**Resurrectional Troparion, Tone 4**
When the women discipless 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 God is risen, granting the world great mercy!”

**Troparion, Tone 1 (St. Mark)**
O blessed Mark, O voice of God. As an apostle of Christ you were taught by the chief apostle Peter – like the sun you brought light to the nations, enrichment of Alexandria. Liberator of Egypt from pagan delusions, as a pillar of light to the church you enlightened all by your evangelical teachings. Therefore we honor your memory with great festivity, pray to God the giver of the gospel that He will grant the forgiveness of sins.

**Troparion, Tone 4 (St. Anthimus)**
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. // Hieromartyr Ánthimus, entreat Christ God to save our souls.

**Troparion, Tone 8 (St. Theoctistus)**
By a flood of tears you made the desert fertile, and your longing for God brought forth fruits in abundance. By the radiance of miracles you illumined the whole universe! Our Father Theoctistus, pray to Christ God to save our souls!

**Resurrectional Kontakion, Tone 4**
My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hell, and as Master,// He has risen on the third day!
Kontakion, Tone 2 (St. Mark)
You received the grace of the Spirit from above most glorious Mark! And destroyed rhetorical snares, O Apostle. You captured all nations bringing them to your Master by the preaching of the Divine Gospel.

Kontakion, Tone 4 (St. Anthimus)
Living hon’rably as a priest, you completed the course of martyrdom; you extinguished the worship of idols and became a champion of your flock, divinely wise one. Therefore, we honor you, mystically crying out: “Through your prayers deliver us from calamity, ever-memorable Anthimus.”

Kontakion, Tone 6 (Theotokos)
Steadfast Protectress of Christians, Constant Advocate before the Creator; despise not the entreating cries of us sinners, but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you.

THE EPISTLE READING
Deacon: Let us attend!
Priest: Peace be unto all!
Reader: And to your spirit!
Deacon: Wisdom!
Reader: The Prokeimenon in the 4th Tone. O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.
Choir: O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.
Reader: Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, Thou art very great!
Choir: O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.
Reader: O Lord, how manifold are Thy works!
Choir: In wisdom hast Thou made them all.
Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: Brothers and sisters in Christ, 13Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. 14Let all that you do be done in love. 15Now, brethren, you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; 16I urge you to be subject to such men and to every fellow worker and laborer. 17I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence; 18for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. Give recognition to such men.

19The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord. 20All the brethren send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. 22If any one has no love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our Lord, come! 23The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. 24My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen. [(166) 1 Corinthians 16:13-24 (RSV)]

Priest: Peace be unto you, reader.

Reader: And to your spirit. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, in the 4th Tone.

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Reader: Go forth and prosper and reign, because of truth and meekness and righteousness.

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Reader: You love righteousness and hate iniquity.

Choir: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

THE GOSPEL READING

33“Hear another parable. There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it,
and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. 

34 When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; 35 and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. 37 Afterward he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ 39 And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. 40 When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”

41 They said to Him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures:

‘The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes’? [(87) Matthew 21:33-42 (RSV)]

Communion Hymn
Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Today we commemorate: The Hieromartyr Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedia, and those with him suffered during the persecution against Christians under the emperors Diocletian (284-305) and Maximian (305-311). The persecution became particularly intense after a fire at the imperial court at Nicomedia. The pagans accused the Christians of setting the fire and reacted against them with terrible ferocity.

In Nicomedia alone, on the day of the Nativity of Christ, as many as twenty thousand Christians were burned inside a church. However, this monstrous inhumanity did not frighten the Christians, who firmly confessed their faith and endured martyrdom for Christ.
Sts Dorotheus, Mardonius, Migdonius, Peter, Indes and Gorgonius died during this period. One of them was beheaded by the sword, others perished by burning, or being buried alive, or by drowning in the sea. The soldier Zeno boldly denounced the emperor Maximian, for which he was stoned, and then beheaded.

