The Life of Antony

I. As a young man, Antony provided Christians an example worthy of imitation
a. Even when a child, his character was exemplary
   i. He obeyed his mother and father
   ii. He was temperate in food
   iii. When his parents died, he cared for his household and his younger sister by himself at a young age
b. In reaction to hearing the Scriptures read, Antony gave away his possessions to the needy
c. He handed his sister over to the convent to be raised a sister of the church
d. Antony prayed and studied Scripture incessantly
e. He sought out the wisdom and counsel of his own elders

II. Antony’s story proves that the Devil is powerless against a God-fearing Christian
a. Satan needed to use a variety of different tactics since no single attack against Antony succeeded
   i. First he tried to make Antony long for his past life prior to entering the discipline
   ii. He also took the form of voluptuous women to try to tempt Antony into fornication
   iii. At one time, Satan took the form of a dark boy to discourage Antony with reports of Satan’s previous success-rate
b. When bribes of pleasure failed to stumble Antony, the Devil resorted to threats of pain
   i. Satan flogged Antony to near-death
   ii. Armies of demons, taking the forms of hideous beasts, tried to frighten Antony and physically tortured him

III. There are ways to repulse the Devil’s attacks according to Antony’s experience
a. Making the sign of the cross frightens demons
b. Prayer to God is effective in warding off demonic powers
   i. Antony taught that demons are cowards who become invisible at the sound of prayer and the sight of the cross
   ii. He taught further that prayer can teach us the difference between good and malevolent spirits
   iii. He testified that just the sound of Christ’s name made Satan disappear
   iv. Martinianus the military commander had a demon-possessed daughter whom Antony exorcised through prayer