



## Memorial of St Anthony of Padua, priest and doctor of the Church



**Date:** Friday, June 13, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

**First Reading:** 2 Corinthians 4:7–15

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 116:10–11, 15–18 | **Response:** Psalm 116:17a

**Gospel Acclamation:** Philippians 2:15d, 16a

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 5:27–32

**Preached at:** the Chapel of the Most Holy Name, Kolvenbach House in the Archdiocese of Lusaka, Zambia.

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**W**e carry a treasure in jars of clay. That’s how Saint Paul describes us—fragile, chipped, easily broken. And yet, entrusted with the very glory of God. Not in spite of our weakness, but through it. The cracks are not covered up. They are the very places where grace gets in, and where glory shines out.

You might think of Kintsugi, the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery with gold. The scars are not hidden; they’re honoured. The broken bowl is not thrown away—it becomes more beautiful than before. And that is us. Our failures, our griefs, our sins—these are not disqualifications. They are invitations. When we bring them to God, He fills them with mercy, with gold.

Paul speaks plainly: “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair.” He does not deny the suffering. He proclaims the presence of God within it.

And then comes Jesus, in the Gospel. He takes the commandment—“You shall not commit adultery”—and goes deeper, into the heart, into the hidden spaces of our minds and desires. He is not adding weight to our shame. He is offering freedom. Freedom from the hidden habits that corrode relationships. Freedom from looking at others as objects. Freedom to see every person—especially the vulnerable—not as a means to our ends, but as a mystery to be revered.

This is a Gospel not of suspicion, but of dignity. Christ calls us to an interior integrity, where our eyes, our hearts, and our hands align in love. He wants to heal us not only from what we’ve done, but from the distortions of desire that diminish others—and diminish us.

Saint Anthony of Padua, whom we remember today, lived this beautifully. A man of great learning, yes—but he became great not through intellect alone, but through compassion. He walked with the poor. He spoke with warmth, not arrogance. His greatness was not in his strength, but in the way God’s grace shone through his humility.

We may not be called to greatness in the eyes of the world. But we are called to greatness in mercy. When you forgive a sibling who has hurt you... when you speak truth at work even though it’s costly... when you love your spouse through difficulty, not perfection... when you visit the sick neighbour or stay with the crying child... you are letting the gold of Christ’s compassion shine through your own cracks.

So I urge you: do not hide your wounds. Bring them to the Lord. Let Him make of them a vessel—not perfect, but beautiful. And then, use that vessel. Pour out love. Pour out service. Pour out justice, especially for those whose dignity is denied or dismissed.

Because it is not in flawless strength that the world will see God. It is in mercy shown by the wounded, in love lived by the weak, in light shining through cracked clay.

And so we pray: Lord, take our brokenness, and fill it with Yourself.

Here are three questions to bring to your own prayer:

- What thoughts or desires is Jesus inviting me to bring into the light—not to shame me, but to free me for deeper love?
- Where have I experienced God’s grace shining through my weakness, and how can I share that grace with others?
- This week, who needs my compassion—not from a place of strength, but from a place of shared humanity and mercy?

Amen.

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