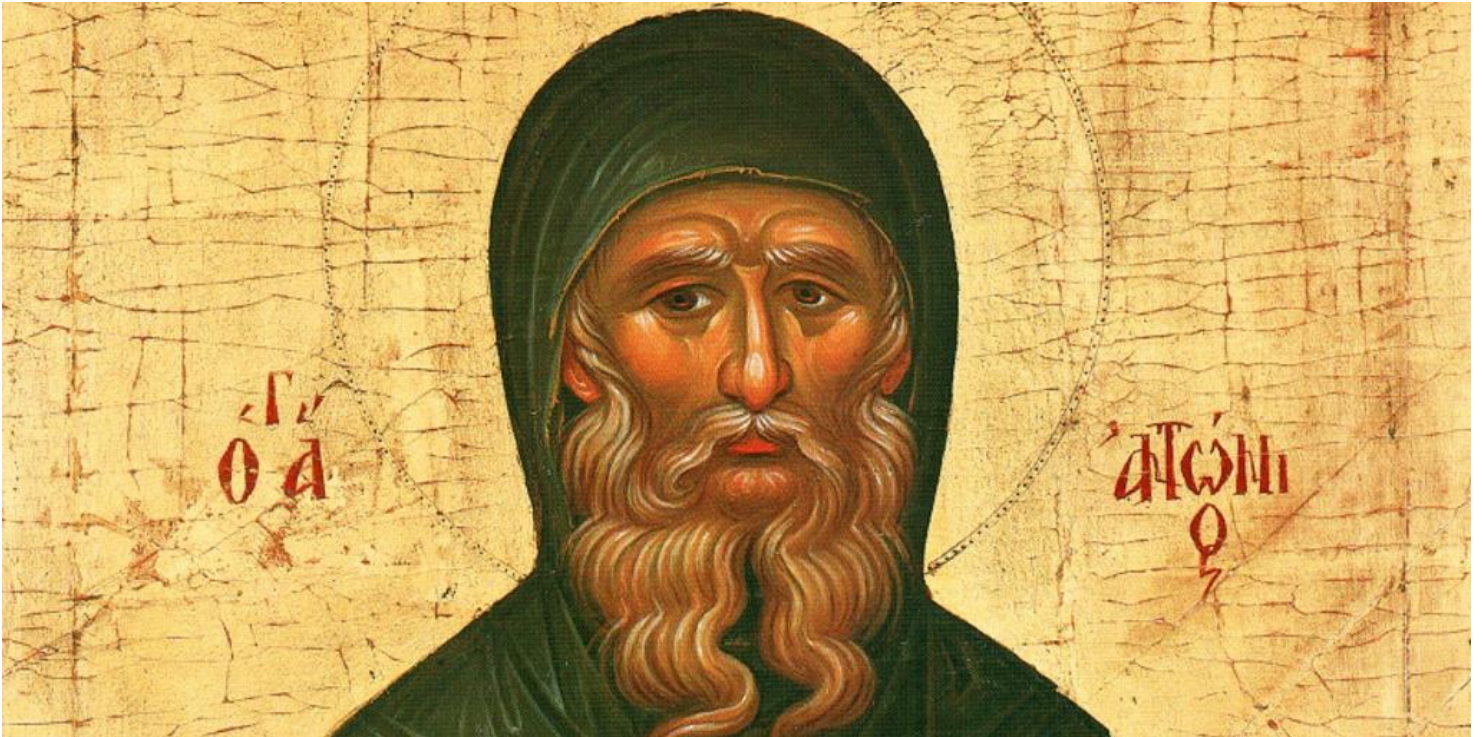


Tuesday 17 January 2023

St Anthony of Egypt



Anthony was born in about 251 AD. He heard the gospel message, 'If you would be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' He was twenty years of age. He was also very rich following the death of his parents. He did as the gospel instructed and went to live in the desert, living an austere life of manual work, charity, and prayer. His many spiritual struggles left him both wise and sensible and he became a spiritual guide for many who flocked to him. His simple rule of personal discipline and prayer was taken up and spread throughout Christendom. He died peacefully in the desert in 356 AD, asking that he be buried secretly, so that his person might be hidden in death as in life.

