

## Our Anniversary Logo

*'In him was life, and the life was the light of all. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it'. John. 1:4-5*

The sun as a sign of new life has been with Christianity from our beginning. Christ was called 'the true sun' and the 'sun of righteousness'. Our sabbath was moved to 'sun'day' in weekly celebration of the resurrection. Our Sunday became synonymous with the Lord's Day.

In the Roman Rite's Christmas Mass at Midnight, we have this familiar passage from Isaiah: 'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who swelt in the land of gloom a light has shone' (Is. 9:1). On the feast of Nativity in the Orthodox liturgy, it is proclaimed: 'O sun of justice, who rises and comes from on high...'. Indeed, our feast of Christmas came to be celebrated at the same time of year as the winter solstice; the time of year when it was believed that the sun was making its annual journey 'back to earth'. The church saw in this coming to earth of the sun, the coming of God to earth; the Word become flesh and dwelling with us.

With Constantine (280?-337.), the sun symbol became identical with the Christ. Constantine claimed that he saw the sign of Christ shining in the sky 'like the sun', i.e., 'parahelion' in Greek. This symbol, which became predominant in church and empire, consisted of two Greek letters, X = 'chi' and P = 'rho'. Together, as 'chi-rho', they form a contraction for 'Christ'.

As we celebrate the anniversary of our founding, it seems appropriate to have selected a sun image as the graphic symbol of our new life, as well as our past; to seek and find blessing in what is to come as well as what has been. As earth and humanity cannot live without the energy of the sun neither can we, as church, exist without the sun-light of Christ.

Our symbol/logo includes the chi-rho at its center. The imagery is clear. Not simply the sun, but the sun of righteousness. Not simply light, but the light of Christ; and not just the light of Christ, but the light of Christ in us. Augustine would call Christian goodness, 'the light which breaks forth like the dawn'.

(Questions have been raised as to the meaning or significance of the different patterns on the right and left sides of the logo. None was intended. It was simply the artist's wish to vary the pattern within the overall design.)

Often, our symbol will be used with the motto, 'Saint Anthony from 1858'. This was deliberately chosen rather than '150 years' or '150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary', because the former will always be true for all of our future time and not just for this anniversary year. In other words, we wish to celebrate our parish's day in the sun, not this year, but for all our years. To paraphrase scripture scholar Bernard Anderson: '...because Saint Anthony Church remembers our past, let us live in the present, with our faces set toward the future.' In facing that future, may the sun keep shining on us.

David Camele. April, 2008