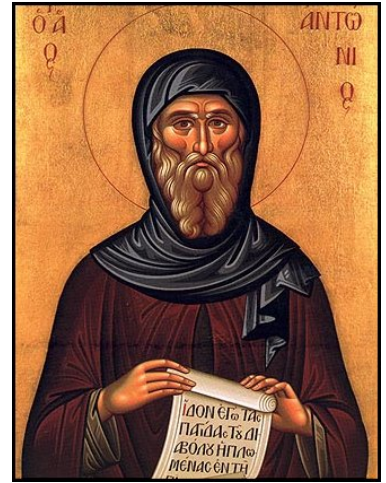


# St. Anthony's Scroll



A publication of  
St. Anthony Orthodox Christian Church

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## Don't Let Lent Pass You By

Fr. Anthony Baba

So it's coming...Great Lent. In just a short two weeks, Lent will be here. March 14<sup>th</sup> to be precise. Actually, it begins on the eve of the 14<sup>th</sup>, with Forgiveness Vespers. If you've never been to this service, you should definitely make plans to come. (Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm). There's no better way to start Lent than by asking and receiving forgiveness from your brothers and sisters in Christ.

I have a habit of referring to almost every service in Lent as "my favorite service". If you're familiar with the services, especially those of Holy Week, you might even have a favorite yourself. Each service of Lent has its own special meaning and significance. From Great Compline on Monday evenings to Pre-Sanctified Liturgy on Wednesday evenings to the Akathist service on Friday evenings, there is an oasis of spiritual nourishment to appreciate. Then there's Holy Week where each night brings new meaning to our spiritual lives.

Don't let Lent pass you by! The fast can seem so daunting that we might say to ourselves, "Our Lent is just too hard for me to even try." Or you might even think, "There's really no point in taking Lent seriously because I just don't have the time." I'm busy with work. I'm too involved with my extracurricular activities that I don't have time to go to an evening service.

And perhaps one of the greatest deterrents is that the traffic is so horrible that it would take me well over an hour to get to Church. We could go on and on about what might prevent our presence in the weekday evening services. I certainly cannot relate to the traffic problem, because I "work" at Church and my job, if you can call it that, is to be here to serve. For the folks who have "real jobs", it can be very difficult to attend the services, especially if you're not leaving work till after 6! Even if you leave work at a decent hour, it can still be difficult. But that's the point. Lent isn't supposed to be easy because life isn't always easy. We all have challenges we are faced with daily – Lent allows us to understand the depth of what it can produce in us.

Schedule days within the week to attend the services. Wednesday evening, for Pre-Sanctified Liturgy is a wonderful opportunity to express the Lenten season and make it real in your daily life. It's in the middle of the week, there's a pot-luck dinner afterwards, and you can receive Holy Communion (if you've fasted after your noon-day meal).

I wish to strongly encourage the parishioners of St. Anthony (and those who may read this who are not members of our parish) to take Lent seriously. Use this time to reflect on your personal relationship with Christ and how it can be strengthened. Don't let Lent pass you by.

St. Anthony the Great Orthodox Christian Church  
7202 FM 2920 ~ Spring, TX 77379 ~ (281) 251-6000 ~ [www.stanthonythegreat.org](http://www.stanthonythegreat.org)

## Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup> ~ Lenten Retreat

10:00 AM ~ 3:00 PM

Experiencing Christ in Fasting and Prayer: A Missiological Approach  
Presented by His Grace Bishop Neofitos

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral ~ (3511 Yoakum Blvd)

## Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup> ~ Houston Food Bank

1:00 PM ~ 4:00 PM

This is a great opportunity to put Lent into action by serving others!

For more information, please contact Jennifer Frangos  
[FrangosJennifer@gmail.com](mailto:FrangosJennifer@gmail.com) or 936-273-3929

## Sunday, March 20<sup>th</sup> ~ Pan-Orthodox Vespers

5:00 PM

Served by all the Orthodox Clergy of the Greater Houston Area  
A Lenten meal will follow

St. George Orthodox Church ~ (5311 Mercer Street)

## Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup> ~ Lenten Retreat

10:00 AM ~ 4:00 PM

“The Cross and the Crescent”

Presented by Fr. Josiah Trenham

St. Joseph Orthodox Church ~ (10644 Hammerly Blvd)  
Registration Forms: [www.saintjosephorthodox.org](http://www.saintjosephorthodox.org)

## Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup> ~ Lenten Pilgrimage

9:00 AM ~ 4:00 PM ~ St. Paraksevi Monastery

We will meet in the St. Anthony parking lot at 9 AM,  
caravan to the Monastery, and return by 4 PM.

