

>Presenter's Page<

## Faith Development Mini Series Version 5

# The Saints

Thank you for taking the time and effort to assist brother knights and their families increase their holiness. Please plan a 90 minute – 2 hour session for members and their families to attend. You may want to have 2 sessions, one during the daytime and another during an evening, perhaps after a council meeting and then followed by a social.

Please make copies of the following pages for the number of people expected to attend and some extras; the presentation is designed for a group although it can be read individually.

Please review what The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us about the saints. Study your own patron saint if you haven't done so, or pick one as your model of charity, assured then of his or her intercession. Have a copy of The Catechism of the Catholic Church for yourself, encourage participants to bring their Catechism of the Catholic Church books to the presentation. Have books available to purchase, receive from you council, or participants can be asked to make a donation.

Please have a Holy Bible with you to read the related scripture passage during the presentation.

Outline of Presentation - - - Ask you council Chaplain to participate.

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- 1) Start with prayer to exemplify our daily activity asking God to cultivate his grace and his purpose through you, as did the saints - disciples who lived lives of exemplary fidelity to the Lord.
- 2) Read through the presentation clearly and with emphasis. On pages 1, 2 & 4 there are break times for reflection questions labeled **(QUESTION TIME)**.  
Allow approximately 5 -10 minutes for participants to write down their answer of the following questions; then ask for a few volunteers to share their answers.
  - Page 1: Where can we continue the work of salvation, accomplished by Christ for us?
  - Page 2: What makes us holy and pure, gives us renewed strength, hope and courage, and enables us to grow in our discipleship for Jesus?
  - Page 4: How can we honor the saints, who intercede on our behalf, in our own discipleship?
- 3) On page 3 in the Section Communion of Spiritual Goods, please read as a group.
- 4) Please end the presentation as a group with the Litany of the Saints (*See page 6*).
- 5) For home study, please offer the last 31 pages stapled separately for each saint, as handouts to the participants. These are among the most well known saints.

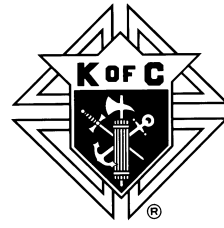
Respectfully submitted,

Karl Vandenberg Chairman  
1508 E. Lincoln Avenue  
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Feel free to write with questions, comments or suggestions of how we might improve upon this program to [karlvprincipal@netscape.net](mailto:karlvprincipal@netscape.net)

# Wisconsin State Knights of Columbus

## Faith Development Mini Series Version 5



## The Saints

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church 2013 (CCC: 2013)* teaches that “All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity.” All are called to holiness: “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

In order to reach this perfection the faithful should use the strength dealt out to them by Christ's gift, so that...doing the will of the Father in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. Thus the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is clearly shown in the history of the Church through the lives of so many saints. *“Lumen Gentium”*, Latin for “Light of the Nations 40 § 2

***Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. Matthew 16:24***

*CCC: 688* teach that The Church, a communion living in the faith of the apostles which she transmits, is the place where we know the Holy Spirit:

- in the Scriptures he inspired;
- in the Tradition, to which the Church Fathers are always timely witnesses;
- in the Church's Magisterium, which he assists;
- in the sacramental liturgy, through its words and symbols, in which the Holy Spirit puts us into communion with Christ;
- in prayer, wherein he intercedes for us;
- in the charisms and ministries by which the Church is built up;
- in the signs of apostolic and missionary life;
- in the witness of saints through whom he manifests his holiness and continues the work of salvation. ***(QUESTION TIME)***

### ***Summary of CCC: 2014 and CCC: 686***

The Church therefore is the all important faith community of which we human beings created in God's Image are designed to partake in growing our spirituality, towards an ever more intimate union with Christ. In the mystery of Christ through the sacraments and, in him, the mystery of the Holy Trinity, God calls us all to this intimate relationship with him, even if the special graces or extraordinary signs of this mystical life are granted only to some for the sake of displaying the completely free gift of his Holy Spirit given to all.

