoptochos General Meeting.

All information in this application will be held in strict confidence.





# PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY OF SAINT ANTHONY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

778 South Rosemead Boulevard • Pasadena, California • 91107 • 626.449.6943

## PHILOPTOCHOS SCHOLARSHIP AWARD APPLICATION - 2026

### APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name

Date of birth

Phone

Current Address

Email

High School Attended

School Address

Dates Attended

GPA

Please list extracurricular activities you have participated in while In school:

Please list activities you have participated in while attending Saint Anthony:

### FAMILY INFORMATION

Parents' Names

Names of Siblings

### SIGNATURE

I VERIFY THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ABOVE IS TRUE AND CORRECT.

Applicant's Signature

Date

**APPLICANT, PLEASE ATTACH A RECENT PHOTO OF YOURSELF TO THIS APPLICATION.**



**PHILOPTOCHOS SOCIETY OF  
SAINT ANTHONY GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH  
PANAGIA CHAPTER**

**PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERSHIP FORM**

☐ 2025 Philoptochos Membership      ☐ 2025 Associate Membership (Men / Non-Voting)      Date \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name	First Name	Spouse Name	M.I.
Street Address			
City	State	Zip	
Home Phone		Cell Phone	
Email			
Notices will be sent via email. If you prefer your notices mailed, please, let us know by checking here <input type="checkbox"/>			
St. Anthony's Philoptochos Stewardship (membership dues). Select amount below:			
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 <input type="checkbox"/> Other			
Each \$50 stewardship supports National Philoptochos (\$15), San Francisco Metropolis (\$15) and St. Anthony Philoptochos obligations and projects (\$20).    ___ Check    ___ Credit Card    ___ Cash			
I am interested in helping with the following:			
___ Feeding the Hungry	___ Hosting Fellowship	___ Marketing	
___ Delivering Meals to Parishioners	___ Baking & Cooking	___ Website Designer	
___ Homebound Visitations	___ Fundraising	___ Other Talents	
___ Telephone Tree	___ Social Media	___ Specify	



**2025 PHILOPTOCHOS MEMBERSHIP DRIVE**

Your continued generosity allows Philoptochos to provide financial assistance and outreach to those in need. We invite you to renew your membership or become a new member as we endeavor to do our philanthropic work. Join us as we strive to fulfill the word of Christ.

*".. whatever you did for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did for me" - Matthew 25:30*

**PLEASE RENEW OR JOIN BY MAIL (Check payable to: Saint Anthony Philoptochos Society)**

**Mail your check along with this form to:**

**Saint Anthony Philoptochos Society, Attention: Membership  
778 South Rosemead Boulevard, Pasadena, CA 91107**

or pay online at <https://stanthonypiloptochos.square.site>

Scroll down to "Annual Membership Dues"

For more information or questions, please contact Lisa Xanthos (626) 222-4374 or Helen Skandale (818) 618-4963

To register for membership online, click here:

<https://stanthonypiloptochos.square.site/product/become-a-philoptochos-member/58>



## COFFEE HOUR FELLOWSHIP



### *Host a Coffee Hour*

**Celebrate a Name Day, Birthday, Anniversary, Loved One, or as a Family Activity!**

Every Sunday following the Divine Liturgy, coffee hour in the Parish Hall provides an opportunity to visit with fellow parishioners and to greet new Parish members. By offering to host Coffee Hour, you are assisting in providing a delicious snack while we spend time with our church family. Your fellow parishioners will be grateful for the snack and fellowship.

#### **Hosting is easy:**

1. **Sign-up on the poster located in the Parish Hall or Church Office.** If you would like your name or event included in the weekly bulletin, notify the Church Office by the Wednesday prior to the date chosen at 626.449.6943 or by email at [office@saint-anthonys.org](mailto:office@saint-anthonys.org)

*For Memorials, please notify the Church Office by the Wednesday prior to the date chosen at 626.449.6943 or by email at [office@saint-anthonys.org](mailto:office@saint-anthonys.org)*

2. **Bring snack for 70 adults & 30 kids** – See reverse side for suggestions and quantities
3. **Bring snack items plated on serving trays/bowls ready to serve by 10:00AM on your chosen day.** (Serving tables and coffee/water station are set up by 10:00AM)
4. **Clean up snack tables and remove all personal items** – Our dedicated Parish caretaker, Carlos, will assist on the day of the event, as needed, but he is not responsible for the set up or clean up of the snack tables. Please remove any leftover food

Coffee, sugar, creamer, paper plates, plastic utensils, paper cups and napkins used for coffee hour are underwritten by Parish Council & Philoptochos. Please consider donating these items to help offset the cost.

