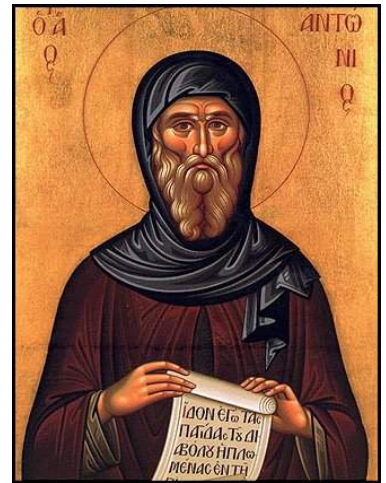


# St. Anthony's Scroll

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St. Anthony Orthodox Christian  
Church

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DECEMBER 2016



## Why Bother Bringing Your Young Ones to Church?

By Kh. Ramia Baba

On my most recent trip back to Canada, I was attending the Divine Liturgy at my home parish and struggling madly to keep my children contained in a single pew. It was then that one of my closest family members, sitting behind me and observing the chaos, struck me with the question, "Why do you even bother bringing your kids to church?"

My immediate response to the challenge was, "Well, I'd like to get them used to it, and they really are getting something out of it." Right...I thought to myself. Well, he didn't seem too convinced, but his skepticism really had me thinking. Why DO we bring our littlest ones to church? What are they getting out of it? What are WE getting out of it? Isn't it just more complicated and stressful than anything? Why don't we just wait a few years until they can sit still in church? These are all very real and relevant questions to parents, so let's explore some of these issues.

Of course, we as parents are entrusted to build good habits for our children as early on as we can. Even Scripture exhorts us to do so. In the book of Proverbs we read, "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (22:6) If we want Christ and

His Church to be a part of our children's lives as they grow, then we've got to bring them to Church while they are young and make it a home for them, because as the old adage goes, "Home is where the heart is." The opposite is true as well. We've got to make our own home "a little church" so that whenever we do bring our children,

it feels like and becomes an extension of home and not some foreign building they frequent once a week. Some ways this could be done are by hanging icons in our homes, saying prayers daily as a family, singing and listening to church hymns, talking about the Lord and the saints and reading the Bible.



*Cont'd on page 5*

His Eminence  
The Most Reverend  
Metropolitan JOSEPH

The Right Reverend  
Bishop BASIL



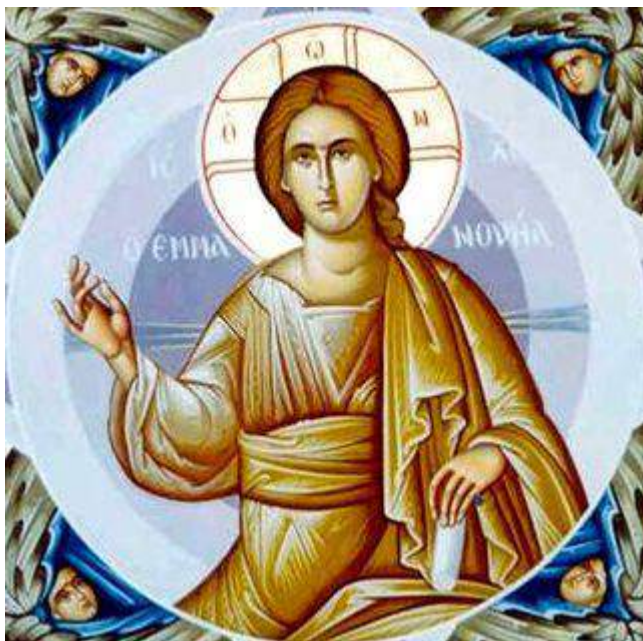
Archbishop of New York and  
Metropolitan of  
All North America

Diocese of Wichita and  
Mid-America

## ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA

The Nativity of Christ  
2016

To the Right Reverend Archimandrites, the Very Reverend and Reverend Priests and Deacons and their families, the Venerable Monastics, and all the Christ-loving Faithful of the Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America:



Icon of Christ Emmanuel – God With Us.

“God is with us! God is on earth, God is among us, not now as Lawgiver – for there is no fire, trumpet blast, smoke-wreathed mountain, dense cloud, or storm to terrify whoever hears him – but as one gently and kindly conversing in a human body with his fellow men. God is in the flesh. Now he is not acting intermittently as he did through the prophets. He is bringing back to himself the whole human race, which he has taken possession of and united to himself. By his flesh he has made the human race his own kin, for God is with us!” – *St Basil the Great, Homily 2 on the Birth of the Lord*

I send to each of you my paternal love, festal greetings and prayerful best wishes for the merriest of Christmases and a healthy and happy 2017.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

+ Bishop Basil

+Bishop Basil  
Diocese of Wichita and Mid-America

*“The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11: 26)*

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# CHRISTMAS SERVICE SCHEDULE



## Friday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>

9:30 AM ~ Royal Hours

## Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>

5:00 PM ~ Festal Orthros

6:00 PM ~ Divine Liturgy for the Nativity of Christ

## Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup> ~ No Services

The festal services on *Saturday* begin at a convenient time, and will conclude in time for families to enjoy their dinner to celebrate this Great Feast.



