

John 17:1-13 (Sunday, Gospel, Fathers)

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.

Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

Kiev Far Caves, Founder of Monasticism in Russia

Commemorated on [July 10](#)

Saint Anthony of the Kiev Caves was born in the year 983 at Liubech, not far from Chernigov, and was named Antipas in Baptism. Possessing the fear of God from his youth, he desired to be clothed in the monastic schema. When he reached a mature age, he wandered until he arrived on Mt. Athos, burning with the desire to emulate the deeds of its holy inhabitants. Here he received monastic tonsure, and the young monk pleased God in every aspect of his spiritual struggles on the path of virtue. He particularly excelled in humility and obedience, so that all the monks rejoiced to see his holy life.

The igumen saw in St Anthony the great future ascetic, and inspired by God, he sent him back to his native land, saying, "Anthony, it is time for you to guide others in holiness. Return to your own Russian land, and be an example for others. May the blessing of the Holy Mountain be with you.

Returning to the land of Rus, Anthony began to make the rounds of the monasteries about Kiev, but nowhere did he find that strict life which had drawn him to Mt. Athos.

Through the Providence of God, Anthony came to the hills of Kiev by the banks of the River Dniepr. The forested area near the village of Berestovo reminded him of his beloved Athos. There he found a cave which had been dug out by the Priest Hilarion, who later became Metropolitan of Kiev (October 21). Since he liked the spot, Anthony prayed with tears, "Lord, let the blessing of Mt. Athos be upon this spot, and strengthen me to remain here." He began to struggle in prayer, fasting, vigil and physical labor. Every other day, or every third day, he would eat only dry bread and a little water. Sometimes he did not eat for a week. People began to come to the ascetic for his blessing and counsel, and some decided to remain with the saint.

Among Anthony's first disciples was St Nikon (March 23), who tonsured St Theodosius of the Caves (May 3) at the monastery in the year 1032.

The virtuous life of St Anthony illumined the Russian land with the beauty of monasticism. St Anthony lovingly received those who yearned for the monastic life. After instructing them how to follow Christ, he asked St Nikon to tonsure them. When twelve disciples had gathered about St Anthony, the brethren dug a large cave and built a church and cells for the monks within it.

After he appointed Abbot Barlaam to guide the brethren, St Anthony withdrew from the monastery. He dug a new cave for himself, then hid himself within it. There too, monks began to settle around him. Afterwards, the saint built a small wooden church in honor of the Dormition of the Mother of God over the Far Caves.

At the insistence of Prince Izyaslav, the igumen Barlaam withdrew to the Dimitriev monastery. With the blessing of St Anthony and with the general agreement of the brethren, the meek and humble Theodosius was chosen as igumen. By this time, the number of brethren had already reached a hundred men. The Kiev Great Prince Izyaslav (+ 1078) gave the monks the hill on which the large church and cells were built, with a palisade all around. Thus, the renowned monastery over the caves was established. Describing this, the chronicler remarks that while many monasteries were built by emperors and nobles, they could not compare with those which are built with holy prayers and tears, and by fasting and vigil. Although St Anthony had no gold, he built a monastery which became the first spiritual center of Rus.

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St Anthony Con't

For his holiness of life, God glorified St Anthony with the gift of clairvoyance and wonderworking. One example of this occurred during the construction of the Great Caves church. The Most Holy Theotokos Herself stood before him and St Theodosius in the Blachernae church in Constantinople, where they had been miraculously transported without leaving their own monastery. Actually, two angels appeared in Constantinople in their forms (See May 3, the account of the Kiev Caves Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos). Having received gold from the Mother of God, the saints commissioned master architects, who came from Constantinople to the Russian land on the command of the Queen of Heaven to build the church at the Monastery of the Caves. During this appearance, the Mother of God foretold the impending death of St Anthony, which occurred on July 10, 1073.

Through Divine Providence, the relics of St Anthony remain hidden.



45 Holy Martyrs at Nicopolis in Armenia

Commemorated on [July 10](#)

The Forty-five Martyrs of the Armenian City of Nicopolis suffered during the reign of the emperor Licinius (311-324), then a coregent with Constantine the Great. Licinius, the ruler of the Eastern Empire, fiercely persecuted Christians and issued an edict to put to death any Christian who would not return to paganism. When the persecutions began at Nicopolis, more than forty of the persecuted of Christ decided to appear voluntarily before their persecutors, to confess openly their faith in the Son of God and accept martyrdom. The holy confessors were headed by Leontius, Mauricius, Daniel, Anthony and Alexander, and were distinguished by their virtuous life. The procurator of the Armenian district, Licius, before whom the holy confessors presented themselves, was amazed at the directness and bravery of those who voluntarily doomed themselves to torture and death. He tried to persuade them to renounce Christ and offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, but the saints remained steadfast. They refuted all the arguments of the governor, pointing out to him all the falseness of faith in the vile and vice-filled pagan gods, leading those that worship them to ruin. The procurator gave orders to beat the confessors about the face with stones, and then shackle and imprison them.



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In prison the saints rejoiced and sang the Psalms of David. St Leontius inspired and encouraged the brethren, preparing them to accept new tortures for the true Faith, and telling them of the bravery of all those formerly that had suffered for Christ. In the morning, after repeated refusals to offer sacrifice to the idols, the saints were again given over to torture. St Leontius, seeing the intense suffering of the martyrs and worrying that some of them might falter and lose faith, prayed to God that there might be a quick end of the matter for all.

When the holy martyrs sang Psalms at midnight, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to them, and the prison blazed with light. The angel declared to the martyrs that their contest was near its end, and their names already were inscribed in Heaven. Two of the prison guards, Meneus and Virilad, saw what was happening and believed in Christ. On the following morning, the governor decided to put the martyrs of Christ to death. After beastly tortures they burned them in a fire, and threw their bones in a river. Pious people found the relics, gathered them up and saved them. Later on, when freedom had been bestowed to the Church of Christ, a church was built on this spot in the name of the holy 45 Martyrs.