

January 12

SAINT ANTHONY MARY PUCCI

Feast

Anthony Pucci was born in 1819 at Poggiolo, in the diocese of Pistoia, Italy. He entered the Servite Order at the age of eighteen. After his ordination to the priesthood he was sent to Viareggio where he was soon made pastor, an office he held for forty-five years, until his death. As prior provincial of the Tuscan Province he preferred to be regarded as a brother in the service of others rather than as a superior. He gave himself totally to the service of God and Our Lady, and with loving care he was a father to all his parishioners, especially the needy. He died on January 12, 1892. In 1962 Pope John XXIII added his name to the list of saints.

Invitatory

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, glorious in the Servants of his Mother.

Invitatory psalm, as in the Ordinary.

Office of Readings

HYMN:

An appropriate hymn may be sung.

PSALMODY

One of the series of antiphons (A, B, C) may be chosen. The psalms are taken from the common of saints and blessed of our Order, or from the common of pastors.

Series A

Ant. 1 Those who offer you a cup of water in my name shall not lose their reward.

Ant. 2

Ant. 3 Give to those who seek your help; do not turn away those who wish to borrow.

Series B

Ant. 1 When you prayed with tears as you buried the dead, I offered your prayer to the Lord.

Ant. 2 Rebuke the troublesome, console the fainthearted, support the weak, be patient with everyone.

Ant. 3 Do not fail those who weep, but share the grief of the grief stricken.

Series C

Ant. 1 I have made myself the servant of all so as to win as many as possible.

Ant. 2 I endure all things for the sake of God's chosen people, that they may gain salvation.

Ant. 3 All this I do for the gospel's sake, in order to share in its blessings.

V. Take great care about what you do and what you teach.

R. In this way you will save both yourself and those who listen.

FIRST READING

From the second letter of the apostle Paul to Timothy 1:6-14

Bear your share of the hardship which the Gospel entails

For this reason, I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control. So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor of me, a prisoner for his sake; but bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God. He saved us and

has called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began, but now made manifest through the appearance of our saviour Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, for which I was appointed preacher and apostle and teacher. On this account I, am suffering these things; but I am not ashamed, for I know him in whom I have believed and am confident that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day. Take as your norm the words that you heard from me, in the faith that are in Christ Jesus. Guard this rich trust help of the holy Spirit that dwells within us.

RESPONSORY See 2 Timothy 2:3; 1:8b

V. Bear your share of hardship as a soldier of Christ Jesus.

R. With the strength that comes from God bear your share of hardship for the gospel.

V. Through the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in us, keep the good things that have been entrusted to you.

R. With the strength ...

SECOND READING

Choose one of the following readings.

From a sermon by Saint Anthony Mary Pucci, priest

(Domenica XII dopo Pentecoste, in *Parole di un Padre e Pastore* [Studia Historica Minora, IV], Roma, 1962, pp. 90-95)

Love of God and of one's neighbour

Love of God and love of one's neighbour: here is summed up the fullness of Christian perfection. These two precepts comprise all that Christians must observe in order to attain eternal life. If they love God, they will keep clear of sin; no union is possible between love of God and wilful sin, these two being contrary to one another by their very nature. And those who love their neighbour will take care not to injure them by injustice or slander; they will do harm to none, but do good to all; whenever it is in their power they will help, the poor. Christ himself warns us that our eternal salvation depends on these two commandments, saying to the doctor of the law: *Do this and you shall live*. In our day there are many who, like this doctor of the law, are eager to learn the divine precepts. They gladly listen to the word of God, consult his ministers, question and importune them, so desirous are they to learn how to appear, and indeed to be, good Christians, destined for eternal life. But then they are sluggish and negligent in putting into practice what they have learned. They do not discipline themselves, put no curb on their desires, give way to fleshly appetites and are so carried away by anger that they are ready to find fault with God himself, to whom they owe all the love of heart, soul and strength. Thus they become hearers of the word, not doers. Far from loving God, they despise him. The second precept, to love our neighbour as ourselves, is like the first, not because the wording is similar, but because this love also must be real, not coming from the lips only, but from the heart. Look at the Samaritan who went to the help of the man who fell among thieves on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho; he showed real and sincere love for that unfortunate man, saying again to us what we read in the Book of Sirach: *According to your ability, assist your neighbour* with the means which God has given you.

