

## AN ICON OF THE SIGN

**A**mong the ancient and most revered icons of the Church are those which depict the Holy Virgin and Child Jesus. These, in turn, are divided into a number of categories, and among them are those known by the term "Icon of the Sign."

Such icons show the Mother of God in frontal view, with her arms upraised in the ancient gesture of prayer, and with Christ depicted on her chest, again in frontal view. Cherubims and Serafims are often included in the icon, indicating that the Mother of God is "more honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Serafim . . ."

It is to the Old Testament and the prophecy of Isaiah that one must turn for an understanding of the name of such icons. The Prophet Isaiah wrote: "Therefore, the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." And so the Virgin Mother with her Child in her bosom is the "sign" of the Incarnation, of God becoming Man to save him from sin and death. This, of course, is the very essence of the Christian faith, and it is no wonder, then, that such icons are given a prominent place in the church building.

Students of iconography also like to speak of these icons as images of the Church, which brings salvation through Christ to humankind, as the Holy Virgin confined in her womb the unconfined Lord. So we have this mystery of the Church as the Body of Christ.

The Holy Bible refers to the Virgin Mother as "full of grace," and "blessed among women." The Church has given her a special place among the Saints of God and the creatures of the earth. This special veneration and esteem is given her precisely because of her relationship to Jesus Christ. She is His mother. The Church always approaches her with this special relationship in mind. Remember, the Church honors the mother because of the Son.

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin . . . . . Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey . . . . . Litho in U.S.A.



## ABOUT COMMUNION

*We are happy that you have joined us today. Indeed, we pray for the "unity of the Faith" for the day when all of Christianity are united as ONE and can share a common Chalice. However, this is not the case as yet. Please note that Holy Communion, the actual Body & Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, is only for Members of the Orthodox Church who have prepared themselves through prayer, fasting, and confession, & arrived before the Gospel reading. However, everyone is welcome to partake of the blessed bread and receive a blessing from the pastor at the dismissal. If you are interested, you may inquire with the pastor how you can become a member.*

*If you are a guest or otherwise not a regular communicant, please give your baptismal name when receiving.*





# St. Anthony The Great Antiochian Orthodox Church

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## WELCOME TO ST. ANTHONY'S

Where people from around the world come together to serve God and our community. We are glad you are worshipping with us today! This Church is one community of many in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The Church of Antioch belongs to two thousand years of evangelization, teaching, history, and tradition which expresses the continued commitment of its members to the Orthodox Christian faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

St. Anthony Church is a Pan-Orthodox community, under the omophorion of His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X within the Self-ruled Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America. If you are a first time visitor, please fill out the guest form located on the literature table. We want you to feel at home in prayer and worship. Please submit your names to the ushers and introduce yourself to Fr. Elia at the end of the service so he may welcome you personally.

Following services, please join us for sharing of fellowship, coffee, and food.

## DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

### tone 5 / EOTHINON 3

### SUNDAY BEFORE THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

### AFTER-FAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS

MARTYRS MENODORA, METRODORA AND NYMPHODORA OF BITHYNIA;  
EMPRESS PULCHERIA; PETER, BISHOP OF NICAEA

#### THE FIRST ANTIPHON

Remember, O Lord, David and all his meekness. Lo, we heard of it at Ephratha. We have found it in the plains of the wood.

**Refrain:** Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be shaken; God shall help her right early in the morning. **(Refrain)**

Glory... Both now... **(Refrain)**

#### THE SECOND ANTIPHON

The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; and He will not annul it. Of the fruit of thy loins will I set upon thy throne.

**Refrain:** Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

There will I make to spring forth a horn for David. I have prepared a lamp for My Christ. **(Refrain)**

For the Lord hath elected Zion; He hath chosen her to be a habitation for Himself. **(Refrain)**

Glory... Both now... O, only begotten Son and Word of God...

#### THE THIRD ANTIPHON

Here will I dwell, for I have chosen her. The Most High hath hallowed His tabernacle. Holy is Thy temple, wonderful in righteousness.

