

Dear Parishioners, Friends, and Visitors to the Cathedral,

The man whom we celebrate on April 21st was described by Pope Benedict XVI as “a monk with an intense spiritual life, an excellent teacher of the young, a theologian with an extraordinary capacity for speculation, a wise man of governance and an intransigent defender of the Church’s freedom.” He is a Doctor of the Church and widely regarded as the best theological thinker of his day – Saint Anselm.

He was born around the year 1033, in northern Italy, to a noble family. His mother was a very pious woman who instilled the sentiments of faith and piety in her son. He was sent to study with the Benedictines for his schooling, and at the age of 15, he petitioned to enter the monastery, but was refused admittance, because of his father’s disapproval. Unable to enter the monastery, and having lost his mother, Anselm left home to escape his father’s mistreatment, and became somewhat tepid in his faith. He wandered Italy and France for about three years engaged in various studious pursuits, before finally coming across a Benedictine prior named Lanfranc. The prior recognized Anselm’s great intellectual gifts, and under his direction, the would-be Saint regained purpose and direction in his life. Anselm finally entered the monastery around 1060 and was ordained a priest. Three years later, he became prior of the monastery when Lanfranc became abbot. Eventually Anselm became abbot of his own monastery. He became renowned as a preacher and teacher of the faith, and wrote numerous theological works. In 1092, he was made Archbishop of Canterbury, against his wishes, and would find himself on numerous occasions at odds with the English crown over the governance of the Church and the administration of her lands. Anselm refused to yield, and was forced into exile until the death of the king, after which he was permitted to return to his diocese. He strongly opposed the slave trade by the English, and exhibited the most tender concern for the poor. Saint Anselm died in 1109, having striven to live his life by the motto: ‘Fides Quaerens Intellectum’ – ‘Faith Seeking Understanding.’

Among Anselm’s numerous intellectual accomplishments, perhaps what he is best known for is his ontological argument for the existence of God. Unlike other proofs that start from something experiential, and from that evidence, arrive at the existence of God (inductive), Anselm’s proof is a purely ratiocinative (deductive). His line of argumentation takes the form of a conversation with an atheist (who holds that the idea of God only exists in the mind, not in reality). Anselm begins by asking if he can understand the idea of God as “that than which nothing greater can be conceived.” Then he goes on to ask the atheist if he can also ‘conceive’ of the idea of God existing in both a person’s head and in reality (as believers do). Now the atheist has ‘conceived’ in his head the idea of God (as that than which nothing greater can be conceived) and the idea of God existing in one’s head and in reality. To which Anselm asks, which is greater - to exist only in one’s head, or, to exist in one’s head and in reality. The atheist replied - it is greater to exist in one’s head and in reality. Now the atheist is caught in the logical trap, because he has the idea of God in his head (as that than which nothing greater can be conceived), but at the same time, he has also ‘conceived’ the idea of God existing in one’s head and existing in reality, which he has posited is greater than the idea of God only existing in one’s head. There is now a logical contradiction – if God is defined as ‘that than which nothing greater can be conceived,’ but also in his head he has ‘conceived’ of something greater, namely, God existing in his head and in reality, it follows therefore, that the atheist’s premise that God only exists only in one’s mind must be false. And, if the premise that God only exists in one’s mind is false, then God exists in reality.

In essence, Anselm’s argument holds that once we understand the idea of God, we have to posit the existence of God in reality. Certainly his line of thinking is a lot to wrap one’s mind around, and if it seems a bit difficult to understand, that’s ok. It just goes to show that Saint Anselm was one of the great thinkers of the Church’s tradition, who put his gifts to work in God’s service.

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Movie Night: Risen



As we continue our celebration of the Easter Season, the Cathedral will host a Catholic Movie Night **this Sunday, April 15**, following the 5:30 pm Mass. Join your fellow parishioners in viewing this 2016 film in which a Roman Tribune in Judea is tasked to find the missing body of Jesus Christ, who rose from the dead. Bring your family! Bring a friend!

PIC Collection - This weekend, April 14/15, is the Personal Items Collection (PIC) for those who so desperately need our help. If you didn’t have time to shop, your monetary donation will go far to help those in need. To quote Mother Teresa, “Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” Please consider giving, as you are able.

What will a One Dollar donation allow the Social Action Ministry to purchase for the Homeless?

- Standard bar of soap or a razor or
- 1.5 oz. roll-on Deodorants or
- Personal size tubes of toothpaste or
- 4 toothbrushes

What will a two Dollar donation buy?

- A pair of socks for men or women or
- A pair of cotton briefs for women or
- A pair of boxer shorts for men

Golden Wedding Anniversary Mass



is Sunday, July 29, in the Cathedral, at 2:30 pm, for couples married in 1968. Those celebrating other significant anniversaries (55+), or who have missed a previous celebration are also welcome. Online registration is done through the home parish of the Jubilarians, and must be done by June 25.