

Saint Anthony And You

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(This little booklet is to help you pray. There are nine thought primers for a Novena to Saint Anthony. Use them for a springboard to reflection and resolution, then, ask for what you need and want. Among your wants, we hope you will include us.)

Prayer Gets Results.

We are notoriously a practical people. The antics and marriages of royalty do interest us, but our main interest is not so much in who does what but what he or she does. What can it produce? What do we get out of it? It might be true that other people are interested in the “who” of a person or thing, but basically, we are pragmatic, utilitarian.

This drive to see results, to count productions, carries over into our spiritual life, and we are not too wrong. After all, Christ Himself said, “By their fruits you shall know them.” The deserved popularity of Saint Anthony might be, in part, clue to his effects. Americans are Anthonian, devotees of Saint Anthony, because he does answer prayers. There is an aspect of the practicality of devotion to Saint Anthony that we should not neglect. Neglect it we dare not, because it would be such a waste, a potential unrealized.

Saint Anthony is a mirror. These words are in his Litany. When we approach Saint Anthony to ask for something, we should get a good look at him. He is a mirror because we go up to him and his reflection on us reassures us that our prayers will be heard. For God he did much extremely well. God just doesn’t refuse to answer any prayer that has the stamp, the image of the Saint of Padua. Saint Anthony makes up for many of our blemishes and his heavenly handsomeness supplies for our worldly ugliness. He is called a mirror because he intercedes for us even if we are not the beauties we should be.

God has gentle ways and effective means of drawing us to Himself. All creatures participate in His goodness. The saints share in His love to a greater degree, and through them, He draws us to an even greater love of Himself. In this way also, devotion to Saint Anthony is eminently practical. We approach the great saint and, facing him, we begin to show forth his virtues. We become more like him; we get better. Through our devotion to Saint Anthony, we learn about him, and what we learn is good; but the good by the very nature of things attracts us. We are attracted to the good, and going to Saint Anthony, the mirror, makes us become more attractive — more God-like.

Mirror of Abstinence.

The Litany calls Saint Anthony a mirror in a particular way. “Mirror of Abstinence” is the title. Abstaining is a quality of a God who is infinite, unlimited, yet practices limitation in His mercy and justice. The Infinite created the finite, according to various limited participations in His unlimited perfections. Saint Anthony reflects this godly quality. He practiced that restraint which is abstinence

— restraint even in legitimate pleasures. The abstinence involved in keeping of poverty, chastity, and obedience and the abstinence required for the tremendous work of preaching, teaching, and writing was Anthony's abstinence.

If we go to the life of Saint Anthony, we find that he is an example of abstinence, that lends itself to imitation. Anthony is not noted for unusual or frightening penances and mortifications. He lived up to his way of life as a priest and friar. In living up to this way, he became a mirror of true and imitable abstinence.

Saint Anthony, mirror of abstinence, will offer your prayers to God and God will hear you through him. That same Anthony by his life and work will show you how to live. To live as a married person should mean to abstain from many things, not only illegitimate pleasures; to live as a single person in the world calls for much abstinence, also. Priests and religious must, like Saint Anthony, practice abstinence. Saint Anthony, who always answers, shows us the way. Be practical, pray to Saint Anthony and you will get what you need: the answer to your appeals and growth in goodness.

Saint Anthony, Mirror of Abstinence, Pray for us.

Vessel of Purity.

The Title, "Vessel of Purity" which is given to Saint Anthony in his litany gives us a really concrete and correct idea of purity. Purity is something. It is not a mere negation; it is a positive quality. Purity is plenty, fullness, riches. Purity is good order, harmony, peace, and contentment because it is God-likeness, imitation of God. God alone is all-pure, because God is Perfection, Beauty, and Happiness.

A container can be empty, but if it is a vessel of something, the something is positive and not just an absence. Saint Anthony is a vessel filled with godly purity. By his will, he disposes himself, with God's ever-loving help, to receive and hold and dispense this quality of good order, proper subordination, and wholesome harmony which is Godlikeness.

