

“YOU ASCEND WITHOUT ABANDONING US . . .”

After Christ's Resurrection, it is documented by the Scriptures that He appeared to His Apostles on numerous occasions, preparing them for the great challenge that awaited them: spreading His Gospel throughout the world. On the 40th day after His triumphant victory over death, our Saviour climbed the Mount of Olives with His beloved followers and gave them their final instructions: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” Jesus then blessed them and ascended into the sky before their very eyes!

St. John Chrysostom writes of the significance of this event in one of his famous homilies. “Today the human race is completely reconciled with God. Today, we, too, become heirs to the kingdom of heaven, even though we are not even worthy to live on earth.”

Yes, the Feast of the Ascension of our Lord makes thoughts of heaven very real for all of us. Our life on earth is merely a “preface” to the “book” of eternal life. Each day of our life here should find us observing all that Christ has commanded us to do! In His own words, the Lord returned to His heavenly home “to prepare a place for us.” One of the verses from the Vespers for this glorious Feast clearly tells us the underlying reason for Christ's departure from our midst: “The Lord ascended into Heaven so that He could send the Comforter into the world.” By doing this, His promise is fulfilled throughout eternity: Lo, I am with you always.

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.





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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, JUNE 16, 2024

SUNDAY OF AFTER-FEAST OF THE ASCENSION

COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY FATHERS OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL

TIKHON THE WONDERWORKER, BISHOP OF AMATHOS IN CYPRUS;
VENERABLE TIKHON OF KALUGA; VENERABLE TIKHON OF LUKH

THE FIRST ANTIPHON

Clap your hands, all ye nations; shout unto God with a voice of rejoicing. For the Lord Most High is terrible; a great King over all the earth.

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

He hath subdued peoples under us, and the nations under our feet. God is gone up in jubilation, the Lord with the voice of the trumpet. **(Refrain)**

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

THE SECOND ANTIPHON

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, in His holy mountain. The mountains of Sion on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.

Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who didst rise from us in glory to the heavens; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

God is known in her towers when He cometh to help her. **(Refrain)**

For lo, the kings of the earth were assembled; they came together. **(Refrain)**

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

THE THIRD ANTIPHON

Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world. My mouth shall speak wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding. I will incline mine ear unto a parable; I will unfold my problem on the psaltery.

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ADRIANE & TED

God's works appear in Christians who faithfully bear this responsibility for making God's power tangible in this world. They are responsible for demonstrating God's mercy and everlasting love for humanity. That is why He commanded His disciples – and everyone who believes in Him is His disciple – when He told them: “Preach the gospel to all nations,” and, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand,” and, “Heal the sick.” The first sign that revealed that His kingdom is at hand is the healing of the sick in every sense of the word – physical, psychological and spiritual – from their despair, depression, sadness, isolation and despondency. As long as He is with us, we are in the daytime, and there is no darkness at all. He wants our hearts to be perfected in His love, our hands to offer His gifts, our tongues to carry His words of comfort and hope, and our feet to transport His works of love to every place. He wants us to be true disciples who, through Him and Him alone, make the world perpetually bright, despite the gloom and darkness in it.

A theologian of the previous century said: “The problem isn't that there are few saints, but that not all Christians are saints.” Christ ended His answer to the disciples, before giving sight to the blind man, with the following sentence: “I am the light of the world, as long as I am in the world.” If Christians truly believe that they are members of the body of Christ, then Christ is always present and active in them and through them, and subsequently always present in the world. Because of them, the world glorifies God, and God glorifies the world. How awesome is our responsibility! How vigilant we must be, so that we become pure vessels that preserve God's work in the world! Only then, will our spiritual insight be awakened and alert, and His light will illuminate our tortured world, awaiting His complete dominion over it on the last day.

O Lord, we know that You have placed Your treasure in our earthen vessels, which quickly become perishable, and we realize that with Your transcendent love for humanity, You want us to be transcendent vessels for You (2 Cor. 4:7), deriving their durability from Your grace, and reflecting Your light wherever they are found. Do not look at our fragility, O Lord, but rather grant us confidence and strength to work in the world and return it to You. We do not deserve Your blessings, O our good God, nor your infinite goodness. Rather, do not turn Your face away from Your creation, for You taught us that You are greater than us in ways we cannot imagine. Fill us with Your presence, so Your light may shine upon our world and remain in the daylight as long as You are in it. Amen. Originally published May 25, 2015.