For more information, please call the Church Office (281-251-6000)  
or email Bonnie at [OfficeOfStAnthony@gmail.com](mailto:OfficeOfStAnthony@gmail.com)

## Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup> ~ “Camp at Home” Retreat @ St. Anthony

This retreat is for the youth of our parish and the youth of other parishes as well.  
More information coming soon!

## “How to Miss a Childhood”

Source: [www.handsfreemama.com](http://www.handsfreemama.com) by Rachel Macy Stafford

By sharing my own painful truths when it comes to the distractions of the modern age, I have gained an unexpected insight. In the 18 months this blog has existed, I have been privy to a new distraction confession every single day. Up until now, I never knew what to do with this unusual collection of painful admissions from an overly connected society. But today, in a moment of clarity, I knew. And a woman with 35 years experience as a day care provider held the key. It came as a message in my inbox after the woman read my post “The Children Have Spoken” which included heart-breaking observations from children themselves about their parents’ excessive phone use. As soon as I read the first sentence of the caregiver’s email, I knew this message was different than any I had ever received. The hairs on my arms stood up as I absorbed each word that came uncomfortably close to home. It was a voice of heartache, wisdom, and urgency speaking directly to the parents of the 21st century:

*“I can recall a time when you were out with your children you were really with them. You engaged in a back and forth dialog even if they were pre-verbal. You said, ‘Look at the bus, see the doggie, etc.’ Now I see you on the phone, pushing your kids on the swings while distracted by your devices. You think you are spending time with them but you are not present really. When I see you pick up your kids at day care while you’re on the phone, it breaks my heart. They hear your adult conversations. What do they overhear? What is the message they receive? I am not important; I am not important.”*

In a 100-word paragraph this concerned woman who has cared for babies since 1977 revealed a disturbing recipe ... **How to Miss a Childhood**. And because I possess hundreds of distraction confessions, including stories from my own former highly distracted life, I have all the damaging ingredients. All it takes is one child and one phone and this tragic recipe can be yours.

### How to Miss a Childhood:

- \*Keep your phone turned on at all times of the day. Allow the rings, beeps, and buzzes to interrupt your child midsentence; always let the caller take priority.
- \*Decide the app you’re playing is more important than throwing the ball in the yard with your kids.
- \*While you wait for the server to bring your food or the movie to start, get out your phone and stare at it despite the fact your child sits inches away...
- \*Check your phone first thing in the morning ... even before you kiss, hug, or greet the people in your family.
- \*Neglect daily rituals or dinner conversation because you are too busy with your online activity.
- \*Don’t look up from your phone when your child speaks to you.
- \*Use drive time to call other people regardless of the fact you could be talking to your kids about their day—or about their worries, their fears, or their dreams.
- \*Read email and text messages at stoplights. Then tell yourself that when your kids are old enough to drive they won’t remember you did this all the time.

### Follow this recipe and you will have:

- Missed opportunities for human connection
- Fewer chances to create beautiful memories
- Lack of connection to the people most precious to you
- Inability to really know your children and them unable to know you
- Overwhelming regret

It is not easy to consider the possibility that the distractions of the modern age have taken an undeserved priority over the people who matter in your life. In fact, when I admitted this difficult truth to myself, I experienced an emotional breakdown. However, that breakdown became a breakthrough that propelled me to begin my life-changing “Hands Free” journey. Here’s the thing: **You don’t have to follow the above recipe**. Yes, it is the 21st century. Yes, the whole world is online. Yes, the communications for your job are important. Yes, at times you must be readily available. But despite all those factors, you do not have to sacrifice your child’s childhood; nor do you have to sacrifice your life.

# *St. Anthony's Scroll*

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## 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

## PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE ~ Tulsa, Oklahoma

June 15-18, 2016

Since our parish will be hosting the conference in 2017, we want as many people as possible from our parish to attend this year's conference.

What's it about? Visit [www.tulsa2016.com](http://www.tulsa2016.com) for more info!

### DIVINE LITURGY

The Feast of the  
Annunciation

Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup>  
@ 9:00 AM

On this day, the Church commemorates the Archangel Gabriel "annunciating" to the Virgin Mary that the Holy Spirit has conceived in her womb the Son of God and His name will be Jesus.

### WEDNESDAYS DURING LENT

Pre-Sanctified Liturgy @ 7:00 PM  
followed by a Lenten Pot-Luck Dinner

March 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, and April 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>

Join us during this Lenten season  
as we break bread together.

Everyone is encouraged  
to bring a Lenten dish to share.

There should be no meat or dairy products.