***All donations made during Coffee Hour go toward the Church Altar Fund to provide the liturgical needs for our St. Anthony Parish***



## *Host a Coffee Hour*

### Food Suggestions & Quantities

100 people – 70 adults & 30 children

Costco, Smart & Final or Super King are recommended for most items. Specialty items can be found at any Greek or Armenian market

Please have all items brought to the Parish Hall ready-to-serve on platters/bowls by 10AM. preferably disposable. If not disposable, please remember to take them home

Tables, Tablecloths, Coffee, Cream, Sugar, Paper Plates, Napkins, Cups and Water will be set up by 10AM

Paper goods are underwritten by both Parish Council & Philoptochos. Please consider donating these items to help offset the cost

Our dedicated Parish caretaker, Carlos, is responsible only for the setup of water and coffee. He should not be expected to set-up the snack or cleanup any remaining food or serving pieces.

Any questions, please contact Tanya Mallis-Christodoulelis @ 626-379-2304

QTY	ITEM	COMMENTS
	Mini Bagels or Bagels	100 Mini whole or 6 bags of 12 Regular Sliced, cut in half
1 Jumbo Jar	Peanut Butter	Served in 4 paper/plastic bowls
1-48oz Jar	Jelly	Served in 2 paper/plastic bowls
1 Jumbo Jar	Nutella	Served in 2 paper/plastic bowls
	<b>OR</b>	
100	Mini Deli Sandwiches	Assorted Meats, Tuna, Veggie
	<b>OR</b>	
5lbs	Greek Cheese	Feta or Kefalotyri, sliced
4lbs	Greek Olives	1-4lb Tub or equivalent
	Hummus	Homemade (1 lg can chickpeas) or 3-34oz tubs Costco Hummus
4	Pita Bread Bags of 12	Pita - cut into quarters / Baguettes - sliced
	<b>OR</b>	
2-3	Assorted Salads	Potato Salad, Greek Salad, Tabouli
2	Assorted Vegetable Trays	
	<b>AND (Choose 2)</b>	
100	Cookies	Biscotti, Oreos, Assorted
4	Bundt Cakes or similar	Cut into thin slices
50-100	Muffins / Pastries / Donuts	50 Large, cut in half or 100 Small
6 containers	Seedless Grapes	Cleaned and cut into small bunches
3 – 5lb bags	Tangerines	
2	Assorted Fruit or Veggie Trays	



**FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA**  
 Facebook: St. Anthony Philoptochos  
 Instagram: stanthonypiloptochos



**KALI XPONIA and HAPPY NEW YEAR** to the entire Saint Anthony Community.

With fervent hopes that everyone had a very Merry and Blessed Christmas holiday, we are happy to report that our month of December was filled with plenty of holiday spirit, fellowship, and in the process, the contribution to a worthy cause for the community at large.

In lieu of our December meeting, the VIPs once again ventured out to Citrus College in Glendora on December 14th to enjoy the amazing and wonderful Christmas pageant put on by the Visual and Performing Arts Division. We wish to once again thank Judie Christopoulos for procuring our tickets for this event which is becoming an annual favorite outing for our group.

On Tuesday, December 16th, the VIPs were invited to the residence of Julie and Dino Balas to enjoy fellowship and Christmas hospitality while simultaneously contributing to the Pasadena City College Foundation for the Lancer Pantry to benefit those students who deal with food insecurity. The VIPs were able to contribute in excess of three thousand dollars in cash and restaurant gift cards for this worthy cause.

Below is a letter that President Irene Albeck submitted to the College along with our contribution.