~ During the Little Entrance, after the verses of the Third Antiphon, chant the Apolytikion of the Ascension. 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, chant these hymns in the following order:

RESURRECTIONAL APOLYTIKION IN TONE SIX

When Mary stood at Thy grave, looking for Thy sacred body, angelic powers shone above Thy revered tomb. And the soldiers who were to keep guard became as dead men. Thou led Hades captive and wast not tempted thereby. Thou didst meet the Virgin and didst give life to the world, O Thou, Who art risen from the dead, O Lord, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF THE ASCENSION IN TONE FOUR

Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, and gladdened Thy Disciples with the promise of the Holy Spirit, making them confident through the blessing that Thou art the Son of God, and Deliverer of the world.

APOLYTIKION OF THE HOLY FATHERS IN TONE EIGHT

Thou, O Christ, art our God of exceeding praise Who didst establish our holy Fathers as luminous stars upon earth, and through them didst guide us unto the true Faith, O most merciful One, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT

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 our God to save our souls.

KONTAKION OF THE ASCENSION IN TONE SIX

When Thou didst fulfill Thy dispensation for our sakes, uniting the terrestrials with the celestials, Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, inseparable in space, but constant without separation, and crying unto Thy beloved: I am with you, and no one shall be against you.

THE EPISTLE

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers. For Thou art just in all Thou hast done to us.

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. (20:16-18, 28-36)

In those days, Paul was determined to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if possible, to be at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the priests of the church. And when they came to him, he said to them: “Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you bishops, to shepherd the church of the Lord and God, which He purchased with His own blood. For I know that after my departure ravenous wolves will enter among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, remain watchful, remembering that for three years I did not cease to admonish every one, night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands

ministered to my necessities, and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by such laboring we ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" And when he had spoken thus, he knelt down on his knees with them all, and prayed.

THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (17:1-13)

At that time, Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son that the Son may glorify Thee, since Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him. And this is eternal life, that they know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent. I glorified Thee on earth, having accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do; and now, Father, glorify Thou Me in Thy own presence with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was made. I have manifested Thy Name to the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, and they have kept Thy word. Now they know that everything that Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from Thee; and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine; all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name, which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are one. While Liturgy Variables 2 Holy Fathers of Nicaea June 16, 2024 I was with them, I kept them in Thy Name, which Thou have given Me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves."

~ *Megalynarion: "It is Truly Meet"; Koinonikon (Communion Hymn): "Praise ye the Lord."*

~ *Instead of singing "We have seen the true light," sing the Apolytikion of the Ascension.*

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

Who Sinned, This Man or His Parents?

By Metropolitan Saba (Isper)

In the story of the man blind from his birth (John 9:1-38), we see a profound gesture. Following the Jewish religious concept, which directly linked physical illness to sin, the disciples asked the Master: "Teacher, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus replied: "Neither this man sinned, nor did his parents," rejecting in his answer a direct relationship between physical illness and sin. Illness is not a punishment for a sin, and not every illness is linked to a specific personal sin. Illness, like other problems in our fallen world, is a result of man's fall from paradise. Sin prevails over humans after the fall of the first two ancestors. In the world of sin, all evils emerge, including diseases, epidemics, and infirmities. There is a significant difference between considering illness as a direct result of a specific sin, and the way we deal with it. People can approach their illness in a spiritual and faithful manner, which can bear spiritual fruit, leading to their growth and salvation. Alternatively, they can approach it with complaints, blasphemy, and depression, thereby making it a spiritual illness as well. Believers accept their illness with humility and joy, placing their life in God's hands and using it to grow in patience, endurance, meekness, and liberation from worldly matters that hindered their sought-after freedom.

Christ's answer to the disciples sufficed with one brief phrase, according to the gospel: "Neither this man sinned, nor did his parents." The Teacher rejects linking blindness with the sins of the blind man and his parents. In order to elevate the mentality of the disciples (for previously, it had not benefitted the blind man), He continues His answer with the next phrase, and says that this man was born blind so that "the works of God might be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him who sent Me, while it is day." God's power appeared through this blind man's miraculous healing at the hands of Christ. But Christ's answer contained a broader meaning. In some translations, we hear Jesus using the collective phrase, "We must work." We, Christ's disciples, must continue to work according to His guidance and through Him, so that God's power remains visible and "at work" in our world.

What would we gain if we knew of a spiritual reason behind the blindness of this man, or any other patient? At best, we would only speculate or gossip, while the sufferer remains in his suffering. Christ elevated the mentality from the level of mere knowledge – again, which was not helping the patient – to a higher level that did help him. It is as if He is saying to the disciples, and through them to every Christian: It is better for you to alleviate the suffering of the sufferer and the ill from his illness, and not to question him. This is how God's power appears and works in you. The Lord's answer is a shift from intellectual theorizing to an actual and practical outpouring of God's grace and mercy. As long as He is with us, we are in the daylight, and we have a duty to pursue "the works of Him Who sent Me," that is, the works of true life.

the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, rejoicing because Christ had promised to send them the Holy Spirit.

