

## Week 1.

- Who was St Anthony?
- Read Luke 18:18-27
- What is the Rich Ruler's attitude towards Jesus? Does he understand who he really is?
- How did Jesus respond to his question about Salvation?
- Why did Jesus ask him to 'do' something that he then went on to say was very unusual and difficult to carry out?

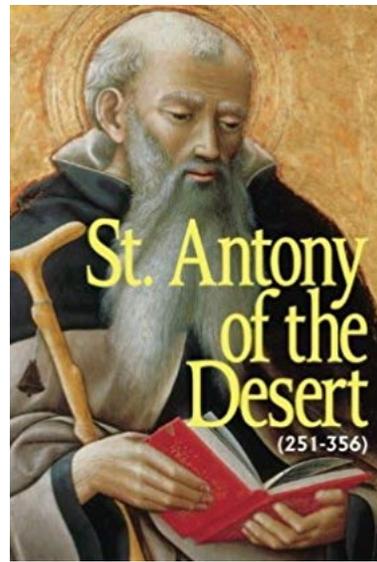
*The image of the camel passing through the eye of a needle is an example of rabbinic hyperbole signifying something very unusual and difficult.*

- If Salvation is not dependent on giving everything away to others, why did Jesus ask the rich man to do so?
- Why might the rich man have been dismayed by Jesus' answer to the question he asked?

*When Anthony heard these parallel verses read (from Matthew), his response was to give away his inheritance and wealth and adopt an 'ascetic' lifestyle.*

[Asceticism : practise of strict self-denial as a spiritual exercise]

- What might an 'ascetic lifestyle' look like today?
- How might we be challenged to change our values or lifestyle?
- Spend some time in prayer - asking that we might be open to change and ready to follow wherever God leads us.



## St Anthony & his Legacy.

Anthony was born to wealthy parents who died young, leaving him with a large inheritance. When he was 17/18 he heard the 'story of the Rich Ruler' and immediately responded by giving away his wealth after making provision for his sister.

His goal was 'to follow Christ unreservedly....' He looked to the Godly exemplars he saw around him and began to live a life of poverty, celibacy & obedience. Anthony fought many personal demons (both physically and mentally) and lived for a while among the tombs in his village, demonstrating Christ's mastery over death. As he grew in spiritual maturity, he withdrew to the desert which was regarded as a sure death sentence. In time, Anthony became sought out to bring God's healing, wisdom and encouragement to others. He supported those being persecuted under the Emperor Diocletian and despite his lack of formal instruction, spoke up against the Arian Heresy circulating during this period. Anthony sought further seclusion in the desert and encouraged others to follow in his footsteps. He was visited by a wide variety of people who were looking for 'answers' to philosophical questions and matters of faith. Anthony lived this simple life until he was over 105. He left no written work but his biography was recorded by Bishop Athanasius who knew Anthony personally and his works are attested to by many other eye witness accounts.

