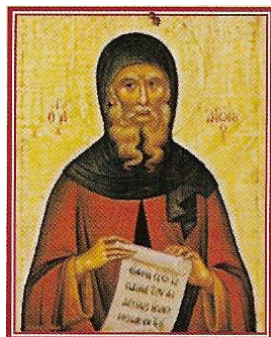


# January 17

+ *Our Ven. and God-bearing Father Anthony the Great*



He was born in Egypt of rich and famous parents in the middle of the Third Century. Having been diligently trained in virtue from childhood" at 20 years of age after the death of his parents, "having changed wealth and glory into nothing", he distributed his estate to the needy and settled in a cave not far from his place of birth in which he began to practice asceticism under the direction of a certain pious elder-hermit.

After some time aspiring to perfect solitude, he left for a more distant place in the desert, crossed the Nile River and settled in a cave on its Eastern shore. Here he continually prayed and labored and during the same time exhausted his body by strict abstinence. He ate only bread and water and accepted food only after the setting of the sun and then not daily. In such great asceticism he spent 20 years in his cave.

The glory of his unusual asceticism, wonders and soul-saving precepts involved quite a few adherents of piety in his desert. Little by little visitors began to settle around the desert dwelling of the great ascetic. Many monastic monasteries and sketes were formed. Soon the entire desert was settled with hermits. Anthony was the leader and director of their way of life.

Being a strict ascetic, St. Anthony allowed himself innocent games with the brethren. Once, when a certain hunter criticized him for this, he asked him to pull his onions. The hunter obeyed. "Pull more and more", the ascetic ordered. The hunter objected that the onions may break. "And so it is in the deeds of God", St. Anthony tutorially said, "If a marginal increase will strain the powers of the brethren, then they will be in disorder".

Quite often they searched for precepts and came to St. Anthony for the advice of the great ascetic and even the educated pagan philosophers also came. Unfamiliar with the learning of wise men and enlightened from above Ven. Anthony amazed them with his wisdom.

St. Anthony during 85-years of asceticism only twice left the desert and appeared in Alexandria with words of love, comfort and teaching. The first time he was in Alexandria during the Maximinus persecution. Anthony calmed the persecuted, strengthened some in asceticism and petitioned before the court for others. He spent about a year in these ascetic deeds and although he himself wished to suffer for the faith, the Lord protected him and he returned to the desert. The other time he appeared in Alexandria was when the false teaching of the Arians appeared there. Arians spread the rumor that St. Anthony agreed with their views, hoping through one name to carry away many into heresy.

Having arrived in Alexandria, St. Anthony denounced the false doctrine of the Arians before all the people. The words of the great ascetic made a deep

impression in Alexandria. Having denounced the wrong doctrine and having strengthened those who were weak in the true faith, St. Anthony returned to his favorite desert. Here he worked many wonders and the glory of his asceticism at the end of his life was so great that it spread to all countries. Knowing beforehand the time of his departure to God, St. Anthony took leave from the brethren and gave them his last teaching. He died at the age of 105 years on January 17, 356.

The Holy Church glorifies him, as "pure in heart and soul, an earthly angel, a heavenly man, a teacher of chastity, a known criterion of abstinence", "chief of fasters", "pillar and foundation of those leading the monastic life", "the best formation of hermits, and the steady foundation of the Church, great guide for those who have lost their way, our praise and the bright joy of the universe".

He left behind canons and teachings for monks, regulations, an exposition of some ideas and replies to various questions and letters. The relics of Ven. Anthony were found and brought to Alexandria in 544. Then, after the conquest of Egypt by the Saracens, they were transferred to Constantinople in the Seventh Century. From there in the Tenth to Eleventh Century they were transferred to the Vienna Diocese. Towards the end of the Fifteenth Century the holy relics were transferred to the Church of St. Julian in Arles, France.

*Troparion, tone 4*

**O Father Anthony,  
Imitating the zealous Elijah in righteousness,  
Following in the straight paths of the Baptist,  
You were a desert-dweller,  
And you have established the universe through your prayers:  
Therefore pray to Christ God to save our souls.**

*Kontakion, tone 2*

**Having rejected the cares of this life  
You quietly ended this way of life,  
Imitating the Baptist in every paradigm of venerability:  
Therefore together with him we honor you,  
O Beginner of the Fathers Anthony.**

**Paramoera:** see Jan. 10. **Matins Gospel:** Mt. 11:27-30; sel. 43. **Epistle:** Heb. 13:17-21; sel. 335. **Gospel:** Lk. 6:17-23; sel. 24.

**If the rector wishes, we may do a Vigil.**

*Emperor Theodosius the Great*

During his rule (379 - 395) pagan temples everywhere were destroyed and closed, among them the Serapis Temple in Alexandria. He delivered the last blow to paganism by issuing a law which made a service to all sorts of pagan gods a

crime. He was a strict advocate of Orthodoxy, issued many laws for the benefit of the Church and against heretics and convened the Second Ecumenical Council.

*Ven. Aquila the Confessor* practiced asceticism as a hermit and died peacefully in the Fifth Century.

*Ven. Anthony the New* practiced asceticism in Berrhoia, Macedonia. His relics exist up to now. The time of his life is not known.

### *Ven. Anthony of Dyma*

According to monastic tales, he was born in Novgorod of devout parents and loved solitude and prayer from his youth. He accepted tonsure in the Khutyn Monastery and spent all his time in monastic asceticism. Ven. Barlaam of Khutyn (see Nov. 6), former rector of the monastery, appointed him his successor. Anthony did not rule the monastery for long. Fleeing human glory, he secretly left the monastery and settled in a cave on the shore of Lake Dyma about 15 versts [10 miles] from the city of Tikhvin. Here he spent days in labor and nights in prayer. Little by little brethren gathered around him and founded a monastery on the shore of the lake. At the age of 67, he reposed on June 24, 1224. His relics were opened during the principdom of Dmitry Donskoy and repose in a hidden place in his monastery. The Venerable One became known for wonders after his death. (Refer Monasteries of the Novgorod Diocese).

### *Ven. Anthony of Krasny Kholm*

Originally a desert-dweller of the Beloozero [White Lake] Province, Ven. Anthony, already a Hieromonk, arrived in the present Vesegonevsky District, Tver Province, and founded a monastery not far from Krasny Kholm [Red Hill], educating his brethren with frequent lectures and especially with the example of the lofty way of life of a Rector. He died in 1481. His relics repose in a hidden place in the monastery (see the Tver Diocese) founded by him.

### *Repose of Ven. Anthony*

He founded the Theotokos Monastery on the shore of Chernoezero [Black Lake], Cherepovets District, Novgorod Province and died in the Sixteenth Century. The monastery founded by the Venerable One was later abolished, and his relics now repose in a hidden place in the chapel.