Through the grace of Christ the God Man, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is revealed and given in an earthly form, to be recognized and welcomed as a person. Christ, the firstborn and head of the new creation, through his human death and resurrection, fulfills God's Divine Plan of Salvation, developing for all of mankind by the outpouring of the Spirit: the Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

## A Cloud of witnesses

**CCC: 2683** teaches that the witnesses who have preceded us into God's Kingdom, especially those whom the Church recognizes as saints, share in the living tradition of prayer by the example of their lives, the transmission of their writings, and their prayer today. They contemplate God, praise him and constantly care for those whom they have left on earth. When they entered into the joy of their Master, they were "put in charge of many things." Their intercession is their most exalted service to God's plan. We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world.

**CCC: 2684** states in the communion of saints, many and varied *spiritualities* have been developed throughout the history of the churches. The personal charism - *having or showing a personal quality of leadership that arouse special popular loyalty or enthusiasm* - of some witnesses to God's love for men has been handed on, like "the spirit" of Elijah to Elisha and John the Baptist, so that their follower may have a share in this spirit. A distinct spirituality can also arise at the point of convergence – *the act or condition of meeting toward uniformity* – of liturgical and theological currents – *rites prescribed for public worship and thought about God and his relation to the world* – bearing witness to the integration – *to form into a whole: UNITE* - of the faith into a particular human environment and its history. The different schools of Christian spirituality share in the living tradition of prayer and are essential guides for the faithful. In their rich diversity they are refractions – *the bending of a ray when it passes slantwise from one medium into another, as when light passes from air into water* – of the one pure light of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit is truly the dwelling of the saints and the saints are for the Spirit a place where he dwells as in his own home, since they offer themselves as a dwelling place for God and are called his temple. **St. Basil, De Spiritu Sancto (Of the Holy Spirit), 26, 62: PG 32, 184**

### (QUESTION TIME)

From **CCC: 1717** we learn that the Beatitudes express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of Jesus' Passion and Resurrection; they proclaim the blessings and rewards already secured, however dimly, for Christ's disciples; they have begun in the lives of the Virgin Mary and all the saints.

From **CCC: 2030** it is in the Church, in communion with all the baptized, that the Christian fulfills his vocation. From the Church he receives the Word of God containing the teachings of "the law of Christ." From the Church he receives the grace of the sacraments that sustains him on the "way." From the Church he learns the *example of holiness* and recognizes its model and source in the all holy Virgin Mary; he discerns it in the authentic witness of those who live it; he discovers it in the spiritual tradition and long history of the saints who have gone before him and whom the liturgy celebrates in the rhythms of the sanctoral –*sacredness* - cycle.

**John Paul II** "True holiness does not mean a flight from the world; rather, it lies in the effort to incarnate the Gospel in everyday life, in the family, at school and at work, and in social and political involvement."

## The Communion of Saints

**CCC: 946 - 948** ask “What is the Church if not the assembly of all the saints?” The communion of saints is the Church. “Since all the faithful form one body, the good of each is communicated to the others... We must therefore believe that there exists a communion of goods in the Church. But the most important member is Christ, since he is the head... Therefore, the riches of Christ are communicated to all the members, through the sacraments.” “As this Church is governed by one and the same Spirit, all the goods she has received necessarily become a common fund.” The term “communion of saints” therefore has two closely linked meanings: communion “in holy things (*sancta*)” and “among holy persons (*sancti*).”

*Sancta sanctis!* (“God’s holy gifts for God’s holy people”) is proclaimed by the celebrant in most Eastern liturgies during the elevation of the holy Gifts before the distribution of communion. The faithful (*sancti*) are fed by Christ’s holy body and blood (*sancta*) to grow in the communion of the Holy Spirit (*koinonia*) and to communicate it to the world.

## Communion in Spiritual Goods

*(Read as a Group CCC 949 – CCC: 953 - note: scripture & other references listed need not be read as a group)*

**CCC: 949 Read as a Group starting here** > in the primitive community of Jerusalem, the disciples “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers.” *Acts 2: 42* \***Communion in the faith.** The faith of the faithful is the faith of the Church, received from the apostles. Faith is a treasure of life which is enriched by being shared.