*The VIPs wish to honor Doctor Julie Kiotas with a donation to the Lancer Pantry, a cause especially dear to her heart.*

*Every once in a while, we meet someone whose presence changes the atmosphere—someone whose kindness, integrity, and generosity leave a lasting impression. For us, that person is Doctor Kiotas. She has devoted herself to caring for our VIPs (Very Important People), the senior citizens of Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church.*

*Understanding that the holiday season can bring loneliness and, at times, isolation, Doctor Kiotas opens her home with remarkable generosity. She offers fellowship, food, and genuine social connection, giving our members a sense of belonging and renewing hope as we enter this season of giving.*

*Her compassion extends far beyond the holidays. Throughout the year, Doctor Kiotas contributes meaningful activities that encourage creativity, stimulate critical thinking, and enrich the lives of our VIPs. We are truly indebted to her openness, her dedication, and her unwavering care.*

*The VIPs extend their deepest appreciation to Doctor Kiotas. Her kindness strengthens our community, and her dedication enriches every life she touches. We are honored to celebrate her this season with this donation to the Lancer Pantry, helping food insecure students.*

*On behalf of the VIPs, sincerely,*

*Irene Albeck, President*

*Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church*

We look forward to welcoming in the New Year at our **next meeting, January 13th, 2026!**

With our best wishes for a New Year 2026 filled with Good Health and Happiness, we remain,

***The Saint Anthony VIP Ministry***







## Community News & more...

### Introducing Father Demetri Dogias..

My name is Demetri Dogias and I was born in Sacramento, California. I grew up going to church at the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Sacramento where my grandfather of blessed memory, Fr. Demetrius Dogias, spent 24 of his 50 priestly years. I participated in the many ministries of the Church from the years of my youth including, serving in the altar, Sunday School, JOY, GOYA, Greek Dance, and summer camp. Upon graduating high school, with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, I began my undergraduate studies at Hellenic College with Seminarian status in the Fall semester of 2019.

When classes were moved remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic, I went back home to Sacramento. During this time, Fr. James Retelas, the Proistamenos at my home parish of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, offered me an internship at the parish so I could continue my life as a seminarian. During what was a difficult time for the world, I was blessed with the opportunity to be at the Church every day being mentored by Fr. James. This internship included my participation as the chanter for all sacraments, main editor of the monthly newsletter, editor of the weekly bulletin, social media coordinator, youth director, and joining Fr. James on pastoral visits. This internship did not just teach me about the day to day life as a parish priest, but it strengthened my calling towards the priesthood.

Upon returning to in person classes on campus in the Fall of 2021, I began to spend each of my summers dedicated to serving the youth of our Metropolis and Archdiocese. In the summer of 2022, I had the opportunity to serve on staff for Ionian Village under the leadership of Fr. Gary Kyriacou. In May of 2023, I graduated from Hellenic College with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Religious Studies. During this summer, I joined my home parish on a 10 day trip to Project Mexico, served on staff for All Saints Camp in Arizona under the leadership of Fr. Jacob Saylor, and returned to my metropolis camp of Saint Nicholas Ranch as a staff member. Additionally, I served as the Worship Chair for the annual Metropolis of San Francisco YAL Conference of that year. Again with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos of San Francisco, in the Fall of 2023, I began my studies at Holy Cross.

During my studies at Hellenic College, I met my best friend and love of my life, Christina Kendrat. Christina is from Leesburg, Virginia and grew up attending Church at the Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church in Sterling, Virginia. Christina also grew up in a family that placed Christ and the Church at the center of their lives. She was involved in Sunday School, Greek School, Greek dance, JOY, and GOYA. Christina received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Religious Studies with a Minor in Education from Hellenic College in 2024. That summer, we had the blessing of serving the youth together as staff for the CrossRoad Institute and we were the Boys and Girls Directors for her metropolis camp, Camp Good Shepherd in Virginia.

In May of 2025, Christina and I were married at her mother's home parish of Saint Katherine Greek Orthodox Church in Falls Church, Virginia. We currently live in Dendrinis Village of Married Student Housing on campus. Christina is a 3rd grade elementary school teacher and I expect to graduate in May 2026 with a Masters of Divinity degree. We look forward to dedicating our lives in following our calling in serving Christ and His Church.



## An Explanation of the Miracle of Epiphany...

The Jordan River Turned Back On the eve of the Feast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior, the hymns of the Church introduce us to the deeper essence of the Feast. Christ comes to be baptized in the Jordan River to pave the way for our own restoration from the sin of Adam. Holy Baptism is presented as a means of defying the fallen world and reuniting ourselves with the God of love.

Within the hymns for Theophany, we hear verses from the Psalms of David declaring that “the Jordan turned back.” The Jordan River starts from two main springs, Ior and Dan. This why the river is called Jordan (Ior + Dan, in Greek means *Ιορδάνης*). These two smaller rivers join to form the Jordan River which eventually flows into the Dead Sea. Saint John Chrysostom explains that the Jordan River symbolizes the beginning of humankind, with Adam and Eve representing the tributaries (a river or stream flowing into a larger river or lake). Their collective path leads to death which is represented by the Dead Sea. But Christ comes, and with His Baptism, the flow is reversed. Humanity no longer moves toward death, but away from it, on the way to the incorruptible and the eternal.

