

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Brothers and Sisters



Born to young parents of the Portuguese nobility, Ferdinand received a first-class education at the cathedral of Lisbon.

We know him as St. Anthony of Padua, his surname deriving from the Italian city where he made his last home.

At age fifteen he joined the canons of St. Augustine but found himself distracted by the constant visits of family and friends. He asked to be transferred to another city!

He devoted himself to prayer and study, and with his unusually retentive memory, acquired an extraordinary knowledge of the Bible.

For the next eight years he lived his daily routine of prayer and study was uninterrupted. Then his world was turned upside down.

A Franciscan came from Morocco, carrying the relics of brethren who had been recently martyred at the hands of the Muslims.

Anthony was profoundly moved. Not by fear or repulsion. Not with thoughts of ‘God forbid that should ever happen to me’ or ‘What a terrible way to die.’ Rather, he conceived an ardent desire to lay down his life for Christ – an aspiration he had little hope of realizing as a canon regular.

He asked to leave his order and became a Franciscan, taking the name Anthony, out of devotion to the great patriarch of monks who was the titular saint of the chapel in which he received the Franciscan habit.

He then embarked for Morocco, hoping to be martyred!

Incapacitated by sickness, after several months he was sent back to Europe. He arrived in Assisi, and met St. Francis at the general chapter of 1221, and from there was assigned to a small hermitage.

It happened that an ordination was held at the hermitage, on which occasion both Dominican and Franciscan friars were being hosted. Through some misunderstanding, none of the Dominicans had come prepared to deliver customary address at the ceremony, and none of the Franciscans seemed capable of filling the breach.

Anthony was summoned from the kitchen and was told to speak whatever the Holy Spirit should put into his mouth.

He had never spoken in public before, but he obeyed, and all were amazed. His eloquence, fervor and learning were unparalleled. He was immediately sent all over Italy to preach missions. He sprang to fame. Sometimes the mere sight of him brought sinners to their knees: he appeared to radiate holiness.

“St. Anthony, St. Anthony come around, something is lost and needs to be found.” This prayer to St. Anthony originated because of his ability to find those who are lost – the sinners – and restore them to Christ.

When he preached, people would take off from work, or close their offices to listen to him. Women rose early or remained overnight to secure their places. Often the churches could not hold the crowds who came, and Anthony had to preach in the squares or market places.

The Gospel Anthony preached is the same Good News we can hear today. The Feast Day of St. Anthony of Padua is this coming Wednesday June 13th. You don’t have to get here the night before to secure your place. There will be a seat waiting for you! Mass is at 8:30am and 12:00 noon.