**CCC: 950 Communion of the sacraments.** “The fruit of all the sacraments belongs to all the faithful. All the sacraments are sacred links uniting the faithful with one another and binding them to Jesus Christ, and above all Baptism, the gate by which we enter into the Church. The communion of saints must be understood as the communion of the sacraments . . . The name ‘communion’ can be applied to all of them, for they unite us to God . . . But this name is better suited to the Eucharist than to any other, because it is primarily the Eucharist that brings this communion about.” *Roman Catechism I, 10, 24*

**CCC: 951 Communion of charisms.** Within the communion of the Church, the Holy Spirit “distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank” for the building up of the Church. *LG 12 § 2* Now, “to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.” *1 Cor 12:7*

**CCC: 952 “They had everything in common.”** *Acts 4:32* “Everything the true Christian has is to be regarded as a good possessed in common with everyone else. All Christians should be ready and eager to come to the help of the needy . . . and of their neighbors in want.” *Roman Catechism I, 10, 27* A Christian is a steward of the Lord’s goods. *Cf. Luke 16:1, 3*

**CCC: 953 Communion in charity.** In the sanctorum communion, “None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.” *Rom 14:7*

“If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” *1 Cor 12:26-27* “Charity does not insist on its own way.” *1 Cor 13:5*; cf. *10:24* In this solidarity with all men, living or dead, which is founded on the communion of saints, the least of our acts done in charity redounds to the profit of all. Every sin harms this communion.

**CCC: 956** *The intercession of the saints.* “Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in heaven fix the whole Church more firmly in holiness...[T]hey do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, as they proffer the merits which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus. ... So by their fraternal concern is our weakness greatly helped.” *LG 49*; cf. *1 Tim 2:5*

Do not weep, for I shall be more useful to you after my death and I shall help you then more effectively than during my life. **St. Dominic, dying, to his brothers.**

I want to spend my heaven in doing good on earth.

St.

**Therese of Lisieux, *The Final Conversations*, tr. John Clarke (Washington: ICS, 1977), 102**

**CCC: 957** *Communion with the saints.* “It is not merely by the title of example that we cherish the memory of those in heaven; we seek, rather, that by this devotion to the exercise of fraternal charity the union of the whole Church in the Spirit may be strengthened. Exactly as Christian communion among our fellow pilgrims brings us closer to Christ, so our communion with the saints joins us to Christ, from whom as from its fountain and head issues all grace, and the life of the People of God itself” *LG 50*; cf. *Eph 4:1-6* :

We worship Christ as God’s Son; we love the martyrs as the Lord’s disciples and imitators, and right so because of their matchless devotion towards their king and master. May we also be their companions and fellow disciples! *Martyrium Polycarpi, 17: Apostolic Fathers II/3, 396*

### **(QUESTION TIME)**

**CCC: 828** By *canonizing* some of the faithful, i.e., by solemnly proclaiming that they practiced heroic virtue and lived in fidelity to God’s grace, the Church recognizes the power of the Spirit of holiness within her and sustains the hope of believers by proposing the saints to them as models and intercessors. Cf. *LG 40; 48-51* “The saints have always been the source and origin of renewal in the most difficult moments in the Church’s history.” **John Paul II, *CL (Christ’s faithful people) 16, 3*** Indeed, “holiness is the hidden source and infallible measure of her apostolic activity and missionary zeal.” *CL 17, 3*

### **How does one become a Saint?**

**Contrary to the common belief that there are 3 steps to becoming a Saint, the Catholic Church teaches that there are 4 steps to becoming a Saint. Many teachers of this matter omit the first step. Before a person can be considered for sainthood, he/she must have been dead for at least 5 years. (Pope John Paul II waived this requirement in Mother Teresa’s case.)**

First Step: When the subject arises that a person should be considered for Sainthood, a Bishop is placed in charge of the initial investigation of the person's life. If it is determined that the candidate is deemed

worthy of further consideration, the Vatican grants a "Nihil Obstat." This is a Latin phrase that means "nothing hinders." Henceforth, the candidate is called a "Servant of God."

Second Step: The Church Official, a Postulator, who coordinates the process and serves as an advocate, must prove that the candidate lived heroic virtues. This is achieved through the collection of documents and testimonies that are collected and presented to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. When a candidate is approved, he/she earns the title of "Venerable."