It is strange that when we speak of purity in relation to a person we usually refer to the sex life of that individual. There is something very revealing about our identification of purity and sex. We should know that a virgin can be pure or impure, that a married man can be pure or impure. What we really mean is that an individual is pure as long as he is not blemished by a misuse of sex.

There is, however, much more to purity than that. There is, for instance, purity of intention which has nothing to do with the sixth commandment as such. When a man is pure, he does all things for God in a way God wants them done. His will is pure because he intends what God wills. There is no self-seeking and selfishness in him, there is that proper order and harmony in his actions and in his motives.

A man can pay a just wage, or go to Mass or even avoid adultery for a very wrong motive. Say a man were doing all this to establish a reputation so that he could, at a later date, perpetrate a fraud or murder someone. Such a man is not pure; he is lacking in that harmony, order, and right reason that is purity.

We cannot be unrealistic, though, about the prevalence of sins of sex. Our Lady at Fatima said that more people go to hell because of sins against the sixth and ninth commandments than for any other reason. Saint Anthony wrote in his sermon for the fourth Sunday after Easter, "The world is more stained with the sins of fornication than with any other sin." There we have it: when we identify

purity with the sixth and ninth commandments, we are merely recognizing the sinning situation of the multitude.

Saint Anthony was a member of the so-called passionate Latin race, yet he was a vessel of purity. His was the purity of harmony between his body and his soul, between his soul and God. He realized, practiced, and preached that principle of reason and nature confirmed by the commandments that sex is primarily for procreation in marriage, and only incidentally a source of pleasure.

He taught that a miser might abstain from sins of sex and still not be pure. He recalled that the Lord spoke of virgins who were foolish and did not make the grade.

Anthony was very forceful in his condemnation of any kind of impurity. And he is called Vessel of Purity because he charted the way to purity by his life and works. Our saint still aids by his prayers.

The saint gives practical norms for preserving or regaining purity. Mortification and the shunning of idleness are two measures advocated by Saint Anthony. Then he gives us two other remedies and preventives. Meditation on the Passion of Christ is much stressed by the Paduan Preacher. This he succinctly states: "The memory of the Crucified crucifies vice." Finally, the saint urges serious thought about the eternal life. Therefore, the busy man who practices mortification, meditates on the Passion of Christ, and considers the life after death, will have this purity of intention and thought. Purity of word and action will be his. The disturbing increase in crime, private and public, can be checked if the remedies proposed by Saint Anthony are used.

The Saint of Padua, who is a vessel of purity, will find purity for us and for our civilization if we pray to him, follow his advice, and imitate his example.

Saint Anthony, Vessel of Purity, Pray for us!

Model of Obedience.

In all of creation, there is subordination. It is the Creator Himself who, in His wisdom and goodness, designed this order.

Only those who are living according to God's way are obedient. They are the saints. There is no saint, married or single, rich or poor, bishop or religious brother, who does not have the occasion and duty to obey. That is the way God planned it. All of this obedience and subordination in creatures, rational, animal, plant or mineral, is subjection to God.

Obedience to any superior is obedience to God. That is the secret, the mystery, the reality. When we observe the Ten Commandments, it is not merely because Moses obeyed them. It is not due to the looks or personality of the law-giver. We obey them because they came from God.

When we abstain from meat on Friday, [or, now, when we perform an extra act of penance,] it is not because the Pope abstains; it is because we know God's will through the Popes.

When we do our job at work it is not because of the boss or foreman; it is because we are following our conscience as directed by God.

The youngster who is forbidden to smoke by his father must obey even if his father is a chain smoker. (Of course, the father would be a wiser role model if he too attempted this abstinence.)

Too often obedience is not really obedience; it is a matter of imitation. Often it is a matter of friendship or affection for the individual who gives the direction. This may be well and good, but it is not obedience. It is subjection to another creature for the sake of the other creature, and not for God's sake.

Saint Anthony is a model of obedience because he obeyed God. He followed his superior's directions because God spoke through them, and not because they were superior.

