



Cardinal Gibbons Assembly 783
Newsletter
January 2014



TALKING ABOUT WAVE WALKING

By Fr. Dwight Longenecker, January 16, 2014

How is the gospel best spread? By talking about how the faith has changed you. It is by telling faith stories. It is by sharing the amazing, simple and real experiences of the faith. It is talking about wave walking. Sherry Weddell emphasizes this in her important book *Forming Intentional Disciples: The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus*.

What is a “faith story”? Here’s one I shared earlier this week—the story of my visit to a man’s deathbed and the transformation in his life as he received the graces from the sacraments. A faith story is a shared event in which the faith actually did what it was supposed to do: save people, heal people, change lives and change the world. Like Sherry Weddell, I am a convert to Catholicism from Evangelical fundamentalism. Like Sherry, I grew up in an atmosphere where it was natural to share our faith stories. The Christian folk in our church shared their faith with one another all the time. They spoke freely about answered prayer, prayer requests and the daily communication with God.

On Wednesday evenings we would meet for fellowship and a prayer meeting. Part of this weekly meeting was the pastor inviting anyone who wanted to stand up and share what God had done for them that week. Housewives would give a brief answer to prayer. Businessmen would recount an experience sharing the faith. Children would stand up and say what they were thankful for. Every week one dear old saint named George would stand up, and in a trembling voice say, “Well pastor, I don’t have much to say tonight except that I love my wife Flossie”, and then he’d reach down to take her hand and start to weep a bit. “The Lord has given us to each other and not a day goes by that I don’t thank him for Flossie.”

When all the theologians, scholars, philosophers and professional religious people are done, this is the down home, heart to heart, rubber meeting road kind of evangelization. We don’t follow Christ for what he can do for us, but we do expect our faith to work. The problem with so many Catholics is that they don’t really expect their religion to DO anything for them. They have been taught to fulfill their duties and say their prayers, and they give at least lip service to the beliefs that confession really absolves them of their sins and heals them and the Eucharist infuses supernatural love into their lives and that anointing brings healing. But they don’t expect the daily surge of God’s power in their lives.

This is where faith stories become so important. As we share faith stories people are inspired, faith grows. People come more and more to believe, trust and expect God to do great things. This is one of the reasons why I try to weave at least one faith story into every homily. In teaching confirmation class I tell faith stories so the children not only learn the facts of their Catholic religion—they learn how faith works and how God can touch their lives.

Faith stories should be at the bedrock of our lives as Catholics. We are sometimes so intent on learning the catechism or the arguments for the faith or apologetics, but we neglect the real stories of real people whose lives are transformed by God. Faith stories, after all, make up the heart of the sacred Scriptures. What is the Bible but one long, ancient collection of faith stories—the stories of real people who made a transaction with God, who set out on the great adventure and changed their world with God.

Why do we tell and re-tell the lives of the saints? Because they are our faith stories. Pope Benedict XVI said that the saints are “lived theology” and “the sacred Scriptures can only be interpreted through the lives of the saints.” It is in

these faith stories that the Catholic religion lives and we should not be ashamed to tell our stories, and if we don't have a faith story to tell? Then we better get one soon!

This is the theme of my upcoming book *The Romance of Religion: Fighting for Goodness, Truth, and Beauty*. The book explores the need for stories and the importance of using the great stories as the pattern for living out our own great romance.

Evangelization takes place as real people first live the faith, then share their experiences. As others see the example and hear the stories they will be attracted and inspired to follow the way and embark on their own great adventure.

From *Pantheos*: <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/standingonmyhead/2014/01/talking-about-wave-walking.html>

DEGREE CEREMONIES

First Degree Ceremony: 20 January 2014. Location: Council 15250, Pope Chapel, Pope Army Airfield, NC. Show Time: 6:30 PM. Start Time 7:00 PM.

Third Degree Ceremony: 8 February 2014. Location: Council 2546, Raleigh, NC. For more details go to: http://www.kofcnc.org/09_10Files/calendar.htm?pli=1

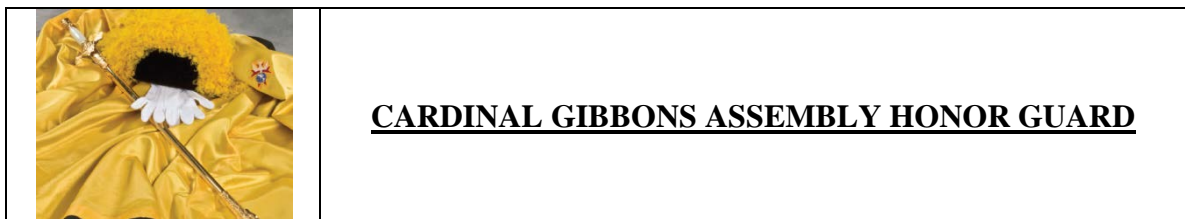
Third Degree Ceremony: 15 February 2014. Location: Council 9499, Clemmons, NC. For more details go to: http://www.kofcnc.org/09_10Files/calendar.htm?pli=1