Third Step: To be beatified and recognized as a "Blessed," one miracle acquired through the candidate's intercession is required in addition to recognition of heroic virtue (or martyrdom in the case of a martyr).

Fourth Step: Canonization requires a second miracle after beatification, though a Pope may waive these requirements. (A miracle is not required prior to a martyr's beatification, but one is required before his/her canonization.) Once this second miracle has been received through the candidate's intercession, the Pope declares the person a "Saint."

**From CatholicDoors.Com** - <http://www.catholicdoors.com/fag/qu221.htm>

## THE CHRISTIAN NAME

*CCC: 2156* The sacrament of Baptism is conferred "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." In Baptism, the Lord's name sanctifies man, and the Christian receives his name in the Church. This can be the name of a saint; this is, of a disciple who has lived a life of exemplary fidelity to the Lord. The patron saint provides a model of charity; we are assured of his intercession. The "baptismal name" can also express a Christian mystery or Christian virtue. "Parents, sponsors, and the pastor are to see that a name is not given which is foreign to Christian sentiment."

## What is a patron saint?

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Patron saints are chosen as special protectors or guardians over areas of life. These areas can include occupations, illnesses, churches, countries, and causes -- anything that is important to us. The earliest records show that people and churches were named after apostles and martyrs as early as the fourth century.

Recently, the popes have named patron saints but patrons can be chosen by other individuals or groups as well. Patron saints are often chosen today because an interest, talent, or event in their lives overlaps with the special area. Angels can also be named as patron saints. A patron saint can help us when we follow the example of that saint's life and when we ask for that saint's intercessory prayers to God. For example, Francis of Assisi loved nature and so he is patron of ecologists. Francis de Sales was a writer and so he is patron of journalists and writers. Clare of Assisi was named patron of television because one Christmas when she was too ill to leave her bed

she saw and heard Christmas Mass -- even though it was taking place miles away.

**From Catholic Online** - <http://www.catholic.org/saints/patron.php>

## THE LITANY OF THE SAINTS

The Litany of the Saints is one of the oldest prayers in continuous use in the Catholic Church. Forms of it were used in the East as early as the third century and the litany as we know it today was largely in place by the time of Pope St. Gregory the Great (540-604).

Most commonly recited on [All Saints Day](#), the Litany of the Saints is an excellent prayer for use throughout the year, especially at those times during which we need special guidance or graces. Like all litanies, it is designed to be recited communally, but it can be prayed alone.

When recited in a group, one person should lead, and everyone else should make the italicized responses. Each response should be recited at the end of each line, until a new response is indicated.

### **Litany of the Saints**

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, hear us. Christ, graciously hear us.

God, the Father of heaven, *have mercy on us.*  
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,  
God the Holy Ghost,  
Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Mary, *pray for us.*  
Holy Mother of God,  
Holy Virgin of virgins,  
Saint Michael,  
Saint Gabriel,  
Saint Raphael,  
All ye holy angels and archangels,  
All ye holy orders of blessed spirits,  
Saint John the Baptist,  
Saint Joseph,

All ye holy patriarchs and prophets,  
Saint Peter,  
Saint Paul,  
Saint Andrew,  
Saint James,  
Saint John,  
Saint Thomas,  
Saint James,  
Saint Philip,  
Saint Bartholomew,  
Saint Matthew,  
Saint Simon,  
Saint Thaddeus,  
Saint Matthias,  
Saint Barnabas,  
Saint Luke,  
Saint Mark,  
All ye holy apostles and evangelists,  
All ye holy disciples of the Lord,  
All ye holy innocents,  
Saint Stephen,  
Saint Lawrence,  
Saint Vincent,  
Saints Fabian and Sebastian,  
Saints John and Paul,  
Saints Cosmos and Damian,  
Saints Gervase and Protase,  
All ye holy martyrs,  
Saint Sylvester,  
Saint Gregory,  
Saint Ambrose,  
Saint Augustine,  
Saint Jerome,  
Saint Martin,  
Saint Nicholas,  
All ye holy bishops and confessors,  
All ye holy doctors,  
Saint Anthony,  
Saint Benedict,  
Saint Bernard,  
Saint Dominic,  
Saint Francis,

