

Sunday, 13 June 2010 – *Feast of St. Anthony*

“Know your faith to live it”

When he was 25, Ferdinand was devastated to see the dead bodies of the first Franciscan martyrs from Morocco. He had known them well, as they had been his guests at the convent only a few months before. Along with the bodies came rumors and great stories of how they had given their lives trying to convert the Sultan in Morocco, and this filled Ferdinand with a rush of desire of martyrdom, to die for the Gospel and for his God. He pleaded with the Augustinian superior, who eventually let him go. Ferdinand donned the Franciscan habit, and took on the name of Anthony, as a sign of his new life as a martyr of Jesus Christ.

One day, some Franciscan and Dominican friars were sent there for ordination. During the ordination, however, they realized that no one had been appointed to preach. As none of the newly ordained were willing to speak, the superior asked Anthony to do so, commanding him to speak whatever the spirit of God put into his mouth. Obediently, Anthony spoke, timidly at first, but once kindled with fervor and passion, began to preach and explain the Holy Scripture with such ability that everyone present was struck with astonishment. It was this event that Anthony’s talent at speaking and knowledge were made famous. Even St Francis, who had never approved of learning, encouraged Anthony to spread his knowledge with the whole world.

Anthony spent most of his preaching days on the road, never staying at one town for long. He went on an evangelical crusade throughout Italy and Southern France. His speeches drew large crowds, numbers that reached tens of thousands. He was not only famous for his mastery of theology but also because he was able to identify and speak out against the prevalent sins of the people. He was not afraid to scold the Bishops and priests if they failed to live up to their responsibilities in taking care of their ‘flock’, and he often challenged people to repent and live a Christian life. It was during this time that he performed many of his miracles.

Anthony’s last sermons were preached in **Padua**.

Questions for community faith sharing:

St Anthony answered the call to preach though he was not sure of himself at first. Are you willing to answer the call of our Father to serve even though you are not sure how?

Do you think there is a need to grow in the knowledge of your faith?

In what ways can you give glory to God our Father?