Then the holy Virgin Martyr Domna, a former pagan priestess, perished at the hands of the pagans, and also Saint Euthymius, because of their concern that the bodies of the holy martyrs should be buried. Bishop Anthimus, who headed the Church of Nicomedia, hid himself in a village not far from Nicomedia at the request of his flock. From there he sent letters to the Christians, urging them to cleave firmly to the holy Faith and not to fear tortures.

One of his letters, sent with Deacon Theophilus, was intercepted and given to the emperor Maximian. Theophilus was interrogated and died under torture, without revealing to his torturers the whereabouts of Bishop Anthimus. After a while Maximian managed to learn where Saint Anthimus was, and sent a detachment of soldiers after him.

The bishop met them along the way, but the soldiers did not recognize the saint. He invited them to join him and provided a meal, after which he revealed that he was the one they sought. The soldiers did not know what to do. They wanted to leave him and tell the emperor that they had not found him. Bishop Anthimus was not one to tolerate a lie, and so he would not consent to this.

The soldiers came to believe in Christ and received holy Baptism. The saint ordered them to carry out the emperor’s instructions. When Bishop Anthimus was brought before the emperor, the emperor ordered that the instruments of execution be brought out and placed before him. “Do you think, emperor, to frighten me with these tools of execution?” asked the saint. “No indeed, you cannot frighten one who wishes to die for Christ! Execution is frightening only for the cowardly, for whom the present life is most precious.” The emperor then directed that the saint be fiercely tortured and beheaded by the sword.
Bishop Anthimus joyfully glorified God with his last breath, and received the crown of martyrdom. (See December 28 for another account of the Nicomedian martyrs.)

Saint Theophilus was a deacon who endured martyrdom during the persecution against Christians under the emperors Diocletian (284-305) and Maximian (305-311). The persecution became particularly intense after a fire at the imperial court at Nicomedia. The pagans accused the Christians of setting the fire and reacted against them with terrible ferocity.

St Anthimus, who was Bishop of Nicomedia, took refuge in a neighboring village during the persecution, and encouraged his flock through letters. One of his letters, sent with Deacon Theophilus, was intercepted and given to the emperor Maximian. Theophilus was interrogated and died under torture, without revealing the whereabouts of Bishop Anthimus.

Saint Theoctistus of Palestine was a great ascetic who lived in the Judean wilderness in the Wadi Mukellik. At first, he was the
companion of Saint Euthymius the Great (January 20) in the ascetic life. So great was their mutual affection and oneness of mind that they seemed to live as one soul in two bodies. They were persons of similar virtue and holiness, and they encouraged one another in their struggles. Each year after the Leave-taking of Theophany, they would go into the desert to struggle and pray in solitude, returning to their cells on Palm Sunday.

After five years together, Saints Euthymius and Theoctistus went into the desert for Great Lent, and in a wadi they discovered a large cave which later became a church. They decided to remain there, believing that they had been led there by God. They ate wild herbs to sustain themselves, and met with no other people for some time.

The Lord did not wish these great luminaries to remain hidden, however. He wanted their wisdom and holiness of life to become known in order to benefit others. One day, shepherds from Bethany found the ascetics and went back to their village and told others about them. After that, many people came to hear of them, and monks came from other monasteries to visit them. Some even stayed there in order to be instructed by them.

So many monks gathered around them that they were obliged to build a lavra over the cave church. Saint Euthymius made Theoctistus the igumen of the lavra, while he himself lived in seclusion in the cave. The wise Theoctistus accepted all who came to him, confessing them and treating the infirmities of their wounded souls with appropriate spiritual remedies.

When he had reached an advanced old age, Saint Theoctistus became very ill. Saint Euthymius (who was ninety years old himself) visited him and took care of him. When Saint Theoctistus went to the Lord in 467, Patriarch Anastasius of Jerusalem came and presided at his burial service.

Saint Theoctistus of Palestine should not be confused with Saint Theoctistus of Sicily (January 4).