

blessings, and begging His pardon for failing to use His gifts properly in the past.

The Christian is bound to make an act of thanksgiving after receiving Holy Communion. St. Philip Neri once observed a man habitually leaving the church immediately after receiving the sacred Host. In order to reprove him and put him to shame, he called two acolytes, asked them to take two lighted candles and accompany the man to his home. The servers obeyed and everyone in the street stared at them as they followed the man. Looking back and seeing the acolytes the man asked them why they were following him. They said that St. Philip had ordered them to do so. He therefore returned to the church and asked the saint what the meaning was of this unwanted escort?

The St. Philip replied: “It is to pay proper respect to Our Lord, whom you are carrying away with you. Since you neglect to adore Him, I sent the servers to take your place.” The man recognized his fault, knelt before the altar and made his thanksgiving devoutly. He remained in prayer for fifteen minutes; the length of time the Blessed Sacrament is intact in the body. These fifteen minutes should be recognized as the most precious of any day and should be spent in silent contemplation. As Scripture states, “My house is to be called a house of prayer for all peoples” (Is. 56:7).

This is the kind of thanksgiving that the Church and our Lord desires of us, as referred to in the *Instruction on the Eucharistic Mystery*:

“Union with Christ, to which the Sacrament [of the Eucharist] is directed is

not to be limited to the duration of the celebration of the Eucharist. It is to be prolonged into the entire Christian life, in such a way that the Christian faithful, contemplating unceasingly the gift they have received, may make their life a continual thanksgiving under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and may produce fruits of greater charity” (no.38).

I urge you all, I beg you all to be intelligent, thoughtful, mentally alert during Holy Mass. Enter into every Mass as it were your last. Serious as that may seem, it will bring you the joy Christ promises.

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Pamphlet 227

St. Anthony Mary Claret

Patron Saint of Weavers and Savings Banks

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St. Anthony Mary Claret (bishop and missionary) was born on December 23, 1807, at Sallent, Catalonia, Spain and died in Cistercian monastery at Fontfroide in France, on October 24, 1870 at the age of 63. He was a Spanish missionary priest and bishop who became known as the “Spiritual Father of Cuba.” He also founded the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Claretians). He was beatified in 1934 and by the time of his canonization in 1950, there were 4,000 Claretians living in 240 religious houses in 24 countries.

The well-liked Spanish priest Anthony Claret was the fifth of eleven children. His family was poor but hard working at the family trade of weaving. Anthony's earliest memories of home were the family's praying the Rosary and going to church which imbued him with a deep love and devotion to Jesus and Mary.

By age twenty-one Anthony had been educated and was in much demand for his skill as a weaver. At one time he suffered because of poor health, and during the days of recovery he imagined himself as a Carthusian monk. Anthony went to the bishop for advice. The bishop suggested that he first go to the diocesan seminary and then, if he wished, leave and become a monk. Anthony followed this advice and enjoyed seminary life. He was ordained two

years earlier than usual because of a civil war in Spain.

Anthony finally realized that his health would prevent him from being a monk or a Jesuit missionary. He was sent to a small mountain village where he studied medicine and helped many of the sick. He discovered his power to read hearts and his ability to understand people.

Anthony began a busy schedule of preaching throughout Spain. His gentle faith and great courage in spreading devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and in reviving devotion to the Eucharist made him a popular preacher. He also published a catechism that led the bishop of the Canary Islands to invite him to preach there for a year, fulfilling Anthony's dream to be a missionary.

When Anthony returned to Spain, he founded a congregation called the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary [Claretians]. Then he was assigned as archbishop of Cuba. Not having had an archbishop for fourteen years, the island was in need of renewal. Anthony reorganized the seminary training, preached in all the churches, heard confessions, and guided people to Christ. He worked for updated farm methods and credit unions. He wanted the people to own their own farms, knowing that this would improve family life. He made enemies by teaching black slaves. Fifteen times people tried to assassinate him. Once a man stabbed him and was given a death sentence, but Anthony had this changed to a prison sentence.

After eight years, Anthony was called to Spain to be Queen Isabella II's confessor: he

would not live at the palace but come only to hear her confession and instruct the children. This freed him to open a religious publishing house and write more than two hundred books and pamphlets.

In 1886 a revolution took place, and those associated with the court were accused of treason. Anthony fled to Rome where Vatican Council I was in session. There he defended the infallibility of the pope. Then he retired to a Cistercian monastery in France where he stayed in solitude until his death. His Feast Day is October 24.

Living Tabernacles

On December 8, 1869, seven hundred bishops from all over the world gathered in Rome for the First Vatican Council. St. Anthony Claret was one of the Council Fathers. His presence became noticeable when the subject of papal infallibility was discussed, which Claret defended vehemently. This teaching became a dogma of faith for all Catholics at this Council.

Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore came to know Archbishop Claret at the Council and said of him, "There goes a true saint." Pope Pius IX was of the same opinion: "Archbishop Claret is a man of God. He is a saint!"

St. Anthony was given a singular grace from our Lord as he was known to be a living tabernacle: "On August 26, 1861, finding myself at prayer in the church of the Holy Rosary, at La Granja, at seven o'clock in the evening, the Lord granted me the grace of conserving the Sacramental Species within my heart." For the rest of his earthly

days he shared with the Mother of God in a special way the divine privilege preserving incorruptibly from Communion to Communion the precious Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ in his bosom. Now a human tabernacle of Our Lord, he reflected: "I now bear within me day and night the adorable Eucharist. I must therefore be always recollected and cultivate the interior life."

It must be granted that this was the greatest grace received by Saint Anthony Mary Claret: a grace of intimate and total communion with Jesus, produced and increased through the Eucharist. The risen Lord remained in him as in His temple, transforming him and strengthening him for the service of God.

We too receive this grace for a short time when we receive, in a worthy manner, our Lord's Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in Holy Communion. We too, become living tabernacles.

This is the time to adore God, to thank God, to ask favors of God, and to beg God's forgiveness. To adore God means to tell Him in thought, word and deed that He is above everything and everyone, that He is Supreme. To thank God means to express your gratitude for His countless blessings of body and soul, especially for the Eucharist. As Mass is the best time to adore and thank God, it is also the best time to ask for favors and to beg pardon. We offer God the Gift most pleasing to Him, His own Divine Son, asking Him for material and spiritual