Anthony, as a Franciscan, was far more intelligent and holy than most of his superiors. Yet he obeyed. He obeyed the Pope. He obeyed the uneducated superior who told him to wash the dishes. And because he obeyed not for his own or his superior's sake, but for God's sake, he is the example of true obedience.

If we realize the nature of obedience, we can see how each of us has the duty of obeying. It would be more correct to say the privilege, the honor of obeying; because when we obey our parents, the policemen, doctors, or our pastors we are being directed by God. As long as one in authority gives directions which are not against God's will, they are the directions of God. To be subject to God knowingly and willingly is a secure position; it is the fulfillment of our nature.

Saint Anthony in his sermon for the second Sunday of Advent mentions five qualities that the real virtue of obedience has.

Obedience is humble,
devout,
prompt,
cheerful,
and persevering.

Obedience is humble because it sees that God has subjected us to someone.

Obedience is devout because it is an exercise of religion, for in obeying we render homage to God. Because commands come from God there will be no delay in executing them.

Joyful and cheerful is obedience, because it is good for us to be what and how God has made us.

Obedience is permanent because God does not change.

There is power in obedience. There is superiority in being subjected. Anthony shows us the way of obedience in his earthly life, and the effects of obedience in his heavenly life. He had tremendous power over creatures because he was completely subject to the Creator. The Paduan friar who obeyed inferior superiors soared to the heights of sanctity. From those exalted heights, he exercises his power for our benefit.

Saint Anthony always answered God when God spoke through superiors. Now, God always says "yes" to Anthony when he asks something of Him for us.

Saint Anthony, Model of Obedience, Pray for us!

Star of Sanctity.

Not everyone can be President. That is a fact, even if it might shatter the dreams, if not expectations, of many parents. We are made with different native abilities, then molded and formed by our environment and education. The use we make of free choice, of circumstances and opportunities is a great factor in shaping and equipping us for various work, offices, and obligations as well as for dignities and honors.

In the natural, political, and social orders, this difference is a fact. Just as star differs from star and each has a different role in the universe, so it is with different human beings. Although in a particular work one might and does substitute for another, we are all different. One individual is able to do several particular works or even go from one field to another; but in the overall picture, each man has a distinctive role. It is determined most certainly by man's free will, but also by his natural talents and make-up, as well as by environment, training, and circumstances.

This natural order gives us a hint about the supernatural order. Grace does not destroy, but perfects nature. The Franciscan theologians teach that the natural was made for the supernatural order, because what is higher and greater is willed by God more than what is lower and less great. It is true to say that the inferior is intended, willed for the superior. Thus it was and is that all inferior creatures are to be subject to man. Add to this the truth that all of creation is an imitation of the Creator according to degrees; since God is infinitely perfect it is fitting that there are all degrees of participation in being. According to the natural and supernatural orders, this diversity is fitting. That is the way God planned it.

In our Litany, we say: "Saint Anthony, Star of Sanctity, pray for us." We know that Saint Anthony is not the only saint in heaven, not the only star in the glorious heaven of the blessed. We do know that he is a great, beautiful, powerful and attractive star that is our inspiration, consolation, help, and guide while we navigate the choppy seas of this life. Sanctity is soundness, safety, and sanity; and as we flounder about we need a steady, shining star — a star that is our ideal, our hero.

Not everyone can or should be able to be president: but everyone can, should and must be a saint. Here Saint Anthony, the star of sanctity, shines through as the next invocation of the litany calls him, a "model of perfection."

Not a minor factor in our wherewithal for sanctity is the shining example and powerful prayer of Saint Anthony.

Star differs from star, saint differs from saint, but each is perfect. Saint Anthony himself in two different sermons wrote of this difference and sameness in sanctity. The text "In My Father's house there are many mansions" (John 14:2) he explained with the example of the pomegranate which has many seeds under one skin, but each seed has its own cell. He goes on to say that there will be no sadness because of these differences and inequalities. "Everyone will be equally joyful about the differences in joy because I will rejoice over your goodness even as I rejoice about mine, and you will be as happy at my happiness as you are at your own. For example: if we were together and I had a rose of mine in my hand, you would enjoy its beauty and fragrance just as I would. So will it be in eternal life: my glory will refresh and exult you and vice versa." So wrote Saint Anthony.

