

August 31

BLESSED ANDREW OF BORGO SANSEPOLCRO

Andrew was inspired by a sermon of St. Philip Benizi and so asked to receive the habit of the Servants of St. Mary in 1278 in the house of the Order in the city of Borgo Sansepolcro. He withdrew immediately to a hermitage near Borgo to live a life of penance and solitude. Both by his counsel and his works, he drew many other hermits to the Order of Servants. Blessed Andrew was their moderator. He died in 1315 while he was at prayer. Pope Pius VII in 1806 confirmed the veneration which had been paid to him. From the common of saints and blessed of our Order, or from the common of holy men.

Office of Readings

SECOND READING

Choose one of the following readings.

From the Prosligion of Saint Anselm, bishop

(Cap. 1: *Opera omnia*, Ed. Schmitt, Edinburgh, 1946, pp. 97-99)

Enter into the inner chamber of your mind

Insignificant as you are, escape from your everyday business for a short while, hide for a moment from your restless thoughts. Break off from your cares and troubles and be less concerned about your tasks and labours. Make a little time for God and rest awhile in him. Enter into your mind's inner chamber. Shut out everything but God and whatever helps you to seek him; and when you have shut the door, look for him. Speak now to God and say with your whole heart: *I seek your face; your face, Lord, I desire.*

Lord, my God, teach my heart where and how to seek you, where and how to find you. Lord, if you are not here, where shall I look for you in your absence? Yet if you are everywhere, why do I not see you when you are present? But surely you dwell in unapproachable light. And where is light inaccessible? How shall I approach light inaccessible? Or who will lead me and bring me into it that I may see you there? And then, by what signs and under what forms shall I seek you? I have never seen you, Lord my God; I do not know your face.

Lord most high, what shall this exile do, so far from you? What shall your servant do, tormented by love of you and cast so far from your face? I yearn to see you, and your face is too far from me. I desire to approach you, and your dwelling is unapproachable. I long to find you, and do not know your dwelling place. I strive to look for you and do not know your face. Lord, you are my God and you are my Lord, and I have never seen you. You have made me and remade me, and you have given me all the good things I possess, and still I do not know you. I was made in order to see you, and I have not yet done that for which I was made. Lord, how long will it be? How long, O Lord, will you forget us? How long will you turn your face away from us? When will you look upon us and hear us? When will you enlighten our eyes and show us your face? When will you give yourself back to us?

Look upon us, Lord, hear us and enlighten us, show us your very self. Restore yourself to us that it may go well with us whose life is so evil without you. Take pity on our efforts and our striving toward you, for we have no strength apart from you.

Teach me to seek you, and when I seek you show yourself to me, for I cannot seek you unless you teach me, nor can I find you unless you show yourself to me. Let me seek you in desiring you and desire you in seeking you, find you in loving you and love you in finding you.

RESPONSORY See John 1:38-39, 41

V. Turning around, Jesus saw the two disciples of John following after him. He said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi, where do you live?"

- R. "Come and see." They came and they saw where he lived and they stayed with him.
V. Andrew said, "We have found the Messiah," which is interpreted Christ.
R. "Come and see." They came and they saw where he lived and they stayed with him.

Alternative.

He went out into a desert place

From documents of the Order we learn that Blessed Andrew, known as Brother Andrew of the Hermitage, lived for some time in the community of Borgo Sansepolcro early in the fourteenth century. Regarding his entrance into the Order, Fra Michele Poccianti tells us that in the year 1278 when a general chapter of the Order was being held in Borgo Sansepolcro, our holy father Philip delivered a homily on the gospel text where the Lord said, *None of you can be my disciple unless he give up all his possessions.* Andrew, a handsome and wealthy young man who was present at the homily, was so deeply moved by the words of the man of God, that immediately, led by the Spirit, he left his parents and all his earthly goods in the name of the Lord and shortly after, asked for the habit of the Servants. This young man was called Andrew like that other Andrew who left his nets and his boat and followed Christ. In the community at Borgo, Andrew proved himself to be an exceptional servant of the Virgin and a perfect disciple of Saint Philip. He always showed a spiritual sensitivity toward the things of this world which he loved in God and through God. Although poor and harsh on himself, he showed himself to be rich and compassionate toward all. Meek and humble and peace-loving, it was evident that he had conquered his anger and subdued hatred. He never indulged in idleness or foolish talk. In his desire for penance and solitude, he frequently went into the privacy of a cell at Cella Vallucola near Borgo, especially since this hermitage was attached to the community of the Servants at Borgo by the bishop of Città di Castello in the year 1295. Andrew was appointed vicar of the hermitage and soon won over the solitaries living there and became their father and leader. We read this in Fra Michele Poccianti's account and he was almost certainly using older sources. Blessed Andrew, by his holiness of life and fiery eloquence gained many disciples, among whom was Blessed Bartholomew of Borgo. Among the many gifts of his apostolate, prudence and spiritual counselling shone forth in such a way that through him communities in the cities of Alessandria and Asti joined with the Order of Servants.

He was informed of the time of his death by a divine inspiration and thus returned his soul to God while at prayer in his cell in the year 1315. All mourned him as children for their father, pupils for their teacher, as sick deprived of their doctor.

His body was carried to the Church of the Servants in Borgo Sansepolcro amid weeping people and a large crowd of the faithful. The devotion which had been shown him from time immemorial was approved by Pope Pius VII in the year 1806.

RESPONSORY See 1 Chronicles 16:11; Colossians 3:3

- V. Look to the Lord in his strength.
R. Seek to serve him constantly.
V. You are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
R. Seek to serve him constantly.

PRAYER

O God, through Andrew you called many hermits to the community of Servants, making them one in their service of Mary and love for each other. Grant that, as humble servants of Mary, we may be one in heart and action. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.