

ANNIVERSARY OR OUR DEPARTED FOR THIS SUNDAY

| DAY | NAME OF THE DEPARTED | ANNIVERSARY |
|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 12 | Fouad G El-Hage | 3 |
| 12 | Josephine Youakim | 13 |
| 15 | Tammam "Jacqueline" Zakkak | 1 |
| 15 | Suleiman Nawas | 24 |
| 17 | Raymond Ghandour | 5 |
| 17 | Abraham Ellies | 30 |
| 17 | Ida Jean Shallop | 27 |

- **Please**, pray for the health of the following parishioners: Ellen, Robert, Alex, Sam, Elias, Nassar, Valentine, George, Nina, Sonia, George, Elizabeth, Beshara, Samer, Irene and Toni. If you have any names of people who need prayers, email them to father.
- **Memorials on Saturdays:** we can do memorials on Saturdays after or before Vespers. Please, consider doing your memorial for your loved one then specially if you are expecting 50 + people.
- **"The Champion" Newsletter:** Father will be starting St. George Newsletter under the name "The Champion" from the troparia of St. George. Ms. Marian Abdallah has a degree in Graphic design and she accepted to be in charge of the newsletter under Father supervision. All organizations: the ladies, the teens, the young adults, the Sunday school, building committee, parish council chairperson, and church treasurer etc. please send her your news to share with the community. Her email marianabdalla@hotmail.ca. Her phone number is **416/708-2423**. We will include news about the birth of a new baby for members of our community only, baptisms at St. George, weddings, and funerals for members only will be shared in the Newsletter to. The goal is to produce one by the middle or the 20th of January. Thank you Marian for accepting to help with this task.
- **Blessing of homes:** Father will be blessing homes starting on January 7th. Father will be wearing a mask throughout the blessing of the home. Father will not stay for coffee or food at this time. If you like to have Father bless your home, please email Father at frdahdouh@sbcglobal.net, or text him with your name and address. Father prefers that those who live in an apartments building to arrange for few apartments to be blessed together.
- **Liturgies during January:**
- **Tuesday January 19th at 7 PM we will have Liturgy for the St. Euthymius the Great.**
- Liturgy Friday January 29th at 7 PM.
- **"A Parent Survival Guide":** our Ladies will be holding a zoom educationl get together on Sunday January 31st at 7 PM. It is open to all men and women of our church. The speaker is Annalisa Boyd, author of serveral books and she holds a podcast on Ancient Faith Radio. More information will follow soon.
- **If you are not receiving The Word magazine at your home address, please email your information to registrar@antiochian.org. You must be an Orthodox and a member of St. George Church.**
- **Bible study will resume on Thursday January 14th with a session on the Orthodox Faith from 7-8, and the Gospel of John from 8-9:30.**

- Effective January 12, 2021, the Ontario Government has declared a State of Emergency for the province. Similarly, effective 12:01 a.m. on January 14, 2021 every citizen will be subject to a Stay-at-home order by the government with few exceptions.

As always, the Church is operating under the guidance and directives of our Archdiocese and also our local government, as is directed by His Eminence. With that, the church will be closed to the public going forward until such time as the government reassesses and/or lifts these restrictions. Services will continue to be live streamed on both Facebook and our Parish website. Only Clergy and those who are serving, with the blessing of Father George, will be permitted inside the church for services or otherwise.

If you wish to serve in the Altar, please contact Father George directly. If you wish to serve as a chanter, please contact Samantha Nassar. George Boutros will be arranging ushers to assist with attending to the church doors to ensure there is no entry by members of the public.

We pray that you all stay safe and healthy during these continued unprecedented times and ask for your continued prayers also.

