

**Novena Mass - St. Anthony de Padua Parish
June 13, 2019**

Today, the Church of the Archdiocese of San Antonio gathers for the closing of the annual Novena honoring the life and works of St. Anthony of Padua, the patron of this local Church and of the City of Saint Anthony-San Antonio

As we commemorate St. Anthony, the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council reminds us that in the memorial of the saints in the annual liturgical cycle, the Church proclaims the Paschal Mystery in those “who have suffered and have been glorified with Christ. She proposes them to the faithful as examples who draw all people to the Father through Christ, and through their merits she begs for God’s favor”.

Anthony was born in Lisbon Portugal on August 15, 1195 and died in Padua on June 23, 1231 at the age of 36. It is the preaching of Saint Anthony of the Gospel that transformed the lives of the faithful in whole regions of northern Italy and southern France.

At the age of 15 Anthony joined the Augustinian Canons in Lisbon, where he grew in knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures. At the age of 25 he encountered a funeral procession of five Franciscans Friars, who were martyred as they preached to the Moors. He began to discern that he too must go out on mission to preach the kingdom of God as Jesus commanded his first disciples.

St. Francis sent him on mission where he demonstrated his brilliance as a preacher-later known as the ‘Golden Tongue’.

In Butler’s Lives of the Saints, we read that “wherever he went crowds flocked to hear him; hardened criminals, careless folks, and heretics alike were converted and brought to Confession.” He could truly be called an apostle of conversion and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1436) we are reminded that “daily conversion and penance find their source and nourishment in the Eucharist, for in it is made present the sacrifice of Christ which has reconciled us with God.”

We of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, have been called to be the missionary disciples of Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, in which this local Church was recently consecrated. To be those disciples, we must take on the legacy of Saint Anthony, by sharing the Good News, inviting people to a personal conversion of mind, heart and spirit, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation by which he continues to offer to his beloved people the sign and instrument of his great mercy, forgiveness and love.

In John’s Gospel we hear that Jesus’ glory lies in the fact, that from his life, men recognized his special relationship with God. They saw that no one could live as he did unless he was uniquely near to God. As with Christ, it is our glory when men see in us the reflection of God.

Undoubtedly, men saw the reflection of God’s glory in the life and ministry of Saint Anthony, as the words of St. John could make reference to his ministry: “I made them known to you; and these know that you have

sent me. I make known to them your name, and I will make it known, that the love with which you have loved me, may be in them, and I in them". (Jn 17:26)

May Saint Anthony of Padua continue to shower his blessings upon this City and all its inhabitants, and most specially this parish of Saint Anthony of Padua. And may Our Lady of Guadalupe, who revealed her image on the tilma to Saint Juan Diego, and the people of the world, continue to reveal her love and her presence to us, her children.