The hymn refers to the Old Testament figures of Theophany and Baptism. Within the person of Jesus Christ and the life of the Church, the Old Testament is fulfilled. When Israel passed through the Red Sea, the body of water was split in two. Israel crossed as if on dry land: “The sea saw them and fled.”

When again the Ark of the Covenant containing the sacred relics of God’s glory (the tablets with the ten commandments, the rod of Aaron and the manna of the desert) together with Israel reached the Jordan River, the river “turned back,” and once more the people of God were able to cross with the Ark as if on dry land. When for the third time the Prophet Elijah wanted to cross the Jordan River, he struck it with his mantle, and the river was divided. The water left, it turned back, and the Prophet Elijah together with his disciple Elisha crossed as if on dry land.

These three great miracles serve to reveal to us how it is now our turn; as the New Israel, led by Christ Himself, to pass from sin to virtue, to go from deceitfulness to incorruptibility, to become God’s adopted children instead of being spiritual orphans, to advance from delusion to truth, from darkness to light. Our passage takes place through Baptism where our old self dies. We are born again in newness according to Christ. We also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the life-giving power of God. The Holy Spirit is God who comes to dwell in us and abide with us forever.

Paradoxically, while the Jordan River “turned back” when the Ark of the Covenant or the Prophet Elijah crossed — its waters were not divided when God Himself entered them to be baptized. The theological tradition of the Church teaches that the Jordan River, emblematic of the fallen nature of the world, recognized its Creator and longed to embrace Him, to receive His blessing, to be sanctified. The Baptism of Christ sanctifies and renews all of Creation, not just humanity. Also, just as the water embraced the Body of Christ and was itself sanctified, so the water of the baptismal font at our Baptism embraces our body. Through the sanctified water of the baptismal font, we become sanctified and can finally reunite ourselves to our Creator.



## Saint Anthony Bowling League



St. Anthony Bowling League will begin their 2026  
Winter-Spring season on **Thursday, January 15, 2026**

We wish to invite any interested in joining the St. Anthony Bowling League  
to reach out to Anthia Lucas.

Each season lasts 12 weeks and concludes on Thursday, April 2, 2026.  
League fees are \$22.00 a week and include prizes at the end of the season.

Contact info:

Anthia Drulias-Lucas:

[ADLJSL02@yahoo.com](mailto:ADLJSL02@yahoo.com)

(626)274-6133

## Church Etiquette

When are we NOT to enter the Nave of the Church?

As we are entering God's Home, we must always keep in mind that during the following times, we should NOT enter the Nave of the Church nor come to the front of the Church to light a votive candle:

- During the Small Entrance (when the procession with the Gospel takes place)

- During the Epistle Reading

- During the Gospel Reading

- When the priest is censuring and is facing the Congregation

- During the Great Entrance (when the procession of the Holy Gifts takes place)

- When the priest is blessing the Congregation

- During the recitation of the Nicene Creed ("I believe...")

- During the Consecration of the Holy Gifts

- During the recitation of the Lord's Prayer ("Our Father...")

- During the Priest's sermon

Also, during these times, we should avoid leaving the Nave unless it is for family needs, medical or some other necessary reason. If you are unsure when to enter or leave the church, ask a Parish Council member in the Narthex.

While in the Church, remember to...

- Wear appropriate attire to enter God's House

- Silence your mobile devices

- Refrain from chewing gum, mints, or candy

- Remove lipstick when receiving Holy Communion & when venerating & kissing the icons