It should be noted that the Mount of Olives is a Sabbath's day journey from Jerusalem, that is, the distance a Jew was permitted to walk on the day of the Sabbath. Ecumenius writes, "A Sabbath day's journey is one mile in length, as Clement says in his fifth Stromatis; it is two thousand cubits, as the Interpretation of the Acts states." They draw this conclusion from the fact that, while they were in the wilderness, the Israelites of old kept within this distance from the Holy Tabernacle, whither they walked on the Sabbath day to worship God.

TYCHON THE WONDERWORKER

This Saint was born of pious Christian parents and flourished in the fifth century. Because of his piety and purity of life he was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Amathus, and later was made Bishop of Amathus by the great Epiphanius (see May 12). He worked many signs and wonders and turned many from the worship of idols unto Christ. Once he planted a vine in the ground and it wondrously sprouted and brought forth ripe grapes. After his death, on his annual feast-day on June 16, it being yet early in the season, that vine would be laden with unripe grapes, as is natural; but as the Divine Liturgy began, the grapes would begin to darken, and by the end of it, they would be fully ripened. The third of the Vespers stichera in the Menaion service to Saint Tychon alludes to this yearly miracle.

Cloud of Witnesses

by Abbot Tryphon

The Saints Are Alive In Christ Jesus

Vigil lights are placed before the icons of the saints, according to Saint Symeon the New Theologian, as a way of showing that without the Light, Who is Christ, the saints are nothing. It is only as the light of Christ shines on them that they become alive and resplendent. The saints show us what a glorious destiny we have in God, and through the example of their lives, point the way to our becoming "partakers of divine nature." The saints, as the cloud of witnesses in heaven, are present in the divine services, worshipping the Holy Trinity with us. They, as our friends, intercede before the Throne of God on our behalf, having won the good fight, and we are encouraged by the memory and example of their lives, as we struggle on our own path to God. It has been said that there are two kinds of people in the world: sinners who think they are saints, and saints who know they are sinners. A saint is a Christian who lets God's light shine through, and who's life has been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. We venerate the Saints as we seek their intercession with God, but we adore and worship only God in Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We venerate the Images (Icons) as well as the relics of the saints and martyrs. Yet according to the decisions and Canons of the Seventh Ecumenical Council, this veneration relates not to the icons as such, but to their prototypes, or to the persons whom they represent. The interior walls of our temples are adorned with the icons and frescoes of the saints as a reminder that we are surrounded by the cloud of witnesses, the saints, and that the Church Militant (here on earth) is not separated from the Church Triumphant (in heaven). In Christ, death does not divide us, for the saints are not dead, but alive in Christ Jesus. Glory to Jesus Christ, Who is glorified in His saints. **The Very. Rev. Abbot Tryphon is Igumen of All-Merciful Saviour Monastery on Vashon Island, Washington. This and other articles may be found on his website abbottryphon.com**

Announcements

Epistle Readers



June 16
June 23
June 30

Susan Perers
William Van-Dusen
Olga Munoz

Acts of the Holy Apostles (20:16-18, 28-36)
Acts of the Holy Apostles (2:1-11)
St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews (11:33-40;
12:1-2)

TODAY'S COFFEE HOUR IS SPONSORED BY SUSAN



Happy Father's Day to Fr. Elia and all Fathers, Step-Fathers, God Fathers, and Father figures.

May God send you His blessings and grant you many years.

June Birthdays



June 1 Jessica Bellinger, June 6 Octavius Beeny, June 9 Stephanie Enstice,
June 10 DeWayne Hopper, June 12 Alina Matos, June 14 Max Jacobs,
June 17 Alexander Bollig, June 25 Mikey Holland, June 29 Callie Karas.

May God grant you many years!

June Anniversaries

June 13 Fr. Stephen and Kh. Amani Adili

June 23 John and Debbie Thieme

June 27 Subdeacon Michael and Alyssa Lieberman

May God grant you many more Happy Years together!



FOOD FOR THE NEEDY (Basket in the Foyer)

Please remember to bring non-perishable food as you attend church services.

It will be distributed to the needy within the local community.

Thank you!



St. Anthony's Got Talent

This year's Christmas play will be a talent show.

Please talk to Yuliya if you wish to participate.