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The liturgy assumes this service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 All my hope on God is founded ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

The Spirit of the Lord fills the world and knows our every word and deed. Let us then open ourselves to the Lord and confess our sins in penitence and faith. Therefore, knowing our unworthiness and sin, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for Anthony of Egypt

Most gracious God,
who called your servant Anthony to sell all that he had
and to serve you in the solitude of the desert:
by his example may we learn to deny ourselves
and to love you before all things;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the First Book of Kings

The word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'Go from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. You shall drink from the wadi, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.' So he went and did according to the word of the Lord; he went and lived by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the wadi. *1 Kings 17:2-6*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Philippians

Whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard

them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. *Philippians 3:7-14*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 One thing I ask

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

Someone came to Jesus and said, 'Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?' And he said to him, 'Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.' He said to him, 'Which ones?' And Jesus said, 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honour your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' The young man said to him, 'I have kept all these; what do I still lack?' Jesus said to him, 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.' When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, 'Then who can be saved?' But Jesus looked at them and said, 'For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible.'

Matthew 19:16-26

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

We know almost nothing about St Anthony. He left neither writings nor documents. The so-called 'Life of St Anthony' by Athanasius of Alexandria was written after he died and was heavily edited, and often. He therefore remains a shadowy, private figure. Ironically, that secrecy explains a great deal of why we still remember him all these centuries later, because the secret part was the most important part.

Anthony was a disciple of St Paul of Thebes. He began to practice an ascetic life at the age of 20 and, after 15 years withdrew for absolute solitude to a mountain by the Nile called Pispir (now Dayr al-Maymūn), where he lived from about 286 AD. During this time, he began his legendary combat against the Devil, withstanding a series of temptations that became famous locally and (later) in theology and iconography. He emerged from his retreat in about 305 AD to instruct and organise the lives of the hermits who imitated him and who had established themselves nearby. He taught each of them to abandon themselves to God.

To understand Anthony, we need to must understand that he spent most of his time with God in prayer. That prayer would not have involved petitions and words because a life spent in secret cannot accommodate so much chatter and constant 'wordy-ness'. Rather, if it was like lives spent for God today, he would have spent time resting in the presence of God, 'soaking up' the joy of knowing that God was there surrounding him.

Much of Anthony's time would have been spent with scripture. Pondering scripture is a profound way of growing toward God but, because Anthony lived in a pre-literate age, he would have had to memorise large amounts of scripture and then thought about its content. In fact, a printed page can be more of a distraction than thinking about memorised material. It's a physical thing and, with our eyes open, we see the room around us with its clutter and invitations to divert our attention.

While not a problem for St Anthony, many of us will struggle with physical distractions such as the doorbell and phone as well as internal distractions. To ensure our time with God is spiritually fruitful, it is wise to turn off the phone and choose a time when regular interruptions are less likely, such as early in the morning or later in the afternoon or evening—before the postman or after the school run.

The number of people who are genuinely called to a life of complete detachment is very rare, but all of us are called to short periods of time when we are completely alone with God. Many people today talk about an 'interior life', by which they mean what happens in secret between a human soul and God. They want their time to be God's and spent with Him alone. The word 'interior' here is the clue. That time grows in power and benefit in proportion that we distance ourselves from the physical worlds we inhabit.

It is wise to experiment a little, so choose a time of day that is right, and a place without associations and distractions. That distraction might involve discomfort, so choose a chair with good support and in which we can sit without becoming aware of our bodies.

Many people find that their lifestyle can become a distraction, and therefore need to explore changing their timetable, diet, and responsibilities. Usually none of these things is wrong in themselves, but they can take over if we don't assess them regularly. It's generally a matter of prioritising rather than absolutes.