Third Degree Ceremony: 22 February 2014. Location: Council 3574, Jacksonville, NC. For more details go to: http://www.kofcnc.org/09_10Files/calendar.htm?pli=1

Fourth Degree Exemplification: 15 March 2014. Location: Council 15250, Watters Family Life Center, Corner of Knox St. and Randolph St. Ft. Bragg, NC 28310. Due to increased security, everyone, including those with a Military ID card, must pre-register with Ft. Bragg Security. For instructions on how to register with Ft. Bragg Security go to: http://www.kofc15250.org/4TH_DEGREE_CEREMONY_2.php For more details on this Exemplification go to: <http://www.kofcnc.org/FOURTH%20DEGREE/Exemplification%20Page.htm>

Third Degree Ceremony: 29 March 2014. Location: Council 7406, Mooresville, NC. For more details go to: http://www.kofcnc.org/09_10Files/calendar.htm?pli=1

If your Council is hosting a Degree Ceremony send an email to COOP5614@yahoo.com with the information and I will place it in the next Assembly Newsletter and on the website Calendar page.



INGRID HANDLEY PALL BEARER DETAIL

Thank you to the Sir Knights and family friends who participated as Pall Bearers for Ingrid Handley, wife of Past Faithful Navigator John Handley, Funeral Service (January 7, 2014):

Past Faithful Navigator Rod Komlofske
Sir Knight Chris Cooper
Sir Knight Jeffrey Jankovics
Warren Hahn - Family Friend

Al Kittridge - Family Friend
Shawn McIlroy - Family Friend
Carlis Sweat Family Friend (Alternate)

UPCOMING HONOR GUARD EVENTS

There are no Honor Guard Events Scheduled at this time.

MONASTIC ORDERS

Sir Knight Christopher R. Cooper

During my research for previous articles I came across many articles pertaining to Monastic Orders. Over the next several months I will cover some of the Orders I found. The following article is an excellent starting point, *Saint Antony of Egypt Abbot, Patriarch of Monks*. St. Anthony of Egypt is considered the Father of Monastic Life. A more in depth biography of St. Anthony of Egypt can be found at: <http://www.fisheaters.com/lifeofantony.html>

SAINT ANTONY OF EGYPT ABBOT, PATRIARCH OF MONKS 251-356 A.D.

Feast: January 7

Concerning Antony of Egypt we have more knowledge than of any other saint of this early period, thanks to the biography written by his friend, St. Athanasius. Antony was born in 251 at Coma, a village near Great Heracleopolis in Middle Egypt. His Christian parents wished to protect him from bad examples and kept him closely at home, so that he grew up in ignorance of pagan literature and read no language but his own. At their death, before he had reached the age of twenty, he found himself in possession of a large estate and responsible for the care of a younger sister. Soon afterward, while in church, he heard the text from Matthew XIX, 21, in which Christ says to the rich young man, "Go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor." Antony took this command as meant for himself. He went home and made over to his neighbors about one hundred and twenty acres of good land. He then sold the rest of the estate and gave the money to the needy, saving only what he thought necessary to maintain his sister and himself. Another drastic step was to follow. He heard in church those other words which Christ spoke (Matthew vi, 34), "Do not be anxious about tomorrow." Antony now distributed in alms all his movable property and placed his sister in a "house of virgins," the first reference we have to a Christian nunnery. In her later years this sister was entrusted with the direction of the women in that holy way of life. Antony, now twenty-one and free of worldly care, became a hermit. He retired to a solitary place and occupied himself with manual labor, prayer, and religious reading. His only food was bread and a little salt, and he drank nothing but water. His bed was a rush mat. He soon became a model of humility, piety, and self-discipline.

However, the devil assailed him by various temptations. He pointed out the joys of family life, the good works Antony might have done in the world with his money, and the futility of the hermit's existence. When repulsed by the young novice, the devil changed his mode of attack, and harassed him night and day with gross and obscene thoughts. Antony resisted by a strict watchfulness over his senses and imagination, controlling them by austere fasts, acts of humility, and prayer. At last Satan himself appeared in visible form, first as a seductive woman, then as a black and terrifying man. Antony remained unmoved, and the fiend confessed himself vanquished.

