

SEPTEMBER 3
HIEROMARTYR ANTHIMUS
VENERABLE THEOCTISTUS

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The Hieromartyr Anthimus. Born in Nicomedia, he was brought up from childhood as a true Christian. 'His body was mortified, his spirit humble; jealousy was uprooted, anger tamed, sloth banished. ... he had love for all and was at peace with all, had a good understanding with all, was filled with zeal for the glory of God and was open to all.' It is not surprising that a man of such virtues was made a bishop. St Anthimus worked as a bishop in Nicomedia at the time of a harsh persecution of Christians under the two wicked Emperors Diocletian and Maximian. Streams of Christian blood were spilled, especially in Nicomedia. One year, on the feast of the Nativity of Christ, twenty thousand martyrs were burned in one church (see Dec. 28th). This happened during Anthimus's episcopate. The persecution did not end with this, but continued, and many Christians were thrown into prison and kept there for torture and death. St Anthimus withdrew to a village, Omana, not to escape death but to be able thence to strengthen his flock in the path of martyrdom, that none should draw back through fear. One of his letters to the Christians in prison was seized and taken to the Emperor Maximian. The Emperor sent twenty soldiers to find Anthimus and take him. The grey-beard, discerning this, went out to meet the soldiers, brought them into his house as his guests and only then revealed that he was Anthimus. The soldiers, amazed at his kindness, urged him to hide, and said that they would tell the Emperor that they had been unable to find him, but Anthimus replied that he dared not allow God's Law to be violated by a lie in order to save his life. So he set out with the soldiers. On the way, all the soldiers came to faith in Christ and were baptised by Anthimus. Brought before the Emperor, Anthimus was submitted to harsh and long-drawn-out torture, and was finally beheaded with an axe. He glorified God and entered into rest in the Lord at the beginning of the fourth century.

Our Holy Father Theoctistus. A faster and fellow-ascetic of St Euthymius the Great, Theoctistus was abbot of Euthymius's monastery six miles from Jerusalem, on the road to Jericho. He was in all things a disciple of Euthymius, governing the monastery under his guidance to the age of ninety. He led a godly life, and entered into rest in the middle of the fifth century, in the time of Patriarch Anastasius of Jerusalem.

GREAT VESPERS

LORD I CALL: *Four stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 4 (spiral bound Vespers book), followed by three stikhera for the Martyr and three for the Saint*

Martyr Anthimus, tone 1:

O divinely-wise and blessed one,
you brightened your sacred and divine vestments with the dye of
your blood.
You went forth in faith from strength to strength
and from glory to glory..
Pray now that peace and great mercy may be granted to our souls!

You offered the Bloodless Sacrifice to God
as a most obedient priest;
later, as a most true martyr,
you offered yourself with blood to Christ
as an acceptable sacrifice and whole burnt offering,
O divinely eloquent and honored one..
Pray to Him for those who sing your praises!

You led legions of martyrs to Christ, O Father Anthimus,
teaching and instructing by your doctrines and words.
You openly presented yourself as an example for them,
O wise one..
Pray with them that peace and great mercy be granted to our souls!

Saint Theoctistus, tone 1:

O Father Theoctistus,
your radiant memory gladdens the assemblies of monastics,
who rejoice in the beautiful works of your life,
the riches of your wonders and the brightness of your spiritual
gifts..
Entreat Christ that peace and great mercy be granted to our souls!

O Father Theoctistus,
the enemies were terrified by the intensity of your ascetic
discipline,
and they were deated by your unceasing prayers,
O most praised saint;
for you had Christ as a helper in your work.//
Pray to Him that peace and great mercy be granted to our souls!

O Father Theoctistus,
you were truly God's creature;
for by preserving that which was according to His image,
you showed by your holy life that you were rightfully named,¹
O most marvelous one.//
Entreat Christ that peace and great mercy be granted to our souls!

GLORY... for the Martyr, tone 6:

O blessed Anthimus,
you were a most obedient priest:
the ultimate call was given to you,
for while celebrating the divine and ineffable mysteries,
you poured out your blood in behalf of Christ our God.
You brought yourself as a pleasing sacrifice to Him.
Therefore, since you have boldness before Him,
pray fervently for those who keep your memory with faith and
love,
that they may be rescued from evil,//
and from all temptations, dangers, and afflictions!

***NOW AND EVER... the Dogmatikon in tone 4 (spiral
bound Vespers book)***

***APOSTIKHA: All stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 4 (spiral
bound Vespers book)***

GLORY...Saint Theoctistus, tone 6:

The sound of your teachings has gone out into all the earth,
O venerable Father Theoctistus.
Therefore you have found the reward of your labors in the heavens.

You destroyed the hosts of demons
and reached the ranks of Angels, whose life you blamelessly
followed.
Since you have boldness before Christ our God,//
entreat peace for our souls!
***NOW AND EVER...the Resurrectional Theotokion in
tone 6 (spiral bound Vespers book)***

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 4

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel
The joyous message of Thy Resurrection;
They cast away the ancestral curse
And elatedly told the apostles;
Death is overthrown!
Christ our God is risen,
Granting the world great mercy.

Saint Anthimus, tone 4

By sharing in the ways of the Apostles,
you became a successor to their throne.
Through the practice of virtue, you found the way to divine
contemplation, O inspired one of God;
by teaching the word of truth without error, you defended the Faith,
even to the shedding of your blood.//
O Hieromartyr Anthimus, entreat Christ God to save our souls!

Resurrectional Dismissal Theotokion, tone 4

The mystery of all eternity,
unknown even by Angels,
through you, Theotokos, is revealed to those on earth:
God incarnate by union without confusion.
He voluntarily accepted the Cross for us,
by which He resurrected the first-created man,//
saving our souls from death.

¹ The name "Theoctistus" means "creation of God"