When considering our interior life, it is generally very useful to make a note of the things that we find occupying our minds. Is it money or relationships; maybe we are too busy or have taken on too many responsibilities? Attention to these external features can be a powerful way of leading the soul back to an interior life that is both healthy (in a psychological way) and leads us closer to God.

St Anthony found that material attachments were becoming more important than God. The things we own and value are not automatically bad in their own right, though some possessions can be profoundly unhelpful. Rather, they have a way of taking our focus away from God, or maybe we find that we no longer rely on God. Extreme wealth is a particular risk in that respect.

In the later medieval period, there arose the idea that praying to St Anthony could be a powerful way of finding lost things. He was the 'patron saint' of lost possessions. Many people today will not find this idea useful at all, but it does highlight a useful idea: worrying about something of value that we have lost will distract us during times of prayer. Our prayer life is no longer interior but exterior, thinking about our keys or a book or the piece of paper with information written on it. St Anthony's example of renouncing the world and its possessions illustrates one way in dealing with the problem: we are less likely to lose things if we have fewer possessions, and if our homes contain less 'stuff'.

Perhaps the best way to celebrate St Anthony is to promise a reassessment, an audit of our possessions and attitudes to them, in such a way that we look at ways in which we let exterior aspects of our lives come between us and God: what is it that stops our spiritual lives becoming deeper?

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

We pray for God to fill us with his Spirit.

Generous God,
we thank you for the *power* of your Holy Spirit.
We ask that we may be strengthened to serve you better.
Lord, come to bless us.

All and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *wisdom* of your Holy Spirit.
We ask you to make us wise to understand your will.
Lord, come to bless us.

All and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *peace* of your Holy Spirit.
We ask you to keep us confident of your love,
wherever you call us.
Lord, come to bless us.

All and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *healing* of your Holy Spirit.
We ask you to bring reconciliation and wholeness
where there is division, sickness and sorrow.
Lord, come to bless us.

All and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *gifts* of your Holy Spirit.
We ask you to equip us for the work which you
have given us.

Lord, come to bless us.

All and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *fruit* of your Holy Spirit.
We ask you to reveal in our lives the love of Jesus.
Lord, come to bless us.

All and fill us with your Spirit.

We thank you for the *breath* of your Holy Spirit,
given by the risen Lord.

We ask you to keep the whole Church,
living and departed,
in the joy of eternal life.

Lord, come to bless us.

All and fill us with your Spirit.

Generous God,
you sent your Holy Spirit upon your Messiah at the River Jordan,
and upon the disciples in the upper room.
In your mercy fill us with your Spirit.

**All hear our prayer,
and make us one in heart and mind
to serve you with joy for ever.
Amen.**

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

God has made us one in Christ.
He has set his seal upon us and, as a pledge of what is to come,
has given the Spirit to dwell in our hearts. Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 [Take time to be holy](#)

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

The Spirit of truth lead you into all truth,
give you grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
and strengthen you to proclaim the word and works of God;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

All Amen.

HYMN 4 [Take my life and let it be](#)

(traditional version)

[Take my life and let it be](#)

(different traditional version)

[Take my life and let it be](#)

(rock version)

[Take my life and let it be](#)

(different rock version)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ.

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For he is our great high priest
who has entered once for all
into the heavenly sanctuary,
evermore to pour upon your Church
the grace and comfort of your Holy Spirit.

He is the one who has gone before us,
who calls us to be united in prayer
as were his disciples in the upper room
while they awaited his promised gift,
the life-giving Spirit of Pentecost.
Therefore all creation yearns with eager longing
as angels and archangels sing the endless hymn of praise:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with Anthony and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Merciful God,
who gave such grace to your servant Anthony
that he served you with singleness of heart
and loved you above all things:
help us, whose communion with you
has been renewed in this sacrament,
to forsake all that holds us back from following Christ
and to grow into his likeness from glory to glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.