Just a few short weeks ago, November 13<sup>th</sup>, to be exact, our parish witnessed yet another miracle. It was almost two years ago to the date when we witnessed a son of our church, Fr. Gabriel Tannous, enter into the Holy Priesthood, and now the Church has given us another worthy servant in the newly ordained Deacon Photios! As you may be aware, when he was a Sub-deacon, his responsibility was mainly to serve in the Holy Altar. As a Deacon, he serves you. He prays for you, and he leads you in prayer during the Divine Liturgy. Pray for him as well that God will grant him and his beautiful family many years of dedicated service to His Holy Church!

*Cont'd from cover page*

A large obstacle for many church-going families is keeping our children “contained” throughout the Liturgy. How do we prevent them from crying uncontrollably, running around playground-style, possibly throwing fits after restrictions have been laid down, or fighting with their siblings? If I had the answers to these questions, I would be writing a different kind of article. Very frankly, there are no easy answers, nor are there right answers. Sometimes, it is appropriate to take our children to the cry room; other times, the dust will settle right there with some intervention. All of this begs the question, however, “What am I getting out of this? Why even bother?” But herein lies the problem. We live in a culture that has become so self-focused that living selflessly is seen as a handicap. The Lord Jesus Christ, on the other hand, stands for the exact opposite way.

Living our lives for others (as He best shows us by dying on the Cross) is the greatest virtue. Of course, it is the difficult way and requires us to do work, but this is exactly what the word “Liturgy” means - WORK. So perhaps our work as parents is to bring our children to church and to struggle with all of the things that come with that endeavor. We also cannot dismiss that God sees our work, and I believe He honors our struggles and rewards us in His ways and in His time.

On a final note on why we should bother, it is important to bring our children to church because of the purity of their souls. Their innocence allows their eyes to see clearly the “the things of God.” During the Liturgy, the

priest and the people are emulating the worship of God in Heaven as it has been revealed to us in the Bible. In Isaiah 6, the prophet writes in detail the things he sees in heavenly worship: God on a throne, angels, incense and a coal touching his lips (which is symbolic of Holy Communion) to name a few. These are things that actually happen in Heaven AND in every Divine Liturgy that we attend.

Though my own eyes are stained by my sinfulness and pride, babies and young children are blessed with a purity of soul and we would be remiss not to acknowledge what they are able to perceive, in spite of how active they are throughout each service! I will conclude with a story told to me by my childhood priest. During a Divine Liturgy at the point of Holy Communion, a young boy of about 2 years old began to cry hysterically, tugging at his father and screaming, “Go get the firefighters!”

To every other onlooker, this was a boy that was having an unusual fit, because no one understood what he was really experiencing. Every adult in the room, including the priest, could tell you there was no need for any firefighter, but the little boy was seeing fire everywhere – the chalice was on fire, as was the Altar Table and a few other holy vessels in the church.

His beautiful little soul was experiencing the reality of how Scripture describes God as a “consuming fire”, and was innocently crying out for firefighters to put out that fire. For us parents, let us BOTHER to bring our young ones to church and not quench the fire of the Holy Spirit that they experience and see when they come to dwell in the House of our Lord.

## WEEKDAY DIVINE LITURGIES IN DECEMBER

### ST. NICHOLAS

Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>  
9:00 AM

### ST. LUCIA

Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>  
9:00 AM

### ST. IGNATIUS

Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>  
9:00 AM

# *St. Anthony's Scroll*

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Place  
Postage  
Here

**St. Anthony the Great Orthodox Church**  
7202 FM 2920  
Spring, TX 77379  
[www.stanthonythegreat.org](http://www.stanthonythegreat.org)

## CHURCH STAFF

Pastor	Rev. Fr. Anthony Baba
Youth Director	Adella Winder
Secretary	Bonnie Kokkinis



**Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> (6~9pm)**

~~~> Parish Christmas Party & Potluck and White Elephant Gift Exchange

**Saturday, December 17<sup>th</sup> (9~11:30am)**

~~~> Church School Christmas Caroling at local nursing home

**Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> after Divine Liturgy**

~~~> Church School Christmas Concert & Special Visitor!

**Thursday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> ~ Teen SOYO (2:00pm)**

~~~> Teens to visit Parish Shut-ins to sing carols followed by White Elephant Gift Exchange