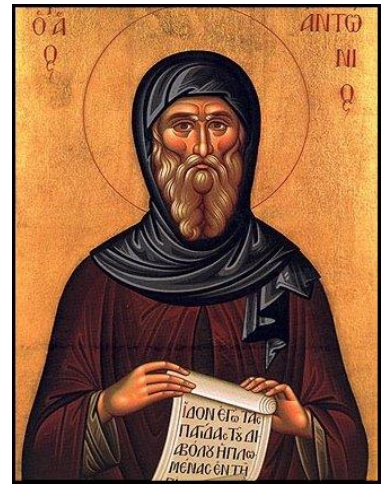


# St. Anthony's Scroll



A publication of  
St. Anthony the Great  
Orthodox Christian Church

VOLUME 9 ~ NUMBER 1  
JANUARY 2018



## The 2017 Nativity Letter of His Beatitude Patriarch JOHN X

To all my brothers, the Shepherds of the Antiochian Orthodox Church, and to my spiritual children throughout the Apostolic See of the Church of Antioch:

*“Beholding him that was in God’s image and likeness fallen because of the transgression, Jesus bowed the heavens and came down; and without suffering change, He made His dwelling in womb of a Virgin.”*

*~ The Entreaty, Great Vespers of the Nativity*

In this remarkable image, St. John of Damascus, the son of our Antiochian church, summarized the Event of the glorious Nativity and of its symbolism. When God, the Creator of all, saw the First Adam is separated from God because of disobedience, and having lost the beauties of paradise and His grace, He sent His only-begotten Son to every human person, who was made in His image and likeness, in order to restore man to his original beauty.

The Lord has penetrated heavens and the heavens of heavens, for the sake of the salvation of man. He has penetrated time and entered our created time and blessed it as well. He continues to penetrate and reach out to men’s hearts and minds, with much care, peace and ease as well. He was born in a cave so He may enlighten our souls by His love. The Lord came to us while tears fill our eyes. His presence added sweetness. The Lord came to us and found warmth in a cave and was borne in a manger, so that He may say to us that His silence is mightier than any human words. For He continues, even during our present time to penetrate the depth of our souls, and instill His light in them.

We are called today not to choke the presence of God in our souls and nourish them with good works. We are called to seek the presence of the divine Child in our midst: in our

hearts and in every segment of our lives. We are called to seek Him in the midst of our misery, our difficulties, and our sad and joyous moments. We are called to feel His presence at times of pleasures as well as in times of necessities throughout our entire life; that Jesus Who bowed the heavens and came down from the highest of His glory, and dwelt in a cave, and from that cave He lifted us by His Cross and His glorious resurrection to an everlasting glory. Today we meditate and knock on the door of His heart; we worship Him and say: Give us, O Lord, the light of your peace. Sooth our hearts by your mercies, bestow your peace on earth. For from your light, O divine Child and in your light we, Antiochian Christians, receive power. By your Gospel which planted in our hearts we can stand firm on our land and homes.

From the steadfastness of our forefathers who have put on Christ, and baptized in your name, we also put on the shield of our faith, and take on your cross in the midst of our difficulties, and remain citizens of the Great East;

we have full confidence, knowing that as you have removed the stone from the entrance of your



grave, you can remove as well the heavy weight from our hearts. In your light shall we see the light. And in your power, despite all circumstances, we shall remain, shepherds and sheep, as one heart and one mind, carrying the weight of one another, so your gospel may be fulfilled. And to all brothers and sisters representing all faiths and all sorts of social fabrics, we extend the hearts and our open hands for the sake of general welfare, serenity, and peace to our nations and to every existing human person.

It is about time that darkness may be scattered from the East and for the people of the East to live in peace on earth in their birth place. It is about time for wars to cease in the land where Christ was born and from which heavenly religions were launched. The message of our East is that of freedom, peace, and of open hearts to the entire world. Neither is there any trace of Takfirism & violence, abandonment and terrorism, in our past and present time. We pray that the light of the cave will cast away the darkness of wars, and to instill in the minds of all people that our region is not an open market to sell arms, and that the destiny of our people should not end dead on the shores of other nations.

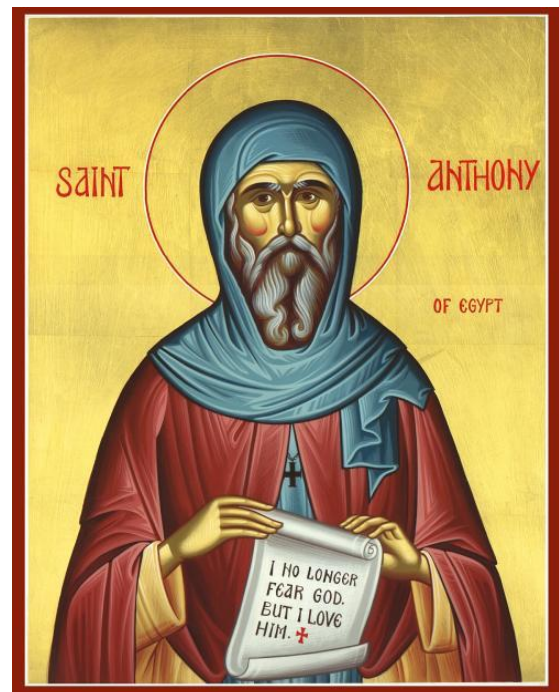
We offer our prayers today for the peace in Syria, for the stability of Lebanon, for the safety of Palestine, and for the welfare of the bleeding Iraq; for every spot and all peoples. We offer our prayers for Jerusalem and for its sacred shrines and institutions so Jerusalem may continue to be the **city of prayers**. We pray for peace of the whole world; we ask our Lord to crown the New Year with His goodness and blessings. We offer our prayers for all those who are captives; especially the two hierarchs: Metropolitan Paul Yazigy and Archbishop Youhanna Ibrahim. We pray for the kidnapped, homeless, and those who live in travail. On the eve of the Nativity we offer our prayers for those who have preceded us in the hope of resurrection and life eternal, that the divine Child will embrace them into His warm heart and surround them with His divine mercy.

