

Today we commemorate Saint Anthony the Abbot.

Calling him an “abbot” is a bit of a mis-nomer.

He was born around 250 AD, and when he was 18 his parents died. He heard the words of St. Matthew’s Gospel:

*If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven; and come, follow Me.*

And in a radical move - similar, perhaps to St. Francis of Assisi (who wouldn’t be born for another 1,000 years) - and took them quite literally. He provided for his younger sister; and moved out to the desert to live a life of prayer, fasting, and solitude.

Despite his efforts to live as a hermit, he was often sought out for his insights and miracles of healing.

His advice to all was that the secret to living the Christian life was perseverance combined with humility.

We see an example of perseverance in the Gospel, where a paralyzed man is lowered through the roof by his friends so that Jesus might heal him.

We, too, must persevere in drawing ever closer to Christ through prayer and virtue.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ; may we receive the graces we need through this Sacrament to grow daily in virtues, especially humility ... as St. Anthony advises ... and always persevere in carrying out our Christian duties.