- ***House Blessing: Father is blessing homes. Please, don't email the office but Fr. George directly at frdahdouh@sbcglobal.net or call Father.***
- **Teens and Ladies getting together coming up soon.**
- **Sunday School Registration is NOW OPEN for Semester 2**

Classes begin the week of January 10, 2021. Virtual classes will continue once a week (by Zoom or Google Meet)

Click on the link below to register, **for new students only**. If you were already enrolled last semester, you do not need to register again.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfwwcjwxyFUCbtutzd59cwKVkqcooxSy9HReovsQrVgO29SPg/viewform?usp=sf_link

- **A gentle reminder: don't forget to fulfill your pledge for 2020 and to send your tax-deductible contribution before the end of 2020. God loves a cheerful giver.**
- **Bookstore: New icons have just arrived in our bookstore. The Bookstore is located in the church's basement. Icons are great gifts for newborn, new home, your car or your children, and Christmas gifts. Please see Colette El-Hajj or Odette Boutros to see these new icons.**
- **Please, don't forget to send your sacrificial giving to your church of St. George via e-transfer, or you can still bring your envelope with you and place it in the box by the candles. Your sacrificial giving (financial donation/support) will keep our doors open.**

- **Canned Food Drive:** please bring non-perishable canned food to donate to the needy and place them in the box outside in the Narthex.
- **Online Sunday School has begun and is in full swing. You may still register your children at any time. For further assistance contact Amanda Qaqish at orthodoxchristianeducation@gmail.com.**
- **MASKS ARE STILL MANDATORY INSIDE THE CHURCH. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

**DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 17, 2021
TONE 7 / EOTHINON 10**

**VENERABLE AND GOD-BEARING FATHER ANTHONY THE GREAT
& TWELFTH SUNDAY OF LUKE**

ANTHONY THE NEW, ASCETIC OF BERREA IN MACEDONIA; NEW-MARTYR GEORGE OF IOANNINA

Deacon: For Metropolitan Paul, Archbishop John, and for their quick release from captivity and safe return, let us pray to the Lord.

الشَّماس: مِنْ أَجْلِ الْمَثْرُوبُولِيَّةِ بُوئْسَ وَالْمِطْرَانَ يُوْحَنَّا
وَفَكَ أَسْرِهِمَا وَعَوْدَتَيْهِمَا سَالِمِينَ، إِلَى الرَّبِّ نَطْبُ.

• *During the Little Entrance, chant the Resurrectional Apolytikion. Then, the following:*

THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF ORDINARY SUNDAYS

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.
Save us, O Son of God, **Who art risen from the dead**; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

هَلِّمُوا لِنَسْجُدَ وَنَرْكَعَ لِلْمَسِيحِ، مَلِكِنَا وَإِلَهِنَا. خَلِّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ
اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، لِنُرْتَلَّ لَكَ. هَلِّلُويَا.

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SEVEN

Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world the Great Mercy.

حَطَمْتَ بِصَلِيبِكَ الْمَوْتَ، وَفَتَحْتَ لِلصِّ الْفِرْدَوْسَ، وَحَوَّلْتَ
نُوحَ حَامِلَاتِ الطَّيِّبِ، وَأَمَرْتَ رُسُلَكَ أَنْ يَكْرِزُوا، بِأَنَّكَ قَدْ
قُمْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهَ، مَانِحًا الْعَالَمَ الرَّحْمَةَ الْعُظْمَى.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT IN TONE FOUR

Thou didst become like the zealous Elijah in his condition, and followed John the Baptist in his upright ways, becoming a dweller in the wilderness and an establisher of the universe by thy prayer, O Father Anthony. Wherefore, intercede thou with Christ God to save our souls.

لَقَدْ مَاتَلْتَّ إِيْلِيَا الْغَيُورَ فِي أَحْوَالِهِ، وَتَبَعْتَ الْمَعْمَدَانَ فِي
مَنَاهِجِهِ الْقَوِيْمَةِ. فَعَدَوْتَ فِي الْبَرِّيَّةِ سَاكِنًا، وَلِلْمَسْكُونَةِ
بِصَلَوَاتِكَ مُشَدِّدًا، أَيُّهَا الْأَبُّ أَنْطُونِيُوسَ. فَتَشَفَّعْ إِلَى
الْمَسِيحِ الْإِلَهَ، أَنْ يُخَلِّصَ نَفُوسَنَا.

