Saint Anthony of Padua • Saint stories

“Doggone it! Where is it? I know I put it somewhere!” Sound familiar? When something is lost, St. Anthony is a great saint to ask for help in finding whatever you are looking for. But who was Saint Anthony?

Anthony’s birth and baptismal name was Fernando Martins. He was born in Portugal in 1195 to a wealthy family, yet he felt called to the priesthood and chose a life of poverty. At the age of fifteen he traveled to the capital of Portugal to study to become a priest. After his ordination, he lived at an abbey and was responsible for taking care of visiting guests. Once when some Franciscans were visiting, Fernando felt called to join their order. When he took the vows of this order, he changed his name to Anthony.

The plan was for Anthony to travel to Morocco to help spread the Catholic faith. While there, he became very sick. (Have you ever been sick when you were away from home? It is scary. I wonder how Anthony felt when he became sick in a strange country.)

Because he was so sick, his superiors decided to send him back to Portugal. On the way home, a storm came and blew his ship off course. Instead of landing back in Portugal they landed in Sicily, not far from Italy. They then traveled to Tuscany which is in the middle of Italy. Being ill and weak, Anthony’s superiors decided to have him stay with some local friars to regain his health. He spent a long time there praying and studying.

One day, Dominican friars arrived and there was some confusion about who was to give the homily at a Mass. Somehow, it was determined that Anthony should give it. Anthony was not known

for his preaching abilities and his superior told him, “Just say what the Holy Spirit wants you to.” (In other words, don’t prepare anything and God will give you the words to say.) His homily was so well received that he was from then on asked to preach to various groups. He became known as a great preacher. What was so special about Anthony’s preaching? Anyone, young or old, educated or not, could understand what he was trying to teach.

Books back in this time were rare and highly treasured. Anthony had a book that he often used for reference when teaching. One day it was stolen. Saint Anthony prayed that the thief would return it. His prayer was answered. The thief even eventually became a member of his religious order! (This is why Saint Anthony is often called upon by people who are searching for lost items.)

Feast day: June 13

St. Anthony, pray for us!

Activity: Stuffed animal hide and seek

Need:

- A stuffed animal (or you can use any easily moveable object.)
- At least two people

One person takes the stuffed animal.

We will call this person the “hider.” This person finds a place to hide the stuffed animal while the other person isn’t looking. After the animal is hidden, the other person—the “seeker” begins to search for it. The hider gives clues if the seeker is having trouble finding it. For example, the hider might say, “You are getting warm,” if the seeker is getting near the animal.

If the seeker is far away from the hidden stuffed animal, the

hider might say, “You are VERY, VERY COLD!

After the seeker has found the stuffed animal, it is the hider’s turn to be the seeker.

Unfailing Prayer to St. Anthony
(from St. Anthony Shrine)

O Holy St. Anthony gentlest of Saints, your love for God and charity for His creatures, made you worthy, when on earth, to possess miraculous powers. Encouraged by this thought, I implore you to obtain for me (*request*).

O gentle and loving St. Anthony, whose heart was ever full of human sympathy, whisper my petition into the ears of the sweet Infant Jesus, who loved to be folded in your arms. The gratitude of my heart will ever be yours. Amen.