- Follow the direction of the Priest for standing & sitting

- Maintain quiet in the Sanctuary

- Enter God's House with reverence and respect



# The Voice of Saint Anthony

**Saint Anthony Greek Orthodox Church**

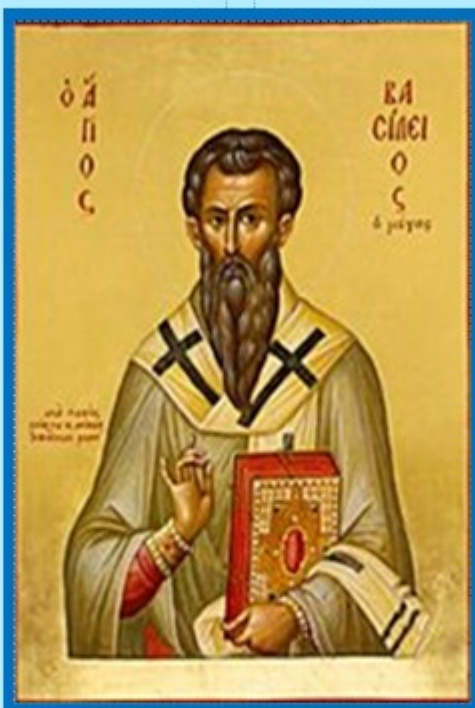
January 2026

[www.saint-anthonys.org](http://www.saint-anthonys.org)

(626) 449-6943 Office

*sample*

**Saint Basil  
1 January**



**DEADLINE for  
FEBRUARY  
Newsletter is  
SUNDAY  
25 JANUARY**

Please send to:  
[newsletter\\_church  
@aol.com](mailto:newsletter_church@aol.com)

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Circumcision of Christ & Saint Basil	1 January
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St. Anthony the Great	17 January
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*If you would like the monthly newsletter mailed to your home  
each month, please contact the Church office.*

**626.449.6943**



## Monthly Lesson from Father Stavros Akrotirianakis

## A Good Beginning: On Repentance and New Year's Resolutions

As we once again approach the beginning of a new year, it is good for us as Christians to take advantage of this opportunity for self-reflection, to prayerfully reexamine how we are living our lives and whether we are doing so in light of the Gospel of Christ. Indeed, just as we Orthodox Christians pray each evening in the words of St. John Chrysostom: “though I have done nothing good in Thy sight yet grant me by Thy grace to make a good beginning,” so too we ought to pray in the last hours of the year that is now coming to a close.

But how exactly should we examine ourselves, and how best can we strive – with the help of God’s grace – to make such a good beginning? What does “a good beginning” in the Christian life truly look like? For the answers to these questions, I suggest we meditate first on the beginning of the Gospel itself.

After Christ’s Theophany at the River Jordan (which we will soon once again celebrate) and His forty days of fasting in the wilderness (which we will soon once again emulate in the season of Great Lent), He began His preaching of the Gospel with these words: “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 4:17). Though these words are extremely well known, they are also extremely poorly understood. Christ did not simply command His people to cease from their sins – as countless moralizers from time immemorial have done. Nor did He merely teach that some vague future bliss awaits the human race beyond the grave – as so many of our contemporaries have reduced our religion to mean. No, Christ instead preached *repentance*, because the Kingdom of Heaven *is at hand*.

It is true that we Orthodox are more likely than most modern Christians to understand (at least intellectually) that repentance does not fundamentally mean to feel guilty about our past sins, nor even merely to cease from sinning in the future. Probably we know that the English word “repentance” is a (quite dubious) translation of the Greek word *μετάνοια*, “*metanoia*,” meaning literally to change one’s *nous* – that is, to change our fundamental way of understanding reality. But as Metropolitan Jonah once remarked, we modern Americans – regardless of our formal religious affiliation – are all in some sense Southern Baptists. That is, there is a common religious framework that our culture has instilled into our subconscious – and so when we hear Christ and His Church use words like “repentance,” on some deep level we really hear what our culture has taught us those words mean.

And so – no matter how good our intentions are, and no matter how correct our formal theological beliefs may be – when we hear someone like St. Isaac the Syrian say: “This life has been given to you for repentance; do not waste it in vain pursuits,” what we really hear is something like: “You should be spending your entire life on earth feeling bad about yourself instead of having any fun.” It is – to say the least – not the most inspiring philosophy by which to live.

It is not that our cultural conception of repentance is totally wrong; it is more that there is so much that it is missing. And the main thing that is missing is, quite simply, the reason Christ Himself actually gave for it: “the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.” And He really meant that *it is at hand*. He did not come simply to explain to us some cosmic legal system of merit-based rewards and punishments, having little to do with the here-and-now and which none of us will actually experience until the afterlife. No, He came to give sight to the blind and life to the dead, “to pour out His spirit upon all flesh” (cf. Acts 2:17). He came to make us gods by grace.