• *Now sing the apolytikion of the patron saint or feast of the temple.*

KONTAKION OF THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN TONE ONE

Thou, O Christ God, Who by Thy Birth, didst sanctify the Virgin's womb, and, as is meet, didst bless Simeon's arms, and didst also come to save us; preserve Thy fold in wars, and confirm them whom Thou didst love, for Thou alone art the Lover of mankind.

يَا مَنْ بِمَوْلِدِهِ قَدَّسَ الْمُسْتَوْدَعَ الْبَتُولِيَّ، وَبَارَكَ يَدَيْ
وَأَدْرَكْنَا الْآنَ وَ خَلِّصْنَا؛ إِحْفَظْ رَعِيَّتَكَ بِسَلَامٍ فِي
كَ الَّذِينَ أَحْبَبْتَهُمْ، بِمَا أَنْكَ وَحَدَاكَ مُحِبًّا لِلْبَشَرِ.

THE EPISTLE (For St. Anthony the Great)

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

What shall I render to the Lord for all that He has given me?

The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (13:17-21)

Brethren, obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this in order that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now may the God of peace Who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

كَرِيمٌ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ الرَّبِّ مَوْتُ أَبْرَاهِمَ.
بِمَاذَا نُكَافِيُ الرَّبَّ عَنْ كُلِّ مَا أَعْطَانَا.
فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولْسِ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى الْعِبْرَانِيِّينَ.

(21-13:17)

يَا إِخْوَةَ، أَطِيعُوا مُدَبِّرَيْكُمْ وَاخْضَعُوا لَهُمْ، فَإِنَّهُمْ يَسْهَرُونَ عَلَى نَفُوسِكُمْ سَهْرَ مَنْ سَيُعْطِي حِسَابًا حَتَّى يَفْعَلُوا ذَلِكَ بِسُرُورٍ لَا آتِينَ. لِأَنَّ هَذَا غَيْرُ نَافِعٍ لَكُمْ. صَلُّوا مِنْ أَجْلِنَا، فَإِنَّا نَتَّقُ بِأَنَّ لَنَا ضَمِيرًا صَالِحًا فَتَرْغَبُ فِي أَنْ نُحْسِنَ التَّصَرُّفَ فِي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ. وَأَطْلُبُ ذَلِكَ بِأَشَدِّ الْإِحَادِ حَتَّى أُرَدَّ إِلَيْكُمْ فِي أَسْرَعِ وَقْتٍ. وَإِلَهُ السَّلَامِ، الَّذِي أَعَادَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ رَاعِيَ الْخِرَافِ الْعَظِيمِ بِدَمِ الْعَهْدِ الْأَبَدِيِّ، رَبَّنَا يَسُوعَ، يُكْمِلُكُمْ فِي كُلِّ عَمَلٍ حَتَّى تَعْمَلُوا بِمَشِيئَتِهِ، عَامِلًا فِيكُمْ مَا هُوَ مَرْضِيٌّ لَدَيْهِ بِيَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ، الَّذِي لَهُ الْمَجْدُ إِلَى أَبَدِ الْأَبَدِينَ. آمِينَ.

THE GOSPEL (For the Twelfth Sunday of Luke)

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (17:12-19)

At that time, as Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When He saw them He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus said, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ لُوقَا الْإِنْجِيلِيِّ الْبَشِيرِ
وَالتَّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ.

وَفِيمَا يَسُوعَ دَاخِلٌ إِلَى قَرْيَةٍ اسْتَقْبَلَهُ عَشْرَةُ رِجَالٍ بُرْصِ، فَوَقَفُوا مِنْ بَعِيدٍ وَرَفَعُوا صَوْتًا قَائِلِينَ: يَا يَسُوعَ، يَا مُعَلِّمُ، ارْحَمْنَا! فَنَظَرَ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ: اذْهَبُوا وَأَرُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ لِلْكَهَنَةِ. وَفِيمَا هُمْ مُنْطَلِقُونَ طَهَّرُوا. فَوَاحِدٌ مِنْهُمْ لَمَّا رَأَى أَنَّهُ شَفِي، رَجَعَ يُمَجِّدُ اللَّهَ بِصَوْتٍ عَظِيمٍ، وَخَرَّ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ عِنْدَ رِجْلَيْهِ شَاكِرًا لَهُ، وَكَانَ سَامِرِيًّا. فَأَجَابَ يَسُوعَ وَقَالَ: أَلَيْسَ الْعَشْرَةُ قَدْ طَهَّرُوا؟ فَأَيْنَ التَّسْعَةُ؟ أَلَمْ يَوْجَدْ مَنْ يَرْجِعُ لِيُعْطِيَ مَجْدًا لِلَّهِ غَيْرُ هَذَا الْغَرِيبِ الْجِنْسِ؟ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ: قُمْ وَامْضِ، إِيمَانُكَ خَلَّصَكَ.