All ye holy priests and Levites,  
All ye holy monks and hermits,  
Saint Mary Magdalene,  
Saint Agatha,  
Saint Lucy,  
Saint Agnes,  
Saint Cecilia,  
Saint Catherine,  
Saint Anastasia,  
Saint Clare,  
All ye holy virgins and widows, *pray for us.*  
All ye holy men and women, saints of God, *make intercession for us.*

Be merciful, *spare us, O Lord.*  
Be merciful, *graciously hear us, O Lord.*

From all evil, *O Lord deliver us.*  
From all sin,  
From Thy wrath,  
From sudden and un-provided death,  
From the snares of the devil,  
From anger, and hatred, and all ill-will,  
From the spirit of fornication,  
From the scourge of earthquake,  
From plague, famine, and war,  
From lightning and tempest,  
From everlasting death,  
Through the mystery of Thy holy Incarnation,  
Through Thy coming,  
Through Thy birth,  
Through Thy baptism and holy fasting,  
Through the Institution of the Most Blessed Sacrament,  
Through Thy cross and passion,  
Through Thy death and burial,  
Through Thy holy resurrection,  
Through Thine admirable Ascension,  
Through the coming of the Holy Ghost the Paraclete,  
In the day of judgment, *O Lord deliver us.*

We sinners, *we beseech Thee, hear us.*  
That Thou wouldst spare us,  
That Thou wouldst pardon us,

That Thou wouldst bring us to true penance,  
That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to govern and preserve Thy holy Church,  
That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to preserve our Apostolic Prelate and all orders of  
the Church in holy religion,  
That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to humble the enemies of holy Church,  
That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to give peace and true concord to Christian kings  
and princes,  
That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to bring back to the unity of the Church all those  
who have strayed away, and lead to the light of the Gospel all unbelievers,

That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to confirm and preserve us in Thy holy service,  
That Thou wouldst lift up our minds to heavenly desires,  
That Thou wouldst render eternal blessings to all our benefactors,  
That Thou wouldst deliver our souls, and the souls of our brethren, relatives, and  
benefactors from eternal damnation,  
That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to give and preserve the fruits of the earth,  
That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to grant eternal rest to all the faithful departed,  
That Thou wouldst vouchsafe graciously to hear us,  
Son of God, *we beseech Thee, hear us.*

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Lord.*  
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *graciously hear us, O Lord.*  
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us.*

*Let us pray.*

Almighty, everlasting God, who hast dominion over both the living and the dead  
and art merciful to all who, as Thou foreknowest, will be Thine by faith and works;  
we humbly beseech Thee that they for whom we intend to pour forth our prayers,  
whether this present world still doth detain them in the flesh or the world to come  
hath already received them stripped of their mortal bodies, may, by the grace of  
Thy fatherly love and through the intercession of all the saints, obtain the  
remission of all their sins. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who with Thee  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth God, world without end. Amen.

**Thank you for your attention and participation.**

**For your home study, we are offering handouts about some of  
among the most well known saints.**

## St. Peter – Feast Day June 29

Patronage: against feet problems, against fever, against foot problems, against frenzy, bakers, bridge builders, butchers, clock makers cobblers, fishermen, harvesters, locksmiths, longevity, masons, net makers, papacy, popes, ship builders, shipwrights, shoemakers, stone masons, Universal Church, watch makers

Simon Peter or Cephas, the first pope, Prince of the Apostles and founder with St. Paul of the see of Rome.

