



# St Anthony

## ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟC

Written by: Marianne Abdou  
St Mary's Church, Pompano Beach, FL

**S**t Anthony is one of the greatest saints and fathers of our church. He is also known as "The Father of Monks." St Anthony wrote many sayings that teach humbleness, love, wisdom and many other virtues. These sayings are a good guide for us to follow his pure and holy path to reach eternity.

**St Anthony was born in the year 251 AD in Keman El-Arous, Beni Suef Govemate, Upper Egypt.** He was raised in the fear of God by rich, church loving parents. At the age of 20, Anthony's dad passed away, and he was left the responsibility of taking care of his younger sister, which he did with love and kindness.

**"If you wish to be perfect, go and sell what you own and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."** (Matthew 19:21) This verse caught Anthony's attention while attending the Divine Liturgy and listening to the Holy Gospel reading. Afterwards, St Athansius he went and distributed his enormous wealth to the poor and the needy. He also placed his sister in a convent and left to the wilderness, where he established the angelic system of monasticism.

**The enemy of good started the fight with St Anthony,** but he survived through the grace of God. We always see St Anthony in his pictures accompanied by St Paul. We know they met...but do you know how exactly it all started out? I'll tell you.

**While Anthony was in the**

desert, he thought to himself and said: "there's no one like me in the desert". He heard a voice saying: "you are not the only one in the wilderness, there's another man who is older and better than you!" Anthony wanted to this great man (St Paul). He started walking asking for God guidance to find this man. He headed south for a whole day and didn't find anything.

**While praying, he found a very strange looking creature** (half animal) and it pointed toward a certain direction. Anthony crossed it with the sign of the cross, and then it ascended slowly and disappeared. St Anthony walked the same way the creature pointed to him while asking for God's guidance.

**On his way, he found a tiger** that was going up a mountain; St Anthony followed him until he reached a cave. He knew someone was in there, and it must be the man he is looking for. The saint took two rocks and banged them together so the man in the cave will know that there's someone outside waiting to meet him.

**St Paul thought that this noise** might have been one of the devil's tricks to get him to open the door, so he didn't open the door. St Anthony said: "You probably know who I am, why I am here, and where I come from; I will wait here until you open the door, even until death." St Paul answered: "...if you are coming to die here, why are you amazed that I won't meet you?" At this point St Paul opened the door. They greeted each other, and knew each



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other's names, even though they never met before.

**St Paul started telling St Anthony about his life, his family and how he ended up coming to the wilderness.** By this time, St Paul has been in the desert for 90 years without seeing a man. They both talked about God's greatness and all the wondrous works He had shown to them both.

**In the evening, a raven came to them carrying a whole loaf of bread.** St Paul said: "Look how God cares for us, he sent us a whole loaf of bread; whereas, since I came to this place, every evening God would send me a half loaf of bread, but today he provided food for both of us." They went and sat next to a spring of water. At this point, it was time to break the bread in half. St Paul didn't want to break the bread, for St Anthony was his guest. On the other hand, St Anthony didn't want to break the bread for he was younger in spirituality as well as in age. They both agreed to break it at the same time.

**The two saints stood up for prayer until the next day.** St Paul said: "My time is coming soon to leave this world, and God has sent you to bury me" St Anthony was very affected by St Paul's words and his eyes were filled with tears. St Paul asked St Anthony if he could go to his cell and get the clothes that Pope Athanasius (20th Pope) had given him to be buried in; and give the Pope the clothes that he (St Paul) was wearing. At the appointed time, St Anthony buried this great saint.

**In St Anthony's life, there are many virtues and lessons that we can gain in our life.** Asking God for guidance all the time helps us to become closer to Him. To be humble is always hard to do, but by putting pressure on yourself, you will overcome many temptations. Obeying is another important virtue St Anthony had. We should be obedient not to only make people happy but to also follow God's commandments. These are just a few virtues that we can try to obtain for this great saint.

**St Anthony departed from this world on the 30th of Toba in the year 355 AD.** May his prayers be with us all. Amen.

## *The Kalansowa*

One of the temptations that St Anthony endured was regarding his *kalansowa*, a piece of fabric that the monks wear on their head. As St Anthony was going to the city to sell the baskets that he weaved, he saw a man that makes nets for hunting animals. St Anthony asked him if he could make him a net so he could trap the deer that ate what he planted. The man agreed and told him: "On your way back the net will be ready for you."

While Anthony continued on his way, he saw a lady that was dressed very fancy, surrounded with servants. The lady called the saint over to have a talk with him, so he went straight away. She started telling him that she has been longing to see him and that she heard a lot about him. She told him that she was a widow; she said that her husband had been a righteous man. She also told him that she could do miracles; she can heal the blind, the sick and if her husband was still alive maybe could even raise the dead! She had her servants bring some blind people to her, she took a cup of water and read some words and sprinkled it on them and they were healed. She kept on going and going and going...

Finally she told St Anthony that she has been looking for a husband that was as righteous as her previous one. She said: "You are very close to my husband in his virtues and I would like you to be my husband." St Anthony said: "I've left everything in the world for the Lord Jesus Christ; I've been building a treasure in Heaven and now you want me to lose it all in one hour?"

She became very mad, went and laid her hand on his *kalansowa* wanting to take it off his head. The saint laid his hand also on his head, trying to protect it. She tried to pull it off until she ripped it. St Anthony crossed himself with the sign of the cross and told her: "Truly you are the enemy of good." Afterwards, she turned into a black mountain filled with smoke and evaporated very quickly, her and all who were with her.

On the way back to his cell, he saw the net maker. St Anthony went to him and asked him for the trap. The man answered: "I made so many traps for you, but you ruined them all." St Anthony made the sign of the cross and the man disappeared. Then St Anthony went back to his cell thanking God for His help in this great temptation.