



**9.30 am Holy Eucharist
S. Antony of Egypt 2020**

St Anthony, a young man in Egypt in the middle of the 200s AD, caring for his sister and making his way in life after the death of his parents. He hears the call of Jesus to give up everything and follow Him. He goes into church to say his prayers and hears the Gospel of the rich young man – 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' 'to be *perfect*? Go, sell everything you have, give it to the poor and follow me.'

He puts his sister in the care of some good local virgins, and went out into the desert. He became the Father of Christian monasticism – history doesn't record the sister's view of being put into convent life...

Anyway, a key message for us today, perhaps, attentiveness.

Even before Antony could hear God's call and respond, he had to have noticed! It is only because He was *attentive* to God's Holy Spirit in the world around him that he could respond. It's all a matter of training our spiritual antenna.

Then attentiveness became his life.

In the desert hermit life, his existence moment by moment was a vocation of attentiveness to the internal weather systems we live with, and the tempters weapons: ego, insecurity, doubt, distraction.

Expending all his energy attending to the psalms, Gospels and the rest of the Scriptures, and most of all – the inescapable reality that the only thing that really matters is God. All his attention he lavished on God.

To be truly alive now and to live forever - only God can give that, and God desires nothing more than to give it to us. All we need to do is seek the singleness of heart by which all that prevents us from running the race will melt away and all we'll be left with is empty hands to fully receive. It is all a matter of attending to God until all that we are is so full of God that there is no longer any room for anything but faith, hope and love.

Antony put his money where his mouth was – if this is the great truth, then I must seek this, attend to this, with everything that I am.

As hard as it is simple. We know that even as we have begun to pray this morning we have been preoccupied and distracted. The conversation in our heads has been silly or harmful or just dead-ening. What are we to do!? St Antony gently tells us: pay attention. Pay attention to internal weather systems. Pay attention to God in the world around us. In the people, little moments and conversations. Pay attention to the divine spark, the voice of Jesus that is speaking in all of our life. And with His help, and not the

unhelpful voices of ego or paranoia, but with the help of Jesus – to hear Jesus` voice in it *all*.

St Antony pray for us – give us attentive and loving hearts. Take away all that clings and mars, that with pure and open hearts we may run the race that is set before us. Amen.