



**Our Righteous and God-bearing Father Anthony the Great  
Whom the Holy Church celebrates on January 17.**

Saint Anthony, the Father of Monks, was born in Egypt in 251 of pious parents who departed this life while he was yet young. On hearing the words of the Gospel: “If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor” (Matt. 19:21), he immediately put it into action. Distributing to the poor all that he had, and fleeing from all the turmoil of the world, he departed to the desert. The manifold temptations he endured continually for the space of twenty years are incredible. His ascetical struggles by day and by night, whereby he mortified the uprisings of the passions and attained to the height of dispassion, surpass the bounds of nature; and the report of his deeds of virtue drew such a multitude to follow him, that the desert was transformed into a city, while he became, so to speak, the governor, lawgiver, and master-trainer of all the citizens of this newly-formed city. But the cities of the world also enjoyed the fruit of his virtue. When the Christians were being persecuted and put to death under Maximinus in 312, he hastened to their aid and consolation. When the Church was troubled by the Arians, he went with zeal to Alexandria in 335 and struggled against them in behalf of Orthodoxy. During this time, by the grace of his words, he also turned many unbelievers to Christ.

He began his ascetical life outside his village of Coma in Upper Egypt, studying the ways of the ascetics and holy men there, and perfecting himself in each until he surpassed them all. Desiring to increase his labors, he departed into the desert, and finding an abandoned fortress in the mountain, he made his dwelling in it, training himself in extreme fasting, unceasing prayer, and fierce

conflicts with the demons. Here he remained, as mentioned above, about twenty years. Saint Athanasius the Great, who knew him personally and wrote his life, says that he came forth from that fortress “initiated in the mysteries and filled with the Spirit of God.” Afterwards, because of the press of the faithful, who deprived him of his solitude, he was enlightened by God to journey with certain Bedouins, until he came to a mountain in the desert near the Red Sea, where he passed the remaining part of his life. Saint Athanasius says of him that his countenance had a great and wonderful grace. This gift he had from the Saviour. For if he were present in a great company of monks, and anyone who did not know him previously wished to see him, immediately coming forward he passed by all the rest, and hurried to Anthony, as though attracted by his appearance. Yet neither in height nor breadth was he conspicuous above others, but in the serenity of his manner and the purity of his soul.”

So passing his life, and becoming an example of virtue and a rule for monastics, he reposed on January 17 in the year 356, having lived altogether some 105 years.

Rest from labour. Wine and oil allowed

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*Dismissal Hymn. Fourth Tone*

**E**MULATING the ways of Elias the zealot, and following the straight paths of the Baptist, O Father Anthony, thou madest the wilderness a city, and didst support the world by thy prayers. Wherefore intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

*Kontakion. Second Tone  
Thou soughtest the Heights*

**T**HOU leftest behind \* all earthly cares and turbulence, \* and leddest a life \* of stillness and tranquility, \* emulating John the Baptist in every way, O most righteous one. \* Wherefore, we acclaim thee with him, \* O first of the Fathers, Father Anthony.