You and I will never be Saint Anthony, but if we follow his star and perfect ourselves according to his example, we will share one day in his glory and in the meantime reap the benefits of his power. While on the way to heaven, we have his help. We rejoice in his good and in that of our earthly and heavenly neighbors. If we navigate by our Anthonian star and form ourselves after our model, there is no place for envy or hatred but just for the happiness that is sanctity and perfection.

Saint Anthony, Star of Sanctity, Pray for us!

Ark of the Covenant.

The Ark of the Covenant was the beautiful container in which the Jews placed the tablet of the law. In the centre of the camp, while they were in the desert, the Ark was respectfully and reverently

kept. Once the temple was built, the Ark was placed in the Holy of Holies. God dwelt over the Ark in a very special manner, in that the Ark was the throne of God.

It was the Ark that reminded the Jews of their special relation to God. In a special way, God was with them; they were His chosen, favorite people.

Between God and the Jews, there was a pact, an agreement which is called the Covenant. The Old Testament is the history of the past, and the New Testament is the record of the pact between God and the new chosen people, the Christians. This pact, this agreement, was, in effect, the will of God making us His heirs. It was the Ark in the Old Testament that symbolized this heritage.

Saint Anthony is called “Ark of the Covenant” in his Litany because he is the precious and magnificent handwork of God. In him, the law of God was contained, fulfilled perfectly. The Ten Commandments plus the evangelical counsels were his norm of action, his way of life. In the midst of the Church God placed Anthony, and he is now in the Holy of Holies of the celestial Jerusalem.

Of course, God is everywhere, just as He was omnipresent in the time of the Old Testament, but He dwelt and operated in a special manner over the Ark. So, too, God, omnipresent, dwelt and dwells in great Saint Anthony in a special manner. He works powerfully in and through him.

Saint Anthony by his preaching and works is an assurance for us that we are chosen to be more than men because we are heirs of God. His children we are, and His kingdom we inherit.

All favors we ask of Saint Anthony; and we can and should, and most of us do, ask all kinds. The most urgent, necessary favor is that we retain or regain the title to that inheritance which is called sanctifying grace. A favor it is, because no one deserves, no one earns it. It is grace; it is gratuitous; it is a gift from God.

If we pray to Saint Anthony, the Ark of the Covenant, we can have confidence that God will harken to our prayers.

There is another lesson to learn from this invocation, “Ark of the Covenant.” We are now the chosen people; we have taken up where the mass of Jews left off. This very fact of our spiritual lineage should make us work and pray that the members of the race once chosen might find their place in the New Testament. There we have something else we should mention; Ark of the Covenant, pray for the conversion of the Jews.

The Ark of the Covenant has shown us how to keep the law, the whole law. Love of God and neighbor, that is the law. All men are neighbors, especially those that are bound to us by some ties. Close and real are the spiritual ties that bind us to the members of that race which God singled out to be the blood family of Jesus, Mary, and the Apostles.

Saint Anthony, Ark of the Covenant, Keeper of the Law, Treasury of the Pact of our Inheritance, Sent of God, Pray for us! Pray that we keep the pledge of sonship, sanctifying grace. Pray that all men, especially the Jews, be brought into the family of Christ.

Teacher of Truth.

In these days of the accepted big lie and the habitual little lie, we need to learn from a teacher of truth. We need to be able to distinguish truth from falsehood when we hear it. We need to be able to speak the truth if we are going to speak at all.

Saint Anthony was a popular preacher not because he told thousands who came to hear him what was nice for them to hear, but because he told them the truth. The truth he told them even when it was very difficult to understand and more difficult to live.

