



FACT OF
FAITH

St. Anthony, Finder of Lost Articles

by Larry Rice

The Church has a patron saint for nearly every person, group of people, situation, and occupation. These heavenly friends benefit us with their prayers of intercession, speaking, as it were, to God on our behalf.

If you ask nearly any Catholic whose intercession they seek when something has gone missing, nearly all will tell you it's St. Anthony who is responsible for the recovery of car keys and eyeglasses by the millions. But how did Anthony become the patron saint of lost articles?

Legend has it that Anthony was the novice master at a friary in Montpellier, France. One of his charges was a somewhat discontented novice named Louis. When he wasn't at prayer or teaching the novices, Anthony devoted his time to writing a book of the psalms—he had worked on it for years. One afternoon, the manuscript vanished, and Anthony searched carefully to no avail. Having no



other recourse, he prayed for its recovery.

At the same time, it seems that Br. Louis, the discontented novice, had disappeared as well and had been seen leaving with a somewhat manuscript-sized parcel. Anthony, believing that Louis was much more valuable than his manuscript, prayed that

Louis would find his true path in life.

The legend says that the former Br. Louis, while on his way to sell the manuscript as his own, was moved to return the stolen book and turn his life around. So, Louis went back to the friary and returned the stolen manuscript. St. Anthony became his mentor, and from that time forward Anthony's prayers were sought whenever something was lost.

It's a tradition that continues today. For centuries, when Catholics have lost something important—their car keys or their way in life, they've sought the prayers of St. Anthony.

Fr. Larry Rice is a former vocations director for the Paulist Fathers.