January 17th: Memorial of Saint Anthony, Abbot

Gospel text (*Mt* 19:16-26): A young man approached Jesus and said, “Teacher, what good must I do to gain eternal life?” He answered him, “Why do you ask me about the good? There is only One who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” He asked him, “Which ones?” And Jesus replied, “You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The young man said to him, “All of these I have observed. What do I still lack?” Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me...”

St. Anthony, the Abbot

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Today we go back to the Egypt of the III and IV centuries (250-356). There San Antonio Abbot was a pioneer of the Christian hermitic movement. After giving up his property, he did not "take refuge" in the desert to "flee" from the people, but to give himself to God and, in God, to give himself to men. There where many who came to him to share his way (and / or receive his guidance). He is considered as the illustrious father of the monks.

He was full of ascetic spirit and endowed with a deep religious knowledge. St. Athanasius, a contemporary friend of St. Anthony, describes his life of praying without interruption: "He was so attentive in reading that he did not miss anything from the Scriptures, and he retained everything: memory was his book." St. Anthony lent a good help to Bishop Athanasius in the fight against arianism and suffered for the Church, encouraging the confessors who suffered the persecution of Diocletian.

-Oh Lord, grant us by the merits of Saint Anthony that, renouncing to ourselves, we love you above all things.