Peter was a native of Bethsaida, near Lake Tiberias, the son of John, and worked, like his brother St. Andrew, as a fisherman on Lake Genesareth. Andrew introduced Peter to Jesus, and [Christ](#) called Peter to become a disciple. In [Luke](#) is recounted the story that Peter caught so large an amount of fish that he fell down before the feet of [Jesus](#) and was told by the Lord, “Do not be afraid; from now on you [will](#) be catching men”. [Jesus](#) also gave Simon a new name: Cephas, or the rock. Becoming a [disciple](#) of Jesus, Peter acknowledged him as “... the Messiah, the son of the living God”. [Christ](#) responded by saying: “... you are Peter and upon this rock I [will](#) build my church.... He added: “I [will](#) give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven”. Peter was always listed as the first of the [Apostles](#) in all of the [New Testament](#) accounts and was a member of the inner circle of Jesus, with [James](#) and John. He is recorded more than any other disciple, and was at Jesus’ side at the Transfiguration, the raising of Jairus’ daughter, and the Agony of the Garden of Gethsemane. He helped organize the Last Supper and played a major role in the events of the Passion. When the Master was arrested, he cut off the [right](#) ear of a slave of the high [priest Malchus](#) and then denied [Christ](#) three times as the [Lord](#) predicted. Peter then “went out and began to weep bitterly”. After the Resurrection, Peter went to the [tomb](#) with the “other disciple” after being told of the event by the women. The first appearance of the Risen [Christ](#) was before Peter, ahead of the other disciples, and when the [Lord](#) came before the disciples at Tiberias, he gave to Peter the famous command to “Feed my lambs.... Tend my sheep.... Feed my sheep”. In the [time](#) immediately after the Ascension, Peter stood as the unquestionable head of the Apostles, his position made evident in the Acts. He appointed the replacement of Judas Iscariot; he spoke first to the crowds that had assembled after the descent of the [Holy Spirit](#) at Pentecost; he was the first [Apostle](#) to perform miracles in the name of the Lord; and he rendered judgment upon the deceitful Ananias and Sapphira. Peter was instrumental in bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles. He baptized the Roman [pagan](#) Cornelius, and at the Council of [Jerusalem](#) he gave his

support to preaching to Gentiles, thereby permitting the new Church to become universal. Imprisoned by King [Herod](#) Agrippa, he was aided in an escape by an angel. He then resumed his apostolate in [Jerusalem](#) and his missionary efforts included travels to such cities of the [pagan](#) world as Antioch, Corinth, and eventually Rome. He made reference to the Eternal City in his first Epistle by noting that he writes from Babylon. It is certain that Peter died in [Rome](#) and that his martyrdom came during the reign of Emperor Nero, probably in 64. Testimony of his martyrdom is extensive, including Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, St. Clement I of Rome, St. Ignatius, and St. Irenaeus. According to rich tradition, Peter was crucified on the Vatican Hill upside down because he declared himself unworthy to die in the same manner as the Lord. He was then buried on Vatican Hill, and excavations under St. Peter's [Basilica](#) have unearthed his probable tomb, and his [relics](#) are now enshrined under the [high altar](#) of St. Peter's. From the earliest days of the Church, Peter was recognized as the Prince of the [Apostles](#) and the first Supreme Pontiff; his see, Rome, has thus enjoyed the position of [primacy](#) over the entire [Catholic](#) Church. While Peter's chief [feast day](#) is June 29, he is also honored on February 22 and November 18. In liturgical art, he is depicted as an elderly [man](#) holding a key and a book. His symbols include an inverted cross, a boat, and the cock.

**From Catholic Online** - [http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=5358](http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=5358)

Out of the whole world one man, Peter, is chosen to preside at the of all nations and to be set over all the apostles and all the fathers of the church. Though there are in God's people many bishops and many shepherds, Peter is thus appointed to rule in his own person those whom Christ also rules as the original ruler. Beloved, how great and wonderful is this sharing in his power that God in his goodness has given to this man. Whatever Christ has willed to be shared in common by Peter and the other leaders of the Church, it is only through Peter that he has given to others what he has not refused to bestow on them. Jesus said: "Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." On this strong foundation, he says, I will build an everlasting temple. The great height of my Church, which is to penetrate the heavens, shall rise on the firm foundation of this faith. Blessed Peter is therefore told: "To you I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven. Whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven." - *From a sermon by [Pope Saint Leo the Great](#)*

*From Saints.SQPN.com – notes about your extended family in heaven*

## St. Stephen - Feast Day December 26

Patronage: against headaches, casket makers, coffin makers, deacons, horses, masons, stone masons

St. Stephen is the first Christian martyr. In the Acts of the Apostles, written by Saint Luke, the Evangelist, his faith and martyrdom is described.

