

# *Episode 1: St. Anthony & St. Pachomius*

Saint Anthony of the Desert and Saint Pachomius are fathers and giants of religious life. They built on the foundation of the Gospel and helped to make consecrated life as we know it today.

The word “consecrate” means: to separate a thing for sacred use. The things the priest uses for the Mass are consecrated. Even the church building is consecrated. People can also be consecrated when they choose to live the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Consecrated life isn’t new. It goes back to the days when Our Lord walked the earth. Our Lady’s the example of consecrated religious.

Women are known to have lived a life of perfection outside of the world in virginity and penance. Some of the early martyrs like St. Agnes, St. Lucy, and St. Philomena vowed themselves to Jesus Christ as his spouse.

There were men, though, who weren’t necessarily priests, who also wanted to live in prayer and penance. They lived a more reserved life in their homes and were called aesthetics.

Today, we’ll be talking about the two founders of monasticism, St. Anthony and St. Pachomius. We’ll spend the most time with Saint Anthony - partly because more information has come down to us about him - and because he’s the one who started it all.

## **St. Anthony the Great**

Saint Anthony’s teachings became the bedrock of religious life. He taught his monks about holy perseverance and that they should live as if they could die at any time.

With his constant battles against the demonic he taught the monks about how tricky the devil can be. He especially warned them about how the devil can use good things to tempt them, like appearing as good angels or as Our Lord Himself. The demons might tempt them to make sacrifices that are impossible to keep so that they lose hope. Or they might wake them up in the middle of the night to pray so that they’d be too tired to do anything the next day.

Saint Anthony’s influence can’t be exaggerated. With the grace of God, he successfully fought against the world the flesh and the devil and won. He even influenced the other great founder of monasticism St. Pachomius.

## **Saint Pachomius**

Saint Anthony wasn’t the first hermit but he was the one God used to attract thousands of people to one of the earliest forms of consecrated life. Saint Pachomius took Saint Anthony’s example and made it accessible to people who weren’t called to live the life of a hermit.

These two men followed Our Lord’s commands in the Gospel and, without knowing it, changed the world forever. Are you willing to let God use you? You might change the world too.

St. Anthony and St. Pachomius, pray for us.

## Episode Preview

Consecrated life is fundamental to the Church. Men and women who live the evangelical counsels, that's the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, live a special life apart from the world.

They deny themselves the right to own things, the right to have a spouse and children, and even put off the use of their own wills in their lives. All these things are good in themselves and God created us to use them, but the person who's consecrated gives up these good things for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. They choose to live their lives for God alone and to work for His kingdom.

Our Lord told us in the Gospel, "If you are willing to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and then you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me." [Mt. 19:21]

Faithful men and women have been following that call from the earliest days of the Church.

In the first episode of our new show, *Pillars of the Church*, we'll talk about the beginnings of religious life - specifically beginning with the introduction of monasticism in the 4th century by Saint Anthony the Great and Saint Pachomius.

Saint Anthony - although not the first hermit - was the one who gave us the foundation of religious life as we know it. He told his monks:

"Wherefore as a servant would not dare to say, 'Because I worked yesterday, I will not work today.'; and considering the past will do no work in the future; but, as it is written in the Gospel, daily shows the same readiness to please his master, and to avoid risk: so let us daily abide firm in our discipline, knowing that if we are careless for a single day the Lord will not pardon us, for the sake of the past, but will be wrath against us for our neglect.

He impressed on them the importance of living a virtuous life in the present.

"... as we rise day by day we should think that we shall not abide till evening; and again, when about to lie down to sleep, we should think that we shall not rise up. For our life is naturally uncertain, and Providence allots it to us daily. But thus ordering our daily life, we shall neither fall into sin, nor have a lust for anything, nor cherish wrath against any, nor shall we heap up treasure upon earth. But, as though under the daily expectation of death, we shall be without wealth, and shall forgive all things to all men, nor shall we retain at all the desire of women or of any other foul pleasure. But we shall turn from it as past and gone, ever striving and looking forward to the day of Judgment."

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