Hence, if you are rich, help the needy, provide for the wretched, lest they be driven to sin. Beware of holding on to your wealth, like some on the way to perdition, who so grind down the face of the unfortunate that they make them offend God. If you are in favour or hold a position of authority make use of it to defend the innocent, to preserve virtue in the young, to deliver widows, young girls and orphans from those who would exploit them.

If you have neither wealth nor power, perhaps you have leisure and knowledge of doctrine. Make use of both by instructing the ignorant, consoling the afflicted, visiting the sick; in a word, exploring all the avenues of charity as far as you are able. If someone wants to enter into life, let

him love God, let him love his neighbour for God's sake.

But who is this neighbour? The one in need. What must we do for him? What the good Samaritan did. Let us return to our reading of the Gospel: notice that the man on his journey who was robbed and wounded by thieves was a Hebrew, while the one who bound up his wounds and brought about his cure was a Samaritan. The Jews were declared enemies of the Samaritans, whom they looked upon with disdain, yet that Samaritan seeing the Jew in such straits, tended him as if he were his dearest friend. As Saint Augustine says, there is little doubt that Jesus told this parable to the lawyer to make us all understand that the law of charity includes all people. No doubt we ought first to love those who are related to us by blood or race, but also an others, learned or ignorant, Christians or Gentiles, Turks or Jews, Catholics or schismatics. We must even love our enemies, accepting injuries from them with resignation, and helping them in their need as far as we can. So doing we shall imitate the Lord, who makes his sun to rise on the good and bad, and be true followers of Jesus Christ who prayed to his eternal Father for his executioners.

RESPONSORY See Matt 22:37-39; Romans 13:9

V. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it:

R. love your neighbour as yourself.

V. All other commandments are summed up in this one:

R. love your neighbour as yourself.

Alternative.

A man singularly dedicated to God and the flock entrusted to him

Anthony Mary Pucci was born of fine Christian parents at Poggiolo, in the diocese of Pistoia, Italy, in 1819; he was the second of nine children. After a youth marked by prayer and study, his devotion to Mary, the Mother of God, caused him to seek entrance in the Order of Servants of Mary at the age of eighteen.

He made his novitiate at Florence and studied philosophy and theology at Monte Senario for six years, where he also made his solemn profession. In 1844, a year after his ordination to the priesthood, Anthony was sent to Viareggio as assistant pastor. In 1847 he was named pastor and for forty-five years, until his death, he fulfilled this responsibility with great love, giving an example of a pure and fruitful life, singularly dedicated to God and his flock. Notwithstanding pastoral duties he continued his studies and in 1850 received the title of Master in Theology.

For many years Father Anthony was prior of the community in Viareggio and also prior provincial of the Tuscan Province. This was a period of hostility between Church and civil authorities due to laws passed against religious orders and congregations. In these offices, mindful of the words of Saint Augustine, he preferred to be loved rather than feared by his brothers, and was happy to serve with love rather than exercise power.

Anthony was characterized by humility of spirit, reserve in speaking, abiding contact with God and love of poverty. He dedicated himself completely to his priestly ministry in order to lead all to Christ; he knew his parishioners individually, he showed them fatherly love, offering them the word of God and supporting them with his advice and direction. His charity to the needy knew no limits: he even went so far as to give a poor man the shirt off his back and because of this he was called father of the poor. He was a faithful minister of the sacrament of penance, dedicating several hours a day to this work. Of greatest importance to him was reconciling sinners to God, comforting the afflicted, forgiving those who had offended him, uniting those separated by hatred and violence, bringing peace to families, and assisting the sick and dying. His love for others was particularly visible during the cholera epidemic of 1854-1856, when day and night, almost without rest, he worked with the sick. God gave him many gifts, including discernment of spirits and the gift of healing. He was seen at times in ecstasy or raised from the ground in prayer.