Please pray for the healing of Father Elia and Kh. Odette, Debbie Thieme, Adriana Theodoropoulos, Lori Sorensen, Michealle and Tyrone Carey, Beverly Delida, Alix Hall, Nina and Diogo Penas, Beth Manzini, John Archambeau, Alex & Soula.



Beloved in Christ

Holy Fathers of the First Council of Nicaea and After-Feast of the Ascension

Our Prayer and Seeking God's Will "Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heave (Mat.. 7:21)."

You will not be saved through prayer alone; you must unite prayer to the fulfillment of the will of God – all that each person is responsible for according to his calling and way of life. And prayer should have as its primary object the petition that God not let us depart from His holy will in any way. Conversely, he who is zealous to fulfill God's will in all things has boldness in prayer before God and greater access to His throne. Moreover, prayer that is not accompanied by walking in God's will is often not true, sober, and heartfelt prayer but only outward reading, during which one's moral dysfunction is concealed by a multitude of words like a fog, while the thoughts are actually disorderly and wandering. Both [prayer and the fulfillment of God's will] must be made orderly through piety, and then there will be fruit.

St. Theophan the Recluse, Commentary on Scripture Readings for the Wednesday of All Saints, from Thoughts of Each Day of the Year, pp. 124-125.

In Christ,
Fr. Elia Shalhoub
Very Rev. Fr. Elia Shalhoub, Pastor

TODAY'S FEAST SUNDAY, JUNE 16, 2024 SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FATHERS OF THE 1ST COUNCIL

The heresiarch Arius was a Libyan by race and a protopresbyter of the Church of Alexandria. In 315, he began to blaspheme against the Son and Word of God, saying that He is not true God, consubstantial with the Father, but is rather a work and creation, alien to the essence and glory of the Father, and that there was a time when He was not. This frightful blasphemy shook the faithful of Alexandria. Alexander, his Archbishop, after trying in vain to correct him through



admonitions, cut him off from communion and finally in a local council deposed him in the year 321. Yet neither did the blasphemer wish to be corrected, nor did he cease sowing the deadly tares of his heretical teachings; but writing to the bishops of other cities, Arius and his followers requested that his doctrine be examined, and if it were unsound, that the correct teaching be declared to him. By this means, his heresy became universally known and won many supporters, so that the whole Church was soon in an uproar.

Therefore, moved by divine zeal, the first Christian Sovereign, Saint Constantine the Great, the equal to the Apostles, summoned the renowned First Ecumenical Council in Nicaea, a city of Bithynia. It was there that the shepherds and teachers of the Church of Christ gathered from all regions in the year 325. All of them, with one mouth and one voice, declared that the Son and Word of God is one in essence with the Father, true God of true God, and they composed the holy Symbol of Faith up to the seventh article (since the remainder, beginning with "And in the Holy Spirit," was completed by the Second Ecumenical Council). Thus they anathematized the impious Arius of evil belief and those of like mind with him, and cut them off as rotten members from the whole body of the faithful.

Therefore, recognizing the divine Fathers as heralds of the Faith after the divine Apostles, the Church of Christ has appointed this present Sunday for their annual commemoration, in thanksgiving and unto the glory of God, unto their praise and honour, and unto the strengthening of the true Faith.

SUNDAY AFTER HOLY ASCENSION

The Lord Jesus passed forty days on earth after His Resurrection from the dead, appearing continually in various places to His disciples, with whom He also spoke, ate, and drank, thereby further demonstrating His Resurrection. On this Thursday, the fortieth day after Pascha, He appeared again in Jerusalem. After He had first spoken to the disciples about many things, He gave them His last commandment, that is, that they go forth and proclaim His Name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. But He also commanded them that for the present, they were not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait there together until they receive power from on high, when the Holy Spirit would come upon them.

Saying these things, He led them to the Mount of Olives, and raising His hands, He blessed them; and saying again the words of the Father's blessing, He was parted from them and taken up. Immediately a cloud of light, a proof of His majesty, received Him. Sitting thereon as though on a royal chariot, He was taken up into Heaven, and after a short time was concealed from the sight of the disciples, who remained where they were with their eyes fixed on Him. At this point, two Angels in the form of men in white raiment appeared to them and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, Who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven" (Acts 1:11). These words, in a complete and concise manner, declare what is taught in the Symbol of Faith concerning the Son and Word of God. Therefore, having so fulfilled all His dispensation for us, our Lord Jesus Christ ascended in glory into Heaven, and sat at the right hand of God the Father. As for His sacred disciples, they returned from

