

## Reflection Wednesday week 2 St Anthony 2024

**St Antony, Abbot (251)** St Antony, the originator of the monastic life, was born in Egypt. When his parents died, responding to the word of the Gospel, he gave all his belongings to the poor. He went into the wilderness to begin a life of penitence, living in absolute poverty, praying, meditating, and supporting himself by manual work. He suffered many temptations, both physical and spiritual, but he overcame them. Disciples gathered round him, attracted by his wisdom, moderation, and holiness. He supported the victims of the persecutions of Diocletian and helped St Athanasius in his fight against the Arians. Living to be over a hundred, he died in 356.

The Gospels are full of the wise sayings of Jesus that seem to be ignored. One of the most poignant was in his meeting with the young man who persisted in asking, "*What must I do to have eternal life?*" In the end, Jesus told him that to be *perfect* he would have to sell all that he had and give the money to the poor, the young man went away sorrowful because he was very rich. What could be more of a waste than that? You tell someone what he has to do, and he is afraid to do it. And yet... 250 years later, St Antony hears the story, gives away all that he has and becomes the founder of monasticism. Over 1,000 years later, St Francis of Assisi hears the story, gives away his possessions (and some of his father's) and revolutionises Christianity again.

Not all the words that we speak are forgotten, even though we cannot see their effects ourselves. Let us pray that those unknown effects may always be good ones.

### **President Biden visits a fully vaccinated senior home**

After a heartfelt speech in which he thanked the staff for their effort and the residents for their sacrifices, he went round shaking hands. As he greeted an elderly woman who appeared to be quite "*out of it*", he asked her, "*Do you know who I am?*"

She simply replied, "*No, but there's a nice woman at the front desk who can tell you!*"