Father Anthony founded a congregation of Servite sisters in his parish for the education of youth, and he directed them with particular concern. He was a pioneer in establishing parish associations

for young children, teenagers, men, and women in order to intensify the Christian life of his community. He promoted the St. Vincent de Paul Society, recently introduced into Italy from France, and the work for the Propagation of the Faith. He founded the first permanent seaside home for the care of children. In this work of the apostolate he was supported and animated by his great love for the Eucharist and Our Lady of Sorrows to whom he solemnly consecrated his parish.

He was stricken with pneumonia on a winter's day after he gave his coat to a poor man on the street. A few days later, January 12, 1892, having received the sacraments, he died a holy death. The entire city, including even those hostile to the Church, wept at the death of their beloved pastor. At the end of the first session of the Second Vatican Council, Pope John XXIII, on December 9, 1962, added his name to the list of saints. The body of Saint Anthony Pucci is venerated in the Basilica of St. Andrew in Viareggio.

RESPONSORY See Job 29:16a, 25b; Sirach 4:4; Romans 12:8

V. He was truly the father of the poor and the consoler of those who mourn.

R. He did not abandon those in need.

V. He was generous in giving alms and careful in exercising authority.

V. He did not abandon those in need.

HYMN, Te Deum,

Prayer, as in Morning prayer.

Morning Prayer

HYMN:

An appropriate hymn may be sung.

Ant. 1 If you give your bread to the hungry and relief to the oppressed, light will rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom become like midday.

Psalms and canticle from Sunday Week I.

Ant. 2 The path of the just is like the passage of the dawn; it grows from first light to the full splendour of day.

Ant. 3 Those who instruct many in the way of justice will shine like the stars forever.

READING 1 Thessalonians 5:14-18

We urge you to admonish the idle, cheer the faint hearted, support the weak, be patient with all. See that no one returns evil for evil; rather, always seek what is good [both] for each other and for all. Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In all circumstances give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

RESPONSORY See John 10:3-4, 11

V. The good shepherd calls his own sheep by name, and the sheep follow him because they recognize his voice.

R. The good shepherd calls his own sheep by name, and the sheep follow him because they recognize his voice.

V. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.

R. The sheep follow him because they recognize his voice.

V. Glory to the Father ... R. The good shepherd calls ...

CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH

Ant. 1 shall raise up one shepherd over my sheep; he shall rescue them from all the lands where they were scattered; on fertile pastures he shall feed them.

INTERCESSIONS

Let us pray with faith to our Father, who willed that his Church be guided by the Spirit as it works its way through this changing world to the kingdom of heaven:

Guide us in your truth, Lord.

Eternal Shepherd, you keep the Spirit of Christ always active in your Church, enabling us to recognize and interpret the signs of our times.

- Grant that in the midst of a changing world we may be attentive to the promptings of the Spirit.

Eternal Shepherd, you have given us in Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, an example for all who have the care of souls.

- Help your priests to perform their duties willingly and not for mere pay, and to be examples to their people.

Eternal Shepherd, your grace strengthens and sustains the efforts of your pastors.

- Grant that on hearing them we may seek your Son above all things, and follow him with humble heart.

Eternal Shepherd, you have given us the perfect example of poverty in your Son, whom you sent to spread the Good News among the poor.

- Help us to be sensitive to the poor and needy and to live a moderate style of life.

Eternal Shepherd, you constantly bring forth new apostolic opportunities in your Church.

- We pray that the old not hinder the new, and that the letter not stifle the spirit.

(Let us pray to our most beloved Father and eternal Shepherd with those words which were taught us by Christ, the innocent Lamb and firstborn among many:) Our Father ...

PRAYER

Father in heaven, you made Saint Anthony exemplary as Servant of Mary and pastor of your people. May our devotion to Mary help us be generous servants of your people, building your kingdom on earth. 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.

Daytime Prayer

Antiphons and psalms from the weekday.

