

“A TEACHER OF TEACHERS”

Saint Anthony the Great is considered to be one of the most prominent Monastic saints of the Orthodox Church. Most of his 105 years were spent living a life of asceticism in the deserts of Egypt. Still, for all of his contributions to the development of monasticism. Anthony is, perhaps, best remembered for his role as a wise counselor and a brilliant teacher. People from all walks of life and from all parts of the known world would seek him out, eagerly searching for advice and for answers to troubling questions. What is most amazing about this is that St. Anthony had no formal education! Much of what he knew concerning the meaning of man's existence simply came from memorizing the Scriptures.

Here is an example of the profound advice that St. Anthony would pass on to his followers: “LEARN TO DESIRE HUMILITY, FOR THAT WILL COVER ALL YOUR SINS. ALL SIN IS HATEFUL TO GOD, BUT THE MOST HATEFUL OF ALL IS PRIDE OF HEART. DO NOT CONSIDER YOURSELF LEARNED OR WISE, OR ALL YOUR TOIL WILL BE LOST AND YOUR SHIP WILL ARRIVE EMPTY AT THE SHORE.”

St. Anthony knew well the importance of humility. He was keenly aware that pride in one's own accomplishments was contrary to the lifestyle that Christ established for us. Our Lord Himself warned us that: “HE WHO HUMBLING HIMSELF WILL BE EXALTED, AND HE WHO EXALTS HIMSELF WILL BE HUMBLED.” (Matthew 23:12)

It is no wonder that the Church refers to St. Anthony the Great as “a teacher of teachers. This beloved saint fell asleep in the Lord in 356 A.D.