- *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom continues as usual.*

THE DISMISSAL

Priest: May He Who rose from the dead, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; by the might of the Precious and Life-giving Cross; by the protection of the honorable Bodiless Powers of Heaven; at the supplication of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John; of the holy, glorious and all-laudable apostles; of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople, whose Divine Liturgy we have now celebrated; of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of our Venerable and God-bearing Father Anthony the Great; Anthony the New, ascetic of Berrea in Macedonia; and New-martyr George of Ioannina, whose memory we celebrate, and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.

الكاهن: أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُنَا الْحَقِيقِيُّ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ لِأَجْلِ خَلَاصِنَا، بِشَفَاعَاتِ أُمِّكَ الْقَدِيسَةِ الْكَلِيَّةِ الطَّهَارَةِ وَالْبَرِيئَةِ مِنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ؛ وَبِقُدْرَةِ الصَّلِيبِ الْكَرِيمِ الْمُحْيِي؛ وَبِطِلْبَاتِ الْقُوَّاتِ السَّمَاوِيَّةِ الْمُكْرَمَةِ الْعَادِمَةِ الْأَجْسَادِ؛ وَالنَّبِيِّ الْكَرِيمِ السَّابِقِ الْمَجِيدِ يُوْحَنَّا الْمَعْمَدَانِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الْمُشْرِفِينَ الرُّسُلِ الْجَدِيرِينَ بِكُلِّ مَدِيحٍ؛ وَأَبِينَا الْجَلِيلِ فِي الْقَدِيسِينَ يُوْحَنَّا الذَّهَبِيِّ الْقَمِّ رَئِيسِ أَسَاقِفَةِ الْقِسْطَنْطِينِيَّةِ، كَاتِبِ هَذِهِ الْخِدْمَةِ الشَّرِيفَةِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الْمَجِيدِينَ الشُّهَدَاءِ الْمُتَأَلِّقِينَ بِالظَّفَرِ؛ وَأَبَائِنَا الْأَبْرَارِ الْمُتَوَشِّحِينَ بِاللَّهِ؛ وَأَبَائِنَا الْأَبْرَارِ الْمُتَوَشِّحِينَ بِاللَّهِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِ (ة) (فُلَانِ، فُلَانَةَ) شَفِيعِ (ة) وَحَامِي (ة) هَذِهِ الرَّعِيَّةِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الصِّدِّيقِينَ يُوَاكِيمَ وَحَنَّةَ جَدِّي الْمَسِيحِ إِلَهُهُ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِ أَنْطُونِيوسِ الْكَبِيرِ وَالْقَدِيسِ أَنْطُونِيوسِ الْجَدِيدِ النَّاسِكِ فِي مَقْدُونِيَا وَالشَّهِيدِ الْجَدِيدِ جَاوَرَجِيوسِ مِنْ أَيُونِيَا، الَّذِينَ نَقِيمُ تَذَكَارَهُمْ الْيَوْمَ، وَجَمِيعِ قَدِيسِيكَ، أَرْحَمْنَا وَخَلَّصْنَا بِمَا أَنْتَ صَالِحٌ وَمُحِبٌّ لِلْبَشَرِ.

Priest: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us.

الكاهن: بِصَلَوَاتِ آبَائِنَا الْقَدِيسِينَ، أَيُّهَا الرَّبُّ يَسُوعُ الْمَسِيحُ إِلَهُنَا أَرْحَمْنَا وَخَلَّصْنَا.

Choir: Amen.

الجوق: آمين.