Midmorning

READING Colossians 3:23-24

Whatever you do, do from the heart, as for the Lord and not for others, knowing that you will receive from the Lord the due payment of the inheritance; be slaves of the Lord Christ.

V. Whatever you do in word and deed,

R. do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Midday

READING Deuteronomy 15:11

The needy will never be lacking in the land; that is why I command you to open your hand to your

poor and needy kinsman in your country.

V. Give alms to the poor in secret.

R. This will be the prayer on your behalf to preserve you from all evil.

Mid-afternoon

READING James 2:24, 26

See how a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. For just as a body without a spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

V. See to it that you do not return evil for evil to anyone

R. Always strive to do what is good for one another and for all.

Prayer, as in Morning Prayer.

Evening Prayer

HYMN

The light of Christ which never fades
Fills Mary's Servants with God's praise.
Bless'd Anthony in glory strong
Gives joy to holy Church's song.

His heart's devotion and his love
He gives the Mother of our God,
And in her service is enrolled
In total consecration bold.

In work for Christ enduring, he
Is zealous in God's ministry.
He serves the faithful flock; in one
the scattered gathers safely home.

He shares God's pardon thus to win
And loose the fettered bound by sin;
That in their hearts the Lord may reign
Who freed them by his blood and pain.

To bind in love and consecrate
All men, he strives to banish hate,
That healing enmity may soothe
And lead his city into love.

With longing for God's holy way
He brings back those who went astray
To that one sheepfold of the Lord
Wherein lies peace and good reward.

To God the Father glory raise
Through Christ his co-eternal Son;

The Servants sing their evening praise
With all the Church in Spirit one.

Melody: Old 100th L.M Text: Paul M. Addison, O.S.M.

Or another hymn may be sung.

Ant. 1 I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink.

Psalms and canticle form the common of saints and the blessed of our Order, or from the common of pastors.

Ant. 2 I was sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.

Ant. 3 Now I tell you this: When you did these things for the most neglected of my brothers and sisters, you did them for me.

READING Romans 12:9-16

Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honour. Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. Bless those who persecute [you], bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation.

RESPONSORY

V. The Spirit of God rests upon me, and has sent me to heal the broken-hearted.

R. The Spirit of God rests upon me, and has sent me to heal the broken-hearted.

V. The Spirit has made me the consoler of those who mourn,

R. and has sent me to heal the broken-hearted.

V. Glory to the Father...

R. The Spirit of God...

CANTICLE OF MARY

Ant. What a glorious servant of the Blessed Virgin Mary! His devotion to the great sorrow that the Virgin felt during the passion of her Son enabled him to bring consolation to those who were in sorrow.

INTERCESSIONS

At this evening hour when the Lord Jesus, the high priest, chose to celebrate the mystery of his love, we humbly place these petitions before him:

Build up your people in love, Lord.

Christ, you gave your life for your friends.

- Grant that the shepherds of the Church may not hesitate to offer their lives for the sheep entrusted to them.

Christ, you always walked in the sight of the Father and often went into the desert to pray to him.

- Help us to draw from constant prayer insights which we may share with our brothers and sisters.

Christ, you worked hard as a carpenter and devoted your whole life to the redemption of the human race.

-May the ministers of your Church, putting aside their own comfort and gain, promote the dignity of their offices by word and deed, and contribute to the salvation of men and women.

Christ, you want your disciples to minister to others without fear of tyrants, without concern for the criticism of the intolerant, and without limiting themselves by national or linguistic barriers.

- Help us to be unafraid of those who wield power and unconcerned with petty differences among us.

Christ, you ascended to the Father to prepare a place for your disciples.

- Grant eternal joy to our deceased brothers and sisters who in this life rendered service to you and their communities.

(Let us conclude our evening sacrifice of praise with that prayer in which we forgive one another our offences and ask to be forgiven by the mercy of God:) Our Father ...

Prayer, as in Morning Prayer.

Note: All Bible texts are taken from: The New American Bible <http://www.vatican.va/archives/>