

April 21, 2020

My very, very dear parishioners,

Today is the Optional Memorial of Saint Anselm, the first memorial to be celebrated in a long time, not since before Ash Wednesday. I chose to say the optional Office of Saint Anselm and to offer the Mass of Saint Anselm instead of the Mass and Office for Tuesday, the Second Week of Easter, because I am asking Saint Anselm to help to me become a better man for God and for you. I never told you before, but I once considered becoming a Benedictine priest and monk. In fact I once met with the Abbot of Saint Anselm College in Washington to consider my vocation with him before I applied to be a seminarian with our diocese. He was very kind to me; nevertheless, the monastery was not my vocation. Being with you was, and is, my vocation, though I couldn't know it then.

Saint Anselm is so out of reach for me, but what else is new? He became a Benedictine monk and eventually went on to become the Archbishop of Canterbury. After he was canonized Saint Anselm was declared a Doctor of the Church. Many of you knew that. But did you know that he was Italian?

Long before we knew him as Saint Anselm, he was Anselmo to his mom and dad. I've added him to my little litany of saints, the one I pray at the conclusion of my Rosary. You know how we pray, Most sacred heart of Jesus...have mercy on us, Immaculate Heart Mary, pray for us, Saint Joseph pray for us?

Well, after Saint Joseph, I let loose with Saint Therese of Lisieux, and then I keep going for a while, not too long, but long enough to have gotten my sister's attention when I started praying this way twenty years ago. At first she was surprised when my little litany continued on and on and on. She would give me this look that seemed to say, What are you doing? But she went along with me, responding, pray for us, at first, almost as if she were saying, whatever. But she is used to it now and she wholeheartedly joins her pray for us to mine with great heart.

So Saint Anselm has joined the ranks, so to speak, of my helpers. If he thought straightening out England was hard, he's got another thing coming! Me!

Now I'm not being vague with Saint Anselm when it comes to how I want to improve. I've given him a template to work with, one created by another saint who, by the way, isn't in my litany: Saint Francis of Assisi.

(Parenthetically, when I was eleven years old and still living in the Holy Land (some call it New York) I was determined to announce after completing sixth grade that year that I wanted to