In the days after the Ascension and Pentecost, the numbers of disciples grew so large that the apostles had no time to concentrate on prayer and the ministry of the Word. So they assembled the community and told them to choose seven men to be deacons. These deacons were to oversee the distribution of alms, food and property, and some of the spiritual needs of the community. The Apostles ordained the deacons by first praying over them and then by laying hands on their heads. Saint Stephen was one of the deacons chosen. He was already a 'man filled with grace and power, who worked great wonders and signs among the people.' (Acts 6:8)

Of course, those who had conspired against Jesus and saw Him as a threat to the Jewish faith were still in Jerusalem. To their dismay, crucifying Jesus hadn't stopped His teaching. The Apostles and the deacons continued meeting in the temple and on street corners, teaching the Gospel. Many people, including priests joined the Christians. A group called the Libertines, or the Synagogue of Roman Freemen, tried to argue with Saint Stephen. But when they could not win any debates with him, they found false witnesses to accuse him of blasphemy to the Sanhedrin.

At Saint Stephen's trial, he was given the opportunity to answer the charges laid against him. At this point, he could have apologized, told the court that he was wrong and promised to never talk about Jesus again. Instead, he delivered a powerful homily, and witness of his faith. He showed those assembled that although Moses foretold a new law and a Messiah, and that Solomon had built the Temple, both were temporary and were supposed to fall in order that God might introduce more perfect institutions. This had been fulfilled by the coming of the Messiah.

He accused them of persecuting and murdering prophets who foretold the Christ and finally of betraying and murdering Him in person.

Finally, turning his eyes upwards, he saw the Heavens open and his Savior, Jesus Christ ready to protect, receive and crown his servant, Stephen. Joyfully, he informed the crowd of this vision. This enraged both the Sanhedrin and the crowd so much, that they abandoned the procedures of the court and the sentencing power of the Roman governor and dragged Stephen out of the city. 'Piling their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul' they began stoning Saint Stephen. He died crying out to the Lord "Receive my spirit." and "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Saul later became Saint Paul, a great evangelist for the Church.

From Domestic-Church.Com - <http://www.domestic-church.com/CONTENT.DCC/19971201/SAINTS/STSTEVEN.HTM>

At that time, as the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, "It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." The proposal was acceptable to the whole community, so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the [Holy Spirit](#)...

Now Stephen, filled with grace and power, was working great wonders and signs among the people. Certain members of the so-called Synagogue of Freedmen, Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and people from Cilicia and Asia, came forward and debated with Stephen, but they could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke. Then they instigated some men to say, "We have heard him speaking blasphemous words against Moses and God." They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes, accosted him, seized him, and brought him before the [Sanhedrin](#).

They presented false witnesses who testified, "This man never stops saying things against (this) holy place and the law; for we have heard him claim that this Jesus, the Nazorean, will destroy this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us."

All those who sat in the [Sanhedrin](#) looked intently at him and saw that his face was like the face of an angel. *Stephen preaches to the [Sanhedrin](#), concluding:* "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always oppose the [Holy Spirit](#); you are just like your ancestors. Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They put to death those who foretold the coming of the righteous one,

whose betrayers and murderers you have now become. You received the law as transmitted by angels, but you did not observe it.”

When they heard this, they were infuriated, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, filled with the [Holy Spirit](#), looked up intently to heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

But they cried out in a loud voice, covered their ears, and rushed upon him together. They threw him out of the city, and began to stone him. The witnesses laid down their [cloaks](#) at the feet of a young man named Saul. As they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them”; and when he said this, he fell asleep. - *Acts 6:1-15, 7:51-60*

Yesterday we celebrated the birth in time of our eternal King. Today we celebrate the triumphant suffering of his soldier. Yesterday our king, clothed in his robe of flesh, left his place in the virgin’s womb and graciously visited the world. Today his soldier leaves the tabernacle of his body and goes triumphantly to heaven.