As we remember the East during these difficult days, we shall never ignore the active Antiochian presence throughout the world. We pray that Christ the Child will bestow His mercies on the entire world and on all our spiritual children of the Antiochian See, in the Middle East and the entire world.

From the heart of the church of Antioch to the hearts of all people, we extend to you the best greetings in the name of Christ who is born in Bethlehem. We can indeed recall that Christianity was born in the East, and lived together fraternally with the others, and that the Christian Church of Antioch stretches her hands and embrace all her children, and is proud of them, wherever they are, for through them and by their active presence, the Antiochian Church carries the gospel of Christ and its message of the good news to the entire world.

*Issued from our Patriarchal Headquarters  
Damascus, Syria  
December 20, 2017*

## St. Anthony the Great



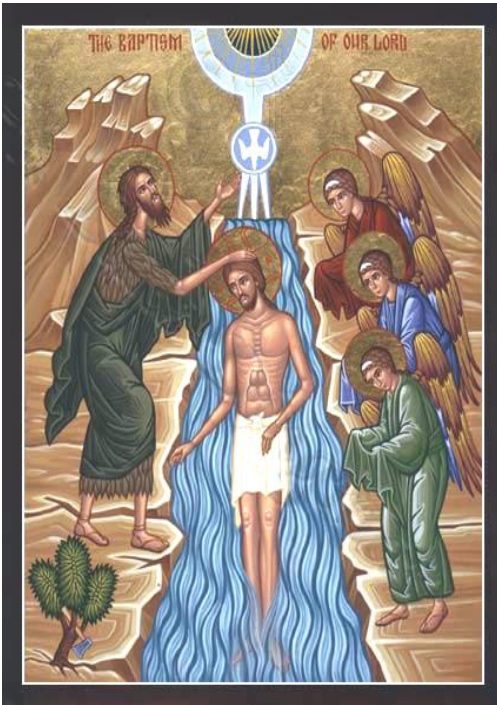
### PARISH FEAST DAY

Divine Liturgy with  
His Grace Bishop Thomas

Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>  
@ 6:30 PM

## Why Should I Have My Home Blessed?

Fr. Anthony Baba



The title of this article is one of the questions I usually ask the children who are at the homes I go to bless. The basic question is pointing to the icon of Jesus and the Virgin and asking them who those people are. For me, seeing the children is the best part of blessing a home. In fact, when I was a child, my favorite time of year was when my priest was coming to bless our home. Besides the fact that my mother used to make me and all my siblings clean every square inch of the house, I anticipated his arrival with such joy and eagerness.

Among the many things I learned from him was his ability to connect with children. He too would ask questions, and one of the questions he would ask us was, “Do you take showers?” Not to be disrespectful but the first thought was, “What?” followed by, “Are you serious, Father?” Of course we shower. Then he’d ask, “What do you use when you shower?” And the response followed, “Umm, well Father, we use shampoo, conditioner, and body soap...” hoping that that was the answer he was looking for, but unfortunately it wasn’t. “What else do you use?”

Of course, water. It’s what we use to cleanse ourselves. It’s no different when we have our homes blessed. We use water, Holy Water, to sprinkle and cleanse our homes from the spiritual sins that stain not just the carpet on our living room floors, but the sins that lurk there and in every room. Do we have arguments? Do we quarrel with our siblings? Do we let the “sun set on our anger?” Even if we live in a peaceful and perfect home, sin infiltrates. As Americans, we’re accustomed to showering at least once a day. Can you imagine showering once a year? Or even worse, never showering?

The season of Theophany, when our Lord and Savior was baptized and through His baptism sanctified the waters and all of creation, is the time of year when we are all called to participate in this mystery. If you’ve never had your home blessed, I encourage you to. If you’re accustomed to having your home blessed every year, don’t stop! And if you need to have your home blessed “out of season”, as the old Jackson Five song goes, “just call my name, and I’ll be there.”

### HOME BLESSING SEASON

Begins in January

Fr. Anthony and Fr. John will be blessing homes this in January.

If you would like to have your home blessed, please fill out this form and give it to either Fr. Anthony or Fr. John

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred time of visit (circle one): **Morning** or **Evening**

# St. Anthony's Scroll

St. Anthony the Great Orthodox Church

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Spring, TX 77379

[www.stanthonythegreat.org](http://www.stanthonythegreat.org)

## CLERGY & STAFF

Rev. Fr. Anthony Baba ~ *Priest*

Rev. Fr. John Ballard ~ *Attached Priest*

Rev. Dn. Photios Beekman ~ *Deacon*

Ms. Adella Winder ~ *Youth Director*

Mrs. Bonnie Kokkinis ~ *Secretary*

## THE FEAST OF THEOPHANY • Friday, January 5<sup>th</sup>

Matins at 5:30pm & Divine Liturgy at 6:30pm

*Blessing of the Waters to follow Divine Liturgy*

Beginning January 11, 2018

Every Thursday

11 am - 2 pm

Spaghetti  
Luncheon

\$ 8.00



In the Fellowship Hall of  
St. Anthony Orthodox Church  
7202 FM 2920

Brought to you by  
Italian Cafe  
19620 Koykendahl