It is precisely *this* “change of heart” that Christ came to give freely to mankind; it is precisely *this* change of being which we have been given our lives on this earth to acquire. And it does not belong simply to some far-removed future age; it begins here and now, with our baptism, just as Christ began His preaching of it with His own baptism. We enter deeper and deeper into this reality with every prayer we utter and with each hymn we sing, and above all at every one of those holiest of moments when we eat and drink the Body and Blood of the God-Man Jesus Christ.



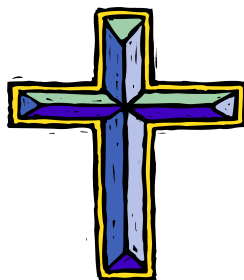
This reality, though perhaps invisible to our bodily eyes, nevertheless shines mystically and brilliantly in every church and monastery and icon corner throughout the entire world – no matter how humble or ordinary their outward appearance. And this reality lives and breathes in every single person that we meet – because the truth is that each and every one of us, no matter how ugly and terrible and all-encompassing our sins, nevertheless bears within ourselves the indelible image of God.

None of this is to say that repentance should not be something sorrowful; indeed, how could it not cause the keenest of sorrows to understand how great the riches are which we have squandered (and still squander), and how trifling are the trinkets we have clung to in their place? And yet, along with such sorrow, there must also come overwhelming joy and infinite gratitude when – like the Prodigal Son in the parable – we see our Heavenly Father *still* rushing out to meet us and embrace us, to clothe us with His finest garments and to give us the best of all that He has, though we have done less than nothing to deserve it, and though we are still so very far away from home.

So it is indeed with sorrow, but all the more with gratitude and joy, that we must make our good beginning of repentance in the coming year, imitating St. Paul who said: “this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:13-14). And in another place: “let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who *for the joy that was set before Him* endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 12:1-2). And finally, let us not cease to keep the joy of the Cross set before the eyes of our hearts “till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:13-15).

*For truly, it is the goodness of God [that] leadeth thee to repentance* (Romans 2:4)

*It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom* (Luke 12:32).



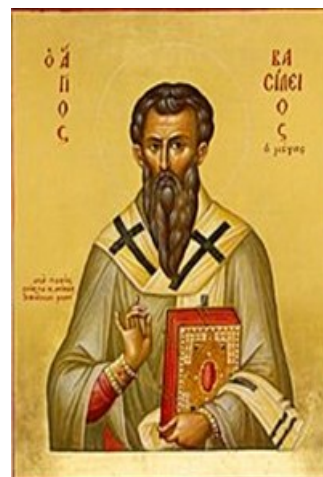
## Saints & Feasts

### Saint Basil the Great & the Circumcision of Christ

1 January

**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 Saints of the Church, together with all his brothers and sisters. Basil studied in Constantinople under the sophist Libanius, then in Athens, where also he formed a friendship with the young Gregory, a fellow Cappadocian, later called "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 Modestus, 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 he set all their malice useless, and in his willingness to give himself up to every suffering for the sake of the Faith, showed himself to be a martyr by volition. Modestus, amazed at Basil's fearlessness in his presence, said that no one had ever so spoken to him. "Perhaps," answered the Saint, "you have never met a bishop before." The Emperor Valens himself 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 restated 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 counsellors, 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.



## Saint Basil (continued)

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 erudition, 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."

## The Circumcision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

This remembrance is celebrated on the first day of the New Year, eight days after the celebration of our Lord's Birth. The Church also remembers our Lord's circumcision and His receiving the name Jesus, which means Savior. So on the eighth day after His Nativity, our Lord Jesus Christ was circumcised in accordance with the Old Testament Law. All male infants underwent circumcision as a sign of God's Covenant with the holy Forefather Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 17:10-14, Leviticus 12:3)

After this ritual the Divine Infant was given the name Jesus, as the Archangel Gabriel declared on the day of the Annunciation to the Most Holy Theotokos (Luke 1:31-33, 2:21). The Fathers of the Church explain that the Lord, the Creator of the Law, underwent circumcision in order to give people an example of how faithfully the divine ordinances ought to be fulfilled.

The Lord was circumcised so that later no one would doubt that He had truly assumed human flesh, and that His Incarnation was not merely an illusion, as certain heretics taught.

In the New Testament, the ritual of circumcision gave way to the Mystery of Baptism, which it prefigured (Colossians 2:11-12). Accounts of the Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord continue in the Eastern Church right up through the fourth century. The Canon of the Feast was written by Saint Stephen of the Saint Sava Monastery.