Portions of the Archdiocesan Service Texts include texts from *The Menaion*, *The Great Horologion*, *The Pentecostarion*, *The Octoechos*, and *The Psalter of the Seventy*, which are Copyright © Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, Massachusetts, and are used with permission. All rights reserved. These works may not be further reproduced, beyond printing out a single copy for personal non-commercial use, without the prior written authorization of Holy Transfiguration Monastery.

PLEASE SUPPORT ST. GEORGE'S NEW INITIATIVE TO
HELP THOSE IN NEED THIS WINTER!!

Warm Hands



Warm Hearts!!

The need for warm hats, gloves and socks is greater than ever. Through this program, St. George's community is aiming to provide at least 400 sets of gloves, hats and socks to those in need at St. John the Compassionate Mission. Monetary donations of any size will greatly help us meet this goal.

Donations can be made to the Church. Please write on the cheque, or note on the online donation, that the funds are for **Warm Hands, Warm Hearts**.

For more information, or to get involved in packing/distributing, please contact

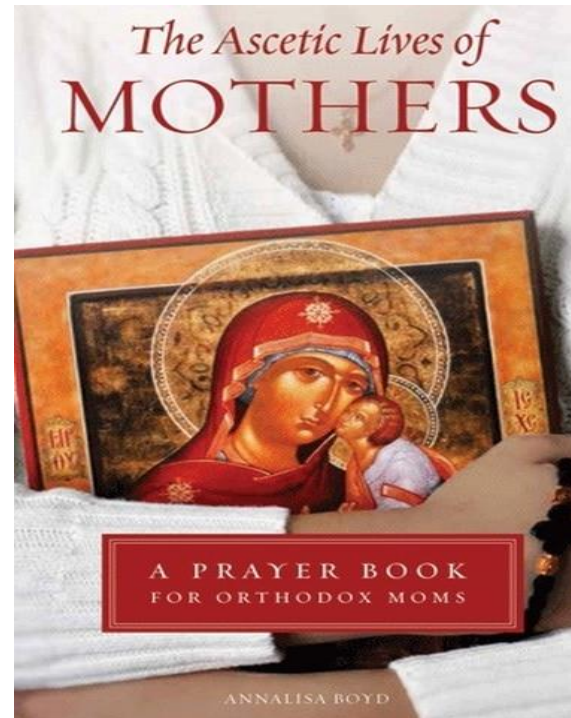
Joanie Younes (joanieunis@hotmail.com) or Michelle Alexopoulos (malex@chass.utoronto.ca)

The Antiochian Women of St. George (Myrrh-Bearers) first educational retreat in 2021

All Ladies and Men 18+ Welcome

A Parent Survival Guide

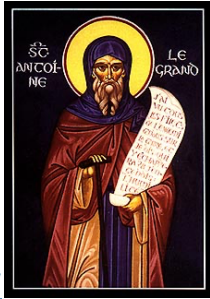
By Annalisa Boyd



Join us on January 31, 2021 at 7:00 P.M. for an educational session with Annalisa Boyd a mother of 9 children and a writer of several parenting books.

ZOOM link will be sent via email closer to date

Venerable and God-bearing Father Anthony the Great



Commemorated on [January 17](#)

[Troparion & Kontakion](#)

Saint Anthony the Great is known as the Father of monasticism, and the long ascetical sermon in The Life of Saint Anthony by Saint Athanasius (Sections 16-34), could be called the first monastic Rule.

He was born in Egypt in the village of Coma, near the desert of the Thebaid, 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 Saint 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, Saint 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 Saint 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, Saint Anthony prayed and intensified his efforts. Anthony 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.

Saint 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.

For even greater solitude, Saint 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, Saint Anthony regained consciousness and told his friend to carry him back to the tombs.

Saint 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 Saint 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, Saint 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 in the then as yet unheard-of exploit of being a hermit, decided not to accompany him because of his age.

Saint 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.

Saint 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 Saint Anthony and besought him to take them under his guidance. Soon Saint 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, Saint 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 Saint Anthony left the desert and arrived in Alexandria to defend the Orthodox Faith against the Manichaean and Arian heresies. Knowing that the name of Saint Anthony was venerated by all the Church, the Arians said that he adhered to their heretical teaching. But Saint 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.

