

ST. PAUL THE FIRST HERMIT

BIOGRAPHY

Paul, originator and master of the eremitic life, was born in the lower Thebaid. When the Persecution of Decius and Valerian was raging, he withdrew to a cave in the desert. Here, with a palm tree providing him with both food and clothing; he lived a most holy life. He had reached the age of a hundred and thirteen years when Anthony, then ninety years old came to visit him. Paul received him warmly. After they had spent the night in conversing about holy things, Paul said that his death was at hand and asked Anthony to go and get the cloak given him by Athanasius to use as a winding sheet. Anthony went to do this and, as he was on his way back he saw Paul's soul going up to heaven. His body he found in his cell, still in the attitude of prayer. When he had chanted the customary hymns, he wrapped the body in the cloak, but had nothing to dig a grave with. Thereupon two lions came from deep in the desert and hollowed out a place large enough to hold a men's body. Anthony buried the body arranged the grave and went away taking with him the tunic which Paul had woven for himself from palm-leaves. Thereafter he always wore this cloak on the great feasts of Easter and Pentecost.

FEAST DAY:
15 JANUARY



COLLECT

O God, Who, year by year, dost gladden us by the solemn Feast day of Thy blessed Confessor Paul, mercifully grant unto all that keep his Birthday, grace to imitate his godly example. **T**hrough Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who Liveth and Reigneth with Thee, in the Unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen

PRAYER TO ST. PAUL

Holy Hermit, St. Paul, thou didst glorify Christ by thy secret life in solemn silence, constant fasting and unceasing prayer. For thy ardent faith and love, thou art called the Master of the Eremitic Life, and wast the friend of St. Antony, the Father of all Monks. Help us to follow thy example: to fast in penance for our sins, to pray for the things of Heaven and to love the Lord with all our heart. Amen