

ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT

STRUGGLES WITH THE DEVIL IN THE DESERT

THE PATRIARCH OF MONKS

Here is a question one may ask: WHICH IS MORE PLEASING TO GOD? SELF-DENIAL AND ISOLATION IN THE DESERT OR GOOD WORKS OF MERCY AMONG THE CROWDS?

A man of prayer in the desert may think that without the solitude, one cannot do what is right. It would be too difficult to keep his heart pure and his mind fixed on God.

Conversely, someone who was doing good works among his fellow man, may feel that the desert-dweller is too occupied with his OWN salvation. This may come at the EXPENSE of his fellow man. We will never fully know, but our Church believes that BOTH are equally pleasing in the eyes of God. Both servants are perfect before our Maker.

One such pious example of SELF-DENIAL and ISOLATION is ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT, pictured on the bulletin today. Born in Egypt in the year 251 A.D., he live to the advanced age of 105. His long lifespan was filled with service to the Lord as the ‘PATRIARCH OF MONASTIC LIFE.’ His good advice and wise counsel was sought by many. The Church Fathers wrote this about St. Anthony the Great. “O Father Anthony, you imitated the zealous Elijah in your manner of living. You followed the straight path of John the Baptist and became a desert dweller. By prayer, you confirmed the Universe. Wherefore, intercede with Christ our God to save our souls.” Amen.