In quest now of greater solitude, he hid himself in an old tomb in the desert, where a friend brought him a little bread from time to time. Here Satan again attacked him and deafened him with loud noises. Once, Athanasius says, he was so grievously beaten that when his friend arrived he lay almost dead. As Antony came to himself, he called out to the devils, "See, here I am! Do your worst! Nothing shall separate me from Christ my Lord." At this, the demons reappeared and again filled the tomb with a terrible clamor and specters of ravening beasts in hideous shapes until a ray of heavenly light, breaking through, chased them away. "Where wast Thou," Antony cried, "my Lord and my Master? Why wast Thou not here from the beginning of my conflict to give me succor?" "Antony," replied a voice, "I was here the whole time; I stood by thee, and watched thy conflict. And because thou hast manfully withstood thy enemies, I will forever protect thee, and will make thy name famous throughout the earth." At this the saint rose up to pray and give thanks.

It was a common practice at this time for fervent Christians to lead retired lives in penance and contemplation on the outskirts of towns, and in the desert, while others practiced their austerities without withdrawing from their fellow

men. In even earlier times we hear of these ascetics.[1] Origen, about 249, wrote that they abstained from flesh, as the disciples of Pythagoras did.[2] Antony lived in his tomb near Coma until about 285. Then, at the age of thirty-five, he set out into the empty desert, crossed the eastern branch of the Nile, and took up his abode in the ruins of an old castle on the top of a mountain. There he lived for almost twenty years, rarely seeing any man except the one who brought him food every six months.

In his fifty-fifth year he came down from his mountain retreat and founded his first monastery, not far from Aphroditopolis. It consisted of scattered cells, each inhabited by a solitary monk; some of the later settlements may have been arranged on more of a community plan. Antony did not stay with any of his foundations long, but visited them all from time to time. These interruptions to his solitude, involving as they did some management of the affairs of others, tended to disturb him. We are told of a temptation to despair, which he overcame by prayer and hard manual labor. Notwithstanding his stringent self-discipline, he always maintained that perfection consisted not in mortification of the flesh but in love of God. He taught his monks to have eternity always present to their minds and to perform every act with all the fervor of their souls, as if it were to be their last.

Antony's later years were spent on Mount Colzim, near the Red Sea. Here he lived on a bit of bread daily, with some dates; in extreme old age, a little oil was added to this meager diet. When he came to his meal, usually taken late in the day, he said he felt a sense of shame, remembering the state of the blessed spirits in Heaven, who praise God without ceasing. He always seemed vigorous and cheerful. Strangers were able to pick him out from among his disciples by the joy which shone in his face. They traveled great distances to talk with the celebrated holy man, and it was the duty of Macarius, Antony's companion and disciple, to interview them. If they proved to be spiritual men, Antony would come out and sit in converse. If they were worldly persons, Macarius would entertain them, and Antony would appear only to give a short talk.

In spite of his fame, this saint looked on himself as the least of mankind; he listened carefully to the counsel of others, and declared that he received benefit from speaking with the humblest person. He cultivated a small garden that he might have a few refreshing vegetables to offer his visitors, who were apt to be weary after traveling by camel caravan over long stretches of desert and climbing the mountain. Athanasius also writes of his weaving mats as a daily occupation. He could pray while working, although his practice was to alternate periods of prayer and contemplation with his weaving.

In the year 311, during the persecutions under Maximian, Antony hoped he might be one of those chosen for martyrdom. He went down to Alexandria and made himself conspicuous by encouraging the Christians already imprisoned, and also those who were standing before the judges and at the places of execution. He wore his white hermit's habit openly, within sight of the governor, yet he did nothing provocative and did not come forward and accuse himself, as some impetuous ones did. The next year, when the persecutions abated, he returned to his mountain. In his extreme old age he made another trip to Alexandria, expressly to refute the Arians, [3] and went about preaching that Christ the Son was not a creature, but of the same eternal substance as the Father; and that the impious Arians, who called Him a creature, did not differ from the heathen, "who worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator." The people flocked to hear him, and even pagans, struck by the dignity of his bearing, gathered around him, saying, "We want to see the man of God." He made many converts and worked several miracles. The governor of Egypt invited him to stay longer in the city, but he declined, saying, "Fish die if they are taken from the water; so does a monk wither away if he forsakes his solitude." St. Jerome says that at Alexandria he met the famous blind Christian scholar Didymus, and told him not to regret overmuch the loss of his eyes, physical organs which men shared with the insects, but to rejoice in the treasure of the inner light which the Apostles knew, and by which we may have a vision of God, and kindle the fire of His love in our souls.