In addition to circumcision, which the Lord accepted as a sign of God's Covenant with mankind, He also received the Name Jesus (Savior) on the eighth day after His Nativity as an indication of His service, the work of the salvation of the world (Matthew 1:21; Mark 9:38-39, Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17; Acts 3:6, 16; Phil 2:9-10). These two events, the Lord's Circumcision and Naming, remind Christians that they have entered into a New Covenant with God and "*are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ*" (Colossians 2:11). The very name "Christian" is a sign of mankind's entrance into a New Covenant with God.



## 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 Savior 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 Savior 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.



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## Synaxis of John the Baptist

### 7 January

Today, the day after Epiphany, we celebrate the Synaxis in honor of the most sacred Forerunner, since he ministered at the Mystery of the Divine Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ, yesterday, January 6th.



## **Saint Anthony**

### **17 January**

The Father of monks, was born in Egypt in 251 of pious parents who departed this life while he was yet young. On hearing the words of the Gospel: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor" (Matt. 19:21), he immediately put it into action. Distributing to the poor all he had, and fleeing from all the turmoil of the world, he departed to the desert. The manifold temptations he endured continually for the span of twenty years are incredible. His ascetic struggles by day and by night, whereby he mortified the uprisings of the passions and attained to the height of dispassion, surpass the bounds of nature; and the report of his deeds of virtue drew such a multitude to follow him that the desert was transformed into a city, while he became, so to speak, the governor, lawgiver, and master-trainer of all the citizens of this newly-formed city.

The cities of the world also enjoyed the fruit of his virtue. When the Christians were being persecuted and put to death under Maximinus in 312, he hastened to their aid and consolation. When the Church was troubled by the Arians, he went with zeal to Alexandria in 335 and struggled against them in behalf of Orthodoxy. During this time, by the grace of his words, he also turned many unbelievers to Christ.

Saint Anthony began his ascetic life outside his village of Coma in Upper Egypt, studying the ways of the ascetics and holy men there, and perfecting himself in the virtues of each until he surpassed them all. Desiring to increase his labors, he departed into the desert, and finding an abandoned fortress in the mountain, he made his dwelling in it, training himself in extreme fasting, unceasing prayer, and fierce conflicts with the demons. Here he remained for about twenty years. Saint Athanasius the Great, who knew him personally and wrote his life, says that he came forth from that fortress "initiated in the mysteries and filled with the Spirit of God."

Afterwards, because of the press of the faithful, who deprived him of his solitude, he was enlightened by God to journey with certain Bedouins, until he came to a mountain in the desert near the Red Sea, where he passed the remaining part of his life.

Saint Athanasius says of him that "his countenance had a great and wonderful grace. This gift also he had from the Savior. For if he were present in a great company of monks, and any one who did not know him previously wished to see him, immediately coming forward he passed by the rest, and hurried to Anthony, as though attracted by his appearance. Yet neither in height nor breadth was he conspicuous above others, but in the serenity of his manner and the purity of his soul."

So becoming an example of virtue and a rule for monastics, he reposed on January 17 in the year 356, having lived altogether some 105 years.



## Saint Gregory the Theologian

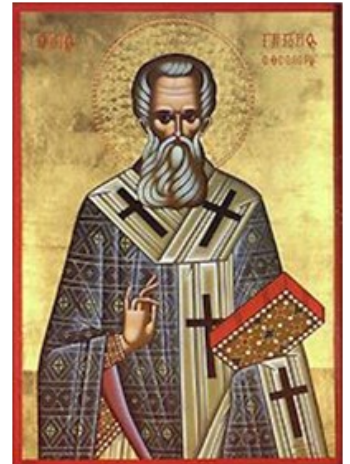
25 January

This great Father and Teacher of the Church was born in 329 in Arianzus, a village of the second district of Cappadocia, not far from Nazianzus. His father, who later became Bishop of Nazianzus, was named Gregory and his mother was named Nonna ; both are among the Saints, and so are 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 fervor he besought God to spare him, vowing to dedicate his whole self to Him, and the tempest gave way to calm.

At Athens Saint Gregory was later joined by Saint Basil the Great, whom he already knew; but now 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; Saint Gregory saw what an unsettled mind he had, and said, "What an 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, 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.



## Saint Gregory (continued)

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. 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.