~ During the Little Entrance, after the verses of the Third Antiphon, chant the Apolytikion of the **Nativity of the Theotokos**. The Eisodikon (Entrance Hymn) is "O come, let us worship... save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead..." as on ordinary Sundays. After the Little Entrance, sing these hymns in the following order:

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**TODAY'S FEAST SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> 2023**

**SUNDAY BEFORE HOLY CROSS**

**AFTERFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS**

According to the ancient tradition of the Church, the Theotokos was born of barren and aged parents, Joachim and Anna, about the year 16 or 17 before the birth of Christ. Joachim was descended from the royal line of David, of the tribe of Judah. Anna was of the priestly tribe of Levi, a daughter of the priest Matthan and Mary, his wife.

**MENODORA, METRODORA, & NYMPHODORA THE MARTYRS**

These Martyrs, sisters according to the flesh, were from Bithynia. They lived in virginity on a mountain near the Pythian hot springs of Bithynia, devoting themselves to asceticism and prayer. Betrayed to the local governor, Fronto, they were subjected to frightful tortures, and so gave up their holy souls into the hands of God. They contested for the Faith during the reign of Maximian, in the year 304.

### **Kill the Ego**

#### **The Destruction of Ego Begins with Repentance**

Modern psychology has told us we must feel good about ourselves, and instructed us to reject the idea of guilt and sin. Sin is seen as religion's instrument for keeping people in line, making them dependent on an institution that should be relegated to the Dark Ages. In an age where man is elevated to being his own god, religion is seen as a sort of enslavement. Up with self! Down with guilt! Self as the new god is worshiped at the expense of community, and enthroned to a position of the utmost importance. Worship of self has contributed to the downfall of families and societal stability, with careers, social and financial gain and selffulfillment reigning supreme. Divine love does not tolerate this elevated status of self, for the ego is the enemy of our communion with God. In an age of financial collapse, mortgage foreclosures, and "pandemic" lockdown, worship of self dooms us to a life of total loss. We were created for communion with God and the worship of the ego has led us into a state of spiritual bankruptcy. The total meltdown of societal standards, and the destruction of the environment, is the direct result of the turning away from spiritual values. The foundation of economic and environmental collapse is to be found in our spiritual bankruptcy, and calls us to return to the worship of God, and reject the worship of self. The denial of guilt and sin is the ultimate example of our having accepted the lie perpetrated by the devil, the great deceiver. True happiness and true wealth come only through the fulfillment of our destiny, and that for which we were created, communion with God. The destruction of the ego begins with repentance, and the acquisition of a humble and a contrite heart. It begins with a return to God.

*The above meditations is authored by The Very. Rev. Abbot Tryphon, Igumen of All-Merciful Saviour Monastery on Vashon Island, Washington.*



### **KONTAKION OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS IN TONE FOUR**

By thy holy nativity, O pure one, Joachim and Anna were delivered from the reproach of barrenness; and Adam and Eve were delivered from the corruption of death; thy people do celebrate it, having been saved from the stain of iniquity, crying unto thee: The barren doth give birth to the Theotokos, who nourisheth our life.

### **THE EPISTLE**

(For the Sunday before the Elevation of the Holy Cross)

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

**The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. (6:11-18)**

Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the Law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all, who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

### **THE GOSPEL**

(For the Sunday before the Elevation of the Holy Cross)

**The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (3:13-17)**

The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but He who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent His Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

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

### **ABOUT THE DIVINE LITURGY**

The Divine Liturgy expresses the entire Christian faith in a continuous song of praise and prayer addressed to God. It is focused on God, not on us. There is nothing just for amusement or entertainment. Since much of the service is the same every week, worshippers know it and can participate personally, either by singing along or just by prayerful attention. Worshippers are surrounded by icons (pictures of Christ and the saints), which remind us that we are participating, while on earth, in the worship of all the angels and saints in heaven. The entire service (except for the sermon) is sung. The words are all from Scripture or ancient Christian texts. Please follow the service in the books available in the pews. Weekly changes will appear below and marked with a corresponding letter in the service book.