Of the profound mysteries like the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Eucharist, our teacher of the truth spoke. These revealed truths that excel all human capacities he presented in graphic forms with warm and intriguing figures of speech.

Of the “mystery of iniquity,” sin, our teacher of truth spoke. Against tyranny and abuses of civil power, the saint stood firm and preached eloquently. The vices of those in high places were attacked by the humble priest-friar.

The sins of malice and weakness that the ordinary common people committed were labeled by our saint for what they were: offences against God and degradations of man.

The secret sins of all were denounced by the holy preacher. Saint Anthony pointed out that no sin was secret or private. With fearlessness the saint taught the truth that God knows all and that as Christ said “Nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest.” Christ the kind and merciful man will be on the Day of Judgment the just and severe one.

Because we are all members of one race, one society, and really or potentially are all members of Christ’s Mystical Body, every sin offends the entirety of humanity, every sin harms society, every sin offends the entirety of humanity, every sin wounds the Mystical Body. This truth, unpleasant as it is to the sinner, this truth, startling in its consequences, the Paduan Preacher proclaimed.

Saint Anthony is the teacher of truth because he taught Christ, who is the Truth. This is the central theme of Anthony’s words, work, and life.

The more we follow our Saint Anthony, the closer to Christ the Truth we come. Then we will make the difficult distinction between truth and falsehood, between black and white.

The more we follow our saint the more we will choose the lighter grays among the partial truths or the relative betters.

The more we follow our saint, the more grace we will obtain to seek, follow, and tell the truth in our daily lives. The more we follow our saint, the more assurance we have that he will hear our prayers.

The truth of Saint Anthony is Christ. Pray to Saint Anthony that like him, you can learn Christ.

To learn Christ is a big job. It is such an enormous task that it takes an eternity. If one does not start now, or if one gives up, one is doomed to the unending confusion and frustration of the error; with Satan, the father of lies, one is condemned to hell.

Saint Anthony, Teacher of Truth, Pray for us that we may overcome Satan by the truth that you taught. Pray, Saint Anthony, that we may ever strive to reach and hold the Truth who is Christ!

Physician of Souls.

It is extremely easy and common to see and point out faults. This is especially true if it is a matter of the faults and vices, real or imagined, of others. It is hard and extraordinary to see consistently in others virtue and good qualities. Stop and think about yourself as you are, as you really are, and more often than not, you will find that the things that most annoy, disgust, and bother you in others are qualities which you yourself have.

It is very easy to tear down, and very hard to build up. It is much harder to aid constructively than to censure severely. The blockers of good are more prevalent than those who make ready and open the way to good.

The great Saint Anthony was a Franciscan, and Franciscans have always been for more than they are against. The Litany of Saint Anthony immediately after calling on the sainted Friar as an exterminator of vices, adds “Planter of Virtue.”

With human beings, there is no vacuum. Christ, Anthony’s model and mover, says, “You are either for me or against me.” Thus, it was to that Anthony not only rooted out vices, but he also planted virtues.

Against sin in general and its horrible consequences, Anthony was most eloquent. Against pride, anger, avarice, impurity, vainglory, envy, and gluttony our saint was ruthless. In rooting them out, he was zealous, but was even more assiduous in planting Faith, Hope, Charity, Justice, Temperance, Fortitude, and Prudence.

Great preacher and sound doctor of theology that he was, wise Saint Anthony insisted over and over again that the sacrament of penance not only roots out vices, but is the effective means of instilling virtues. Saint Anthony insisted on the sacrament of penance as a sure way of progress in virtue.

For a good confession, one must have sorrow for sins, and this sorrow Saint Anthony referred to as a stream of fire which destroys vice and causes virtue to flourish. The purpose of amendment is the assurance that the seeds of virtue will grow to strong plants, that the faint light will become bright and strong. Contrition and satisfaction make the terrain rich and productive; they keep out the vices by cultivating the fields well.

Confession must be complete by considering and mentioning circumstances which alter the nature of the sin. For this reason a positive directive of Saint Anthony is the consideration of who, what, where, with whom, how often, why, and when. These points are to be considered not only because they can alter the gravity of the sin, but because they are important in the development of the opposite virtue.