Heathen philosophers who disputed with Antony were amazed both at his modesty and at his wisdom. When asked how he could spend his life in solitude without the companionship of books, he replied that nature was his great book. When they criticized his ignorance, he simply asked which was the better, good sense or book learning, and which produced the other. They answered, "Good sense." "Then," said Antony, "it is sufficient of itself." His pagan

visitors usually wanted to know the reasons for his faith in Christ. He told them that they degraded their gods by ascribing to them the worst of human passions, whereas the ignominy of the cross, followed by Christ's triumphant Resurrection, was a supreme demonstration of His infinite goodness, to say nothing of His miracles of healing and raising the dead. The Christian's faith in his Almighty God and His works was a more satisfactory basis for religion than the empty sophistries of the Greeks. Antony carried on his discussions with the Greeks through an interpreter. His biographer Athanasius tells us that in spite of his solitary life, "he did not seem to others morose or unapproachable, but met them with a most engaging and friendly air." He writes that no one in trouble ever visited Antony without going away comforted.

When Belacius, the military commander in Egypt, was savagely persecuting the Christians, Antony wrote warning him to leave the servants of Christ in peace. Belacius tore up the letter, spat and trampled on it, and threatened to make Antony his next victim. But five days later, as he was riding with Nestorius, governor of Egypt, the commander's horse began to curvet and prance and crashed against the other. Belacius was thrown and his horse then turned and bit his thigh. In three days he was dead.

The Emperor Constantine and his two sons, Constantius and Constans, once sent Antony a joint letter, recommending themselves to his prayers. Noting the astonishment of some of the monks present, Antony said, "Do not wonder that the Emperor writes to us, even to a man such as I am; rather be astounded that God has communicated with us, and has spoken to us by His Son." Replying to the letter, he exhorted the Emperor and his sons to contempt of the world and to constant remembrance of the final judgment.

St. Jerome mentions seven other letters from Antony to various monasteries, written in the style of the Apostles, and filled with their teachings. As the devil fell by pride, so he assails us most often by temptations to that sin; knowledge of ourselves, Antony said, is the indispensable step by which we go on to the knowledge and love of God. In discourses to his monks he would repeatedly emphasize the importance of rigorous self-examination every evening. Once, when he heard his disciples express amazement at the multitudes who were then embracing the religious life and undertaking austere practices of virtue, he told them tearfully that a time would come when monks would be fond of living in cities and in stately buildings and eating at dainty tables, and would be distinguished from the people of the world solely by the habits they wore. Only a few would then rise to the heights of perfection, though the crowns these few received would be so much the more resplendent since they had attained virtue amid the contagion of bad examples.

A short time before his death Antony made a round of visitations of his scattered communities of monks. This first great "Desert Father" died about the year 356, probably on January 17, the day on which most ancient martyrologies commemorate him, and which the Greek Church kept as a feast. He had lived to the remarkable age of 105, without sickness, his sight unimpaired, his teeth still sound. Two disciples interred Antony's remains according to his instructions) beside his cell. About 561, in the reign of Justinian, they are said to have been carried to Alexandria, and later, when the Saracens overran Egypt, to Constantinople. During the Crusades they were brought to Vienne, France, by Joscelin, a native of that region, to whom the Emperor at Constantinople had given them. The Bollandists [4] report numerous miracles wrought by Antony's intercession, in particular, the cures of persons suffering from St. Antony's Fire, an epidemic which raged violently in France and other parts of Europe in the eleventh century.

Several orders of Eastern monks may still preserve the general features of Antony's system of ascetic training. Certainly his instructions and his example have lived on as ideals of the monastic life through subsequent centuries.

Endnotes:

1 Ascetic is from the Greek word <askesis>, meaning bodily discipline of all kinds.

2 The disciples of Pythagoras, a Greek philosopher and mathematician of the sixth century B.C., led abstemious lives in groups apart from ordinary men.

3 For a fuller account of Arian doctrine, see below, <St. Athanasius>, n. 6.

4 The Bollandists were a group of Jesuit scholars who about 1630 began publishing a definitive edition of the <Acta Sanctorum>, or Lives of the Saints, from the beginning down to their own time. The leader of the original group was one John van Bolland. Their work has been continued to the present day.

This was taken from “Lives of Saints”, Published by John J. Crawley & Co., Inc.

From *Eternal Word Television Network*: <http://www.ewtn.com/library/mary/antony.htm>

IN MEMORIAM:

Please keep in your prayers for the repose of the soul of:
Ingrid Handley, wife of Past Faithful Navigator John Handley

ARTICLES FROM THE ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP

Any Sir Knight who wants to add his article to the Newsletter, submit the article to Faithful Scribe, SK Chris Cooper, at the next Assembly meeting or send it via email to COOP5614@yahoo.com.