

## **40th day memorial for Elder Ephraim to be served at St. Anthony's Monastery**



Elder Ephraim of Philotheou and Arizona peacefully reposed in the Lord at about 10:00 PM on December 7 at St. Anthony's Monastery in Florence, Arizona.

The beloved Athonite elder founded St. Anthony's in addition to another 16 monasteries in America and Canada after leaving the Holy Mountain, where he had labored for many years as the spiritual child of the recently-canonized Elder Joseph the Hesychast and as abbot of Philotheou Monastery.

Elder Ephraim's 40th day memorial is being served in conjunction with the monastery's patronal feast of St. Anthony the Great, tonight and tomorrow.

According to the [schedule published by the monastery](#), the celebration will begin at 11:00 AM today with an informal/buffet meal, followed by a Trisagion at Elder

Ephraim's tomb, Small Vespers, dinner, the reception of Archbishop Elpidophoros, and Vigil in honor of St. Anthony the Great, from 6:00 PM to 11:00 PM.

Tomorrow's schedule begins with the Hours and the Hierarchal Divine Liturgy at 7:30 AM, followed by the 40-day memorial for Elder Ephraim in the monastery's main church at 12:30 PM and another Trisagion at his tomb at 1:00.

The monastery will then offer lunch, followed by Vespers, dinner, and Small Compline.

The services will be live-streamed on the monastery's [YouTube page](#). Vigil for St. Anthony will begin at 6:00 PM Mountain Standard Time. The Hours, Liturgy, and 40-day memorial will begin tomorrow at 7:30 AM Mountain Standard Time.

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In a letter to parents who had lost their child, published in the book *Counsels From the Holy Mountain* by Elder Ephraim, he spoke of the mystery of death and the joy of the Resurrection:

We received the bitterly joyful news of your child's departure to the Lord. We mourned and wept along with you, but such behavior is not fitting for such a soul that we hope our Christ has accepted and delivered from the torments of this life in order to give him repose in the eternal abodes. This soul will adorn your noble family as the most bright and sacred decoration, and henceforth will be an everlasting torch interceding with the Lord for us. His virginity, the many years of illness and patience, the second baptism—that is, the Angelic Schema—assure us that our sweet Jesus has accepted him as a fragrant incense.

I beg you, do not be sad, but rejoice, for you have deposited a great treasure in God's treasury, a large sum which will support you. Death is a momentary separation, because Christ came to earth and cast light upon this dark mystery of death. For "He who believes in Me, though he may die, shall live. I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn. 11:25 ). I pray with all my heart that our holy God gives you patience, consolation, and holy thoughts for deeper spirituality.

Do you know how much help the departed seek! Since there is no repentance after death, and as humans they also departed with stains and blemishes, and since they see that the help of the living greatly assists them to be perfected and find rest, they yearn, seek, and long for someone to commemorate them. They also long for one of their descendants to become a priest or a virtuous Christian who will care for them. Let me tell you about a vision of a certain bishop which he himself

told me while we were serving together years ago. He told us that there was a priest who had a drinking problem and often got drunk; this was going on for many years. Other than this, though, the priest was virtuous and pious. One day he drank wine as usual and got drunk, and then before he was fully sober, he went and served Liturgy.

So God allowed an accident to happen: he spilled the holy Body and Blood of the Lord! The poor fellow froze with fear, while also thinking about the heavy penance his bishop would give him! Finally, after he confessed, his bishop told him, “Go—I will notify you when to return, and then I’ll give you the penance.” So as the bishop was all alone reflecting and pondering, and as he picked up a pen to write his decision to depose him, he saw an endless multitude of people of every age, kind, and class unwind before him like a movie. The bishop was stunned by this vision but was also overcome with fear. Then all those people together said to him, “Your Eminence, do not punish the priest; do not depose him”. Then, little by little, they disappeared. Afterwards, the bishop called the priest to come. The poor priest was terrified, thinking about being deposed. The bishop said to him, “Tell me something, do you commemorate many names when you serve Liturgy?” The priest answered, “In the proskomidi, Your Eminence, I commemorate names for a long time—from kings and emperors down to the last pauper.” The bishop then said to him, “Go, then, and whenever you serve Liturgy, commemorate as many people as you can, and take care not to get drunk anymore. You are pardoned.” Thereafter, the priest—with the help of God—was delivered from drinking.

We received the telegram regarding the departure of our beloved sister, and, as is human, we grieved. We shed tears, which bear witness to our soul’ unity through the unbreakable bond of love in Christ. But we must also rejoice for the great “lottery” she won. First of all, because she kept her virginity—that great jewel on the garment of her pure soul. Second, because for years she endured the Lord’s visitation through her illness and lifted her cross until the Golgotha of her perfection, thus proving to be a true disciple of Jesus. Third, because she was given the Angelic Schema, which she did not defile with new sins, and which the Holy Fathers have decreed to be a second baptism! So, cleansed thenceforth by the baptism of repentance, she departed. Our sweet Jesus has called her to be by His side from now on so that she may see His theandric face to her utmost delight. There she will intercede perpetually not only for her parents and the rest of her relatives, but also for the whole world.

Once St. Anthony the Great was in ecstasy and saw himself being lifted by the angels to heaven, as if he were departing to the Lord. But the adverse powers—the

demons, the toll-houses—were obstructing him and accusing him for sins he had done. The holy angels were objecting, saying, “All the sins he committed before becoming a monk were forgiven by God the moment he wore the Schema. Only sins he did after receiving the Schema you have the right to use against him.” Once the angels said this, the demons could not find anything culpable, and thus he ascended freely.

— Source: [orthochristian.com](http://orthochristian.com)