Our king, despite his exalted majesty, came in humility for our sake; yet he did not come empty-handed. He gave of his bounty, yet without any loss to himself. In a marvelous way he changed into wealth the poverty of his faithful followers while remaining in full possession of his own inexhaustible riches. And so the love that brought Christ from heaven to earth raised Stephen from earth to heaven; shown first in the king, it later shone forth in his soldier. His love of God kept him from yielding to the ferocious mob; his love for his neighbor made him pray for those who were stoning him. Love inspired him to reprove those who erred, to make them amend; love led him to pray for those who stoned him, to save them from punishment.

Love, indeed, is the source of all good things; it is an impregnable defense, and the way that leads to heaven. He who walks in love can neither go astray nor be afraid: love guides him, protects him, and brings him to his journey’s end.

My brothers, Christ made love the stairway that would enable all [Christians](#) to climb to heaven. Hold fast to it, therefore, in all sincerity, give one another practical proof of it, and by your progress in it, make your ascent together. *From a sermon by [Saint Fulgentius of Ruspe](#)*

*[From Saints.SQPN.com – notes about your extended family in heaven](#)*

## Mary, Mother of God – Feast Day January 1

Patronage: fish dealers, fishmongers, human race, bikers, motorcyclists, ribbon makers, tapestry workers, tapsters, bicycle riders, bicyclists, cyclists, air crews, aircraft pilots, aviators, flyers, builders, construction workers, childbirth, cloth workers, coffee house keepers, coffee house owners, cooks, coopers, distillers, drapers, fishermen, goldsmiths, boatmen, mariners, sailors, watermen, navigators, needle makers, news dealers, nuns, vocations, Oblate, pin makers, potters, against bodily ills, against illness, against sickness, sick people, silk workers, silversmiths, travelers, upholsterers, virgins, yachtsmen

Mary's divine motherhood broadens the Christmas spotlight. Mary has an important role to play in the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. She consents to God's invitation conveyed by the angel (Luke 1:26-38). Elizabeth proclaims: "Most blessed are you among women and blessed is the *fruit of your womb*. And how does this happen to me that *the mother of my Lord* should come to me?" (Luke 1:42-43, emphasis added). Mary's role as mother of God places her in a unique position in God's redemptive plan.

Without naming Mary, Paul asserts that "God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Galatians 4:4). Paul's further statement that "God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out 'Abba, Father!'" helps us realize that Mary is mother to all the brothers and sisters of Jesus.

Some theologians also insist that Mary's motherhood of Jesus is an important element in God's creative plan. God's "first" thought in creating was Jesus. Jesus, the incarnate Word, is the one who could give God perfect love and worship on behalf of all creation. As Jesus was "first" in God's mind, Mary was "second" insofar as she was chosen from all eternity to be his mother.

The precise title "Mother of God" goes back at least to the third or fourth century. In the Greek form *Theotokos* (God-bearer), it became the touchstone of the Church's teaching about the Incarnation. The Council of Ephesus in 431 insisted that the holy Fathers were right in calling the holy virgin *Theotokos*. At the end of this particular session, crowds of people marched through the street shouting: "Praised be the *Theotokos!*" The tradition reaches to our own day. In its chapter on Mary's role in the Church, Vatican II's *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* calls Mary "Mother of God" 12 times.

**From Catholic Online** - <http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/Saints/Saint.aspx?id=1247>

### **Prayer for the Immaculate Queen of Peace**

Most holy and immaculate Virgin, Mother of Jesus and our loving Mother, being his Mother, you shared in his universal kingship. The prophets and angels proclaimed him King of peace. With loving fervor in our hearts we salute and honor you as Queen of peace. We pray that your intercession may protect us and all people from hatred and discord, and direct our hearts into the ways of peace and justice which your Son taught and exemplified. We ask your maternal care for our Holy Father who works to reconcile the nations in peace. We seek your guidance for our President and other leaders as they strive for world peace. Glorious Queen of peace, grant us peace in our hearts, harmony in our families and concord throughout the world. Immaculate Mother, as patroness of our beloved country, watch over us and protect us with your motherly love. Amen.

## St. Joseph the Worker – Feast Day March 19

Patronage: against doubt, against hesitation, bursars, cabinetmakers, carpenters, Catholic Church, civil engineