



## ST. ANTHONY THE GREAT

St. Anthony (251-256) was born in Egypt in a pious family. From a very early age he demonstrated a special love towards prayerful and solitude life. Upon the death of his parents in his twentieth year, he decided to isolate himself from the rest of the world and devote his life to prayer and closeness to God.

In solitude he became very close to God and received from Him many gifts such as the ability to avoid the temptations of the evil one, the ability to understand the language of animals and the ability to perform miracles.

Soon his extraordinary ascetic (a practice of self-discipline in solitude) life and great love for God became known to many and despite his wish to be alone with God, many started to visit him in the desert where he was living. Eventually, several ascetics came to live next to him in the desert so that they could learn from St. Anthony and be instructed by him on spiritual discipline.

St. Anthony lived in the desert of Egypt for a very long time and had many students. He died at the age of 105, after learning about his departure in a vision.

St. Anthony has been revered by Armenians since the early ages. He is considered to be the founder of Christian monasticism (վանականութիւն):