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 (May 21) and his sons wrote to

Saint 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.

Saint 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 Saint Athanasius of Alexandria (January 18), and the other to Saint Serapion of Thmuis (March 21). Saint Anthony died peacefully in the year 356, at age 105, and he was buried in the desert by his disciples.

The Life of the famed ascetic Saint Anthony the Great was written by Saint Athanasius of Alexandria. This is the first biography of a saint who was not a martyr, and is considered to be one of the finest of Saint Athanasius' writings. Saint John Chrysostom recommends that this Life be read by every Christian.

"These things are insignificant compared with Anthony's virtues," writes Saint Athanasius, "but judge from them what the man of God Anthony was like. From his youth until his old age, he kept his zeal for asceticism, he did not give in to the desire for costly foods because of his age, nor did he alter his clothing because of the infirmity of his body. He did not even wash his feet with water. He remained very healthy, and he could see well because his eyes were sound and undimmed. Not one of his teeth fell out, but near the gums they had become worn due to his advanced age. He remained strong in his hands and feet.... He was spoken of everywhere, and was admired by everyone, and was sought even by those who had not seen him, which is evidence of his virtue and of a soul dear to God."

The following works of Saint Anthony have come down to us:

Twenty Sermons on the virtues, primarily monastic (probably spurious).

Seven Letters to various Egyptian monasteries concerning moral perfection, and the monastic life as a spiritual struggle.

A Rule for monastics (not regarded as an authentic work of Saint Anthony).

In the year 544 the relics of Saint 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 (in France), to the church of Saint Julian.

Gratitude, Humility, and Obedience: Homily for the 12th Sunday of Luke in the Orthodox Church [Fr. Philip LeMasters](#)



Luke 17: 12-19

It is so easy for human beings to find a way to keep score, to focus on where we stand in relation to other individuals and groups. We probably do that in order to feel better about ourselves along the lines of “Well, at least I am not as bad as they are.”

The Jews of the first century had such an attitude toward the Samaritans—the people they loved to hate. And it would be hard to find someone lower in social standing in that day than a Samaritan with leprosy, a skin condition that made its sufferers religiously unclean and complete social outcasts. So just imagine how shocking it was that the Samaritan leper was the only one of the ten who returned to thank Christ for healing Him from that dreaded disease. In that time and place, this was an outrageous story.

Maybe this man was so thankful precisely because he had learned not to expect compassion from anyone and that he could take no blessing for granted. He surely felt out of place walking with Jewish lepers to the temple in Jerusalem, for that is not where the Samaritans worshiped and presumably, he would not have been welcome there. Nonetheless, he obeyed the Lord’s command and was healed. And he alone took the time and effort to return to thank the One who had changed his life.

This man’s healing is an icon of the good news that we celebrated at Christmas and Epiphany and that is at the very heart of our faith. The healing of the Samaritan leper from a terrible disease manifests our salvation in the God-Man Jesus Christ, which extends to all who have put Him on in baptism. As the healing of the Samaritan leper shows, God’s mercy extends to everyone who receives Jesus Christ with faith, repentance,

and gratitude. Regardless of what anyone else does, we want to be like that leper, receiving God's blessing in humility and responding with true thanks. But in order to do that, we have to find healing for our sins, the diseases of soul that have disfigured us and corrupted our beauty as those whom Christ has clothed with a garment of light in baptism.

The truth is that we all struggle to wear that robe of light, to embrace Christ's healing, for we so easily fall back into the ugly sickness of sin. If we are honest, we will see that we fit right in with the Samaritan and the other lepers who were right to call out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" We need their humility and sense of dependence upon the Lord's grace for a healing beyond what we can give ourselves. The daily prayers found in any Orthodox prayer book say the same thing, and the Jesus Prayer should always be in our hearts. Our prayer life is not a matter of just mouthing words, but a true plea for forgiveness, healing, and strength from the depths of our souls concerning the challenges that we face each day. There is nothing more fundamental to the Christian life than daily personal prayer in which we are fully present to the One born and baptized to save us. The more we open our lives to Him, the more fully we will be aware of our personal brokenness and constant need for His mercy.

The struggle to live faithfully can certainly feel lonely and frustrating. Sin so easily isolates us from one another and also from ourselves. Even if we manage to keep secrets from others, the burdens of guilt and shame are profound and can separate us at a deep level from those closest to us. They easily become unhealthy obsessions that make us feel as unclean as a leper who thinks that no one could understand his pain and that no one could possibly heal his wounds. That is one of the reasons why the sacrament of Confession is such a blessing and a relief, such a source of strength in our journey to live the new life in Christ. In Confession we are reminded that we are not left alone in isolation to struggle with our sins, for the priest is an icon of the Lord, conveying His mercy and providing guidance for the healing of our souls. If we want to be healed like the Samaritan leper, we will come to Confession regularly, naming our sins, especially those of which we are most ashamed and which we would like to keep hidden. We will kneel before Christ in humility, bare our souls, and be assured of His forgiveness, if we are truly honest and repentant.

Like everyone else in the Orthodox Church, a priest goes to another priest for Confession. This sacrament is a therapy for our healing, as well as a reminder that we are members of a Body united together in love and mercy. We do not have to suffer alone, in isolation as though we were the only one who ever sinned. We each have a slightly different version of

a common struggle. Our sins are not nearly as unique as we are tempted to think, and there is great power in hearing a human voice say that we should give no further care to the sins we have confessed, for they are forgiven in this world and in that which is to come. Christ says to each of us in Confession through the voice of a priest, “Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.”

The Samaritan is also an example for us in his obedience because he actually did what Christ told him to do, to head toward Jerusalem to show himself to the priests. Here we have another powerful image of the Christian life, for we open our lives to the Lord’s healing by obeying Him, by keeping His commandments.

A murderer does not become an icon of Christ’s salvation by continuing to murder. A proud person does not become humble by continuing to be proud. And we will not experience victory over any sin in our lives if we simply give into it or make up excuses to justify ourselves. No, we have actually to repent, to reject actions, thoughts, words, and habits that we know are wrong. We may experience the greatest struggle of our lives in doing so and feel nothing but pain and frustration as we fight our passions. We may fall flat on our faces a thousand times and wonder if we will ever find peace and joy. When that happens, we must take our attention off ourselves and put it on Christ. For if we are obeying Him as we best we can given our current state of spiritual health, then we are just like that Samaritan leper going to Jerusalem in obedience to Christ’s command, regardless of how we feel about it. He calls us to obey and be healed, which is different from being perfectly at ease. Have you ever gone to physical therapy after an injury or worked out when you were not in shape? That was probably not much fun. Have you ever done the right thing in life even though it was hard and you did not particularly like it at the moment and worried how things would turn out? If so, you know that there are times to focus on something much more important than your fears. That is what the Samaritan leper did and it is what we must all do if we want to find healing for our souls.

It is never popular, but still true: We simply cannot expect to find strength and transformation if we do not obey the Lord. If we do not pray at home and at church, practice fasting and other forms of self-denial, give to the poor and needy, forgive those who have offended us, keep a close watch on our thoughts and actions, and struggle mightily against our familiar temptations, we really cannot expect growth in the Christian life. If we are not actively seeking to become living icons of Christ’s salvation, we will not grow in holiness. Like the leper, we must do our part in order to open ourselves to the mercy of Christ, to put ourselves in the place where His new life shines in ours. And that is always the place of humble obedience.

We should put out of our minds the thought that we are obeying an abstract law of religion or morality, for our Savior is a Person Who knows us better than we know ourselves. We should turn away from obsessing over whether we are doing anything perfectly, for that reflects only our pride. We should not be bogged down by the thousand excuses that run through our minds about why it is more important to do something else than to follow Christ. At the end of the day, we simply need to be like that Samaritan leper who called for Christ's mercy and then did what the Lord told him to do. Despite our many imperfections and corruptions, that is how we too will be able to hear those blessed words: "Rise and go your way, your faith has made you well." We should not make obedience any harder than it really is.