Impurity committed by a married man is to be overcome differently from the method used by a single boy. The sin against the fifth commandment is remedied differently if it be one of thought than if it be by word, and still more differently if it be by deed. If a sinful action is rare or frequent, the treatment for it is diversified; hence, the number, or at least an estimate of the number, is to be given.

The “why” of the sin is of tremendous importance in its avoidance. The most effective remedy is to remove the cause of evil and supplant it with a cause that is productive of good.

In confession, the most important things are to be confessed first. All mortal sins must be mentioned as far as they are remembered, because these are the things that need most to be supplanted by virtues. If one has no mortal sins, then the venial sins that keep us most from God, for which we have contrition and amendment are to be mentioned, so that the virtues which they block may wax strong.

Saint Anthony, phenomenal preacher, sublime saint and compassionate confessor, taught that the sacrament of penance well used was the most effective way to grow in virtue.

Virtues he planted by his preaching. The planting to be assuredly fruitful, was to be planted in the grace of the sacrament of penance.

To receive the sacrament worthily was an exercise of the fundamental virtues of humility, religion, and devotion. It roots out the faults and plants virtues.

Pray to Saint Anthony that he will aid you and all his friends to make a good confession. Pray that you will follow his advice in having real sorrow for sin, true determination not to sin. Pray that you will recognize clearly, and confess properly, the circumstances of your sins. Pray to Saint Anthony that you will make satisfaction for past sins.

Pray and your prayers will be answered by Anthony. Then you will grow in virtue. You will see your own weakness and appreciate the good in others.

Saint Anthony, Physician of Souls, Pray for us!

Guide of the Erring.

None of us would be a good risk for a supernatural insurance company. We are all accident-prone when it comes to the life and well-being of the soul. Going astray, erring, comes easy to us.

Mortal sin is the big mistake in human living; and a life of sin is the real tragedy. Each mortal sin is a turning from the path of happiness. Each mortal sin is an action in discord with our nature as rational, social, and created.

One mortal sin is a terrible, horrible, ugly, stupid, mistake. There is only one thing worse than a mortal sin and that is two or more mortal sins. In such habitual sin, we not only skip off the path of perfection but we deliberately travel a miserable road to eternal frustration.

Sometimes, and we hope for the friends of Saint Anthony this is most of the time, we don't entirely abandon the road to heaven for mortal sin; but we zigzag, or run with one foot off the road, or dance precariously along the edge looking to the side or behind us. This is erring, too, but in a venial way only.

Saint Anthony by his life and teaching and prayers is a guide along the way to real fulfillment and happiness. Saint Anthony was and is the guide, conductor, the regulator of the erring. He brings us back when we are lost in a sinful state of habitual mortal sin. He retrieves us also when we have jumped from the road by a single mortal sin.

Anthony, Guide of the Erring, saw the way to heaven not so much as straight and narrow, but as a wonderful glorious road because Christ the God-Man said, "I am the Way." Difficult, yes, but delightful! Straight, yes; but safe, sound, and sane. Narrow, but comfortable with the expanding joy of being a rational, social, and great creature of the loving Creator.

There are all kinds of mistakes and errors. They all entail turning your back to Christ. But to make them more apparent each of us should ask himself, "What do I want most in life? In going along the path of life, what signs do I follow?" The advertisers of our nation are great psychologists when it comes to observing what makes people desire products. They appeal through blunt or subtle sensuality, and to worldly success. They use false signs and values.

Saint Anthony knew that there would be such signs and values, and he warned against them. For he knew that if man followed them he would lose his way along the road or at least run onto the soft shoulder of the road.

What are your values, your standards? What do you want most for yourself and your children?