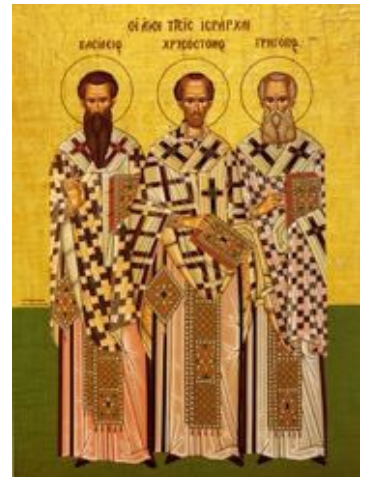
Having governed the Church until 382, he delivered his farewell speech – the Syntacterion, in which he demonstrated the Divinity of the Son – before 150 bishops and the Emperor Theodosius the Great; in this speech he requested, and received from all, permission to retire from the see of Constantinople.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

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.

## Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs

### 30 January

This common feast of these three teachers was instituted a little before the year 1100, during the reign of the Emperor Alexis I Comnenus, because of a dispute and 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 Mauropous, 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.





# Orthodox Calendar

## JANUARY 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 <b>Circumcision of Christ</b> <b>Saint Basil the Great</b> 	2 	3
4 <b>Sunday before Epiphany</b> 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 12:15 Dance Practice Indoor & Live-stream	5  <b>Agiassmos for Saint Basil</b> 9am Vespersal Lit 4:30 Greek School 5pm Dance Prac.	6 <b>Epiphany/Theophany</b> <b>Agiassmos</b> 9am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy	7  <b>Synaxis of Saint John the Baptist</b> 9am Orthros 10am Divine Lit. 7pm UnionStation	8 4:30 Greek School	9  7pm Dance Practice	10
11 <b>Sunday after Epiphany</b> <b>Vasilopita Sunday</b> 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 11am Sun. Sch. Resumes 12:15 Dance Practice Indoor & Live-stream	12 4:30 Greek School 5pm Dance Practice	13 10:30 am VIP Meeting	14  7pm Philoptochos Board Meeting	15 4:30 Greek School	16  <b>Eve of the Feast of Saint Anthony</b> 6pm Great Vespers/ Artoklasia 7pm Dinner hosted by Philoptochos	17 <b>Saint Anthony</b> 9am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy
18 <b>12th Sunday of Luke</b> 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 12:15 Dance Practice Indoor & Live-stream	19 4:30 Greek School 5pm Dance Practice	20 7pm Parish Council Mtg	21  6:30pm Philoptochos General Meeting	22 4:30 Greek School	23  7pm Dance Practice	24 Dance Groups Preview Night
25 <b>15th Sunday of Luke</b> <b>Saint Gregory the Theologian</b> 8:45am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy 12:15 Dance Practice Indoor & Live-stream	26 4:30 Greek School 5pm Dance Practice	27	28 	29 4:30 Greek School	30  <b>Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs</b> 9am Orthros 10am Divine Liturgy	31
		<b>Strict Fast</b> Refrain from Meat, Fish, Wine, Oil, Dairy & Eggs 	<b>Fish, Wine &amp; Oil</b> Allowed 	<b>Wine and Oil</b> Allowed 	<b>Dairy, Eggs, &amp; Fish</b> Allowed: Refrain from Meat 	<b>Fast Free</b> All foods allowed  No Symbol

TIME SENSITIVE



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*To generations of our descendants yet unknown to you, who some day in the dim and distant future will read this account of the dramatic history of the Hellenic community, we who have written this account not only on paper, but in the blood, sweat and tears of our daily lives make this statement:*

*We have built this community with its hopes and its fears, and its land and its buildings because we believe, as did our forefathers, in the soul's immortality, and its eventual union with God.*

*We believe that whether or not we have amassed a great deal of personal wealth or fame, it matters little, since we could not take that with us. What does matter is how we have discharged our obligation to pass on to you the faith and ideals that have sustained us through our lives... and we venture the hope that as you read these lines, you may breathe a prayer that what we have done here may have found favor in the eyes of God.*

O Lord, grant me to greet this new year in peace. Help me in all things to rely upon Your holy will. In every moment of this year reveal Your will to me. Bless my dealings with all who surround me. Teach me to treat all that comes to me throughout the year with peace of soul, and with the firm conviction that Your will governs all. In all my deeds and words guide my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events let me not forget that everything is sent by You. Teach me to act firmly and wisely, without embittering or embarrassing others. Give me strength to bear the fatigue of this coming year with all that it will bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray, pray You Yourself in me. Amen.