### **COME BACK**

We hope to see you next week. Each Sunday we celebrate the Resurrection of Christ with our morning Matins service at 8:45am followed by the main Sunday service, Divine Liturgy at 10am. Sunday School for the Children Follows Communion. Fr. Elia would love to speak with you and answer any questions you may have. Please fill out our Guest Form (CONNECTION CARD). There's also a place where you can let us know any specific needs or concerns and we will lift them up in prayer. We welcome everyone who would like to learn more about the Orthodox Christian Faith. Please contact Fr. Elia either by E-Mail (elia\_shalhoub@yahoo.com) or on his cell phone (305) 812-4940

### **Announcements**



**September 10**  
**September 17**  
**September 24**

***Epistle Readers***  
**Gabriella Baika**  
**Jeffrey Dick**  
**Alix Hall**



Happy First Day of Sunday School! Warm welcome to our new teacher Ms. Zoe.

May God Bless our children and teachers for a fruitful and fun year.



Join us for Family Night  
next Saturday, September 16 at 3:30pm

Adults VS Children Volleyball at 3:30pm  
(separate program if some kids can't play).

Vespers at 5:30pm,

Followed by Potluck Dinner and Bonfire.

Potluck  
Dinner



Please see  
Potluck Sign Up sheet  
on the bulletin board.



TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR IS SPONSORED BY JEFFREY AND HOLLY DICK.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO SPONSOR SEPTEMBER 24.

SIGN UP ONLINE OR SEE/CONTACT YULIYA: (321) 960-9564



Sunday School's Trip to the Theater  
last Sunday was Great!!!  
Thank you all for supporting our  
Fundraisers and Bookstore!



Come see us Saturday, September 23 at 9am-3pm  
at Green Gables' Harvest Festival. We will have jams, cookies, mini  
breads, bookstore items, and Thanksgiving Basket Raffle tickets.

TEEN SOYO MEETING SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 AT 12PM

FOOD FOR THE NEEDY (Basket in the Foyer)  
Please remember to bring non-perishable  
food items for the basket.



Please pray for the healing of Michealle and Tyrone Carey, Beverly Delida,  
Alix Hall, Nina and Diogo Penas, Beth Manzini, John Archambeau, Alex & Soula.



SUNDAY BEFORE HOLY CROSS  
SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What is truth?

Most would define truth as a set of ideas, beliefs or a philosophy. We are then educated in the social definition of truth and hold others to those perspectives. As Christians, we believe that the truth is God. God is the foundation of reality and truth, what is right and holy. Therefore, we can't know the truth in an intellectual sense, we must experience it by developing a relationship with God.

The evil one - the devil - the "father of all lies" (John 8:44), desires that we do not develop a relationship with God, but rather live in a corrupt, temporal world full of lies that produce - fear, pride, sin, hate, and death and will dress it up with luxury, social status and entertainment.

Just before His death, Jesus Christ declares that He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14.6). Developing a relationship with God helps us see the truth. When we have a relationship and abide by His teachings the truth will set us free (John 8.32) from the slavery to this world.

In closing, some words by Saint Theophan the Recluse:

"Human teachings are always reaching out to what is new, growing, developing; and this is natural, for they do not have the truth, but are just seeking it. For us, both the truth and the way to the truth have been defined once and for all. We possess the truth, and all of our efforts are directed toward its assimilation--not its discovery."

In Christ,

Fr. Elia Shalhoub

Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub, Pastor



Offering Holy Bread

It is the tradition of the Orthodox Church to  
offer Holy Bread for a Divine Liturgy  
for the health of a loved one;

in memory of one who has fallen asleep in the Lord;  
a feast day, anniversary, birthday or other special occasion.

The customary donation is \$25.00 per offering.

Please fill out the form at the information table, and hand it to Yuliya.