Some time ago, a Catholic youngster wrote to “Cordette” (A literary magazine for young teenagers published by the Conventual Franciscans.), “What right have you to criticize rock singers? I bet that they have more money than you have. You are just jealous because the girls like them better than they do you.” This young person is no doubt a good Catholic, and we mean in no way to insinuate that she is sinful. She is just a young spokesman of our age who needs the guiding of Saint Anthony’s teaching to be properly oriented. (Reflect a moment. What lifestyle example is given by our current rock singers? What moral and social advice is contained in their songs and verses? Some is good, no doubt, but what of the other?)

If we are in the state of grace we are on the right road; yet we may be pretty far off centre. If we adults are unbalancing our civilization in favor of sensuality and materialism, it will be the youngsters who will fall off first.

It maybe shocking to see our youth going wild, but if we look honestly at the overtones and undertones of our adult standards we shouldn’t be surprised. If we follow the wrong signs, how can we expect our youth not to?

We need the adult Christianity of Saint Anthony’s preaching and examples. Pray to the Guide of the Erring. He will help all of us, young and old.

Saint Anthony, Guide of the Erring, Pray for our family, our nation, our civilization. Pray for us!

Preacher of Grace.

The Wonder-worker of Padua is called Preacher of Grace in his Litany. First, he taught and preached about grace. Grace is the gift of God which makes us partakers in the Divine Life. This participation in God’s life is supernatural; it is above our power, and it is given to us freely. Grace, then, is a gift.

Saint Anthony taught the truth that we need this help superadded to God’s natural help to obtain the state of grace and to remain in that supernatural condition.

God helps us in many supernatural ways, and this help is grace. Saint Anthony in his sound, healthy, mature approach uses a figure to illustrate this. Like a mother who weans her children by putting something bitter on her breast, so the Holy Spirit gives us sometimes a taste of the bitterness of this world so that we can acquire a taste for the solid food of the other world.

It is grace which enables us to live on earth but act and think as citizens of heaven; but we have to cooperate, do our part, use our will to keep this precious gift.

Precious gift that grace is, we need it to have not only eternal happiness but any measure of true happiness here on earth. Saint Anthony says: “The man in mortal sin is nothing because God, Who alone truly is, is not in him through grace.”

Anthony, a great theologian and truly human as he was, understands that man could and does lose grace through mortal sin. Mortal sin is the greatest and only true tragedy that can befall man. The supreme stupidity of sin is only topped by the useless, wasteful evil of remaining in sin once a person has fallen.

Saint Anthony pleaded, insisted, urged, and demanded that the sacrament of penance he used frequently to revive the life of grace. Pointing out how dreadful it was to live in sin, he also noted

that there is waste involved. Everyone does good things, but they are of no supernatural value if the doer is not in the state of grace. The Christian in the state of sin can bear no fruit, since he doesn't have the necessary equipment.

Grace is a free gift of God which must be cooperated with, and it is the most important thing in this life. It is to be prayed for and guarded, regained immediately, if lost. This is the truth about grace taught by Saint Anthony, the preacher of grace.

The great Franciscan saint of Padua is Preacher of Grace in another way. Not only did he preach about it, but his preaching was grace for many in his own day and innumerable souls down through the ages. By means of the words of Saint Anthony, God moved many to regain the state of grace. He was and is able to rouse the hearts of many of his hearers because his well-chosen human words were backed by the Divine Power.

So great was Anthony's grace that God continuously pleases to give His wondrous gift of supernatural life to others through and because of Saint Anthony.

Grace is most assuredly something personal, given to individuals. Grace is, however, something social, because a man is a child of God and grows more and more like God. He participates by God's free condescension in the power of God. The Christian in the state of grace can and does produce supernatural fruit, not only for himself but also for others.

Saint Anthony is able and willing to help us and all who need help. (Who doesn't?) We need but to listen to his help. He will help us and ours.

Saint Anthony, Preacher of Grace, Pray for us. We ask you for graces for ourselves and for our dear ones.

(This little booklet is to help you pray. There are nine thought primers for a Novena to Saint Anthony. Use them for a springboard to reflection and resolution, then, ask for what you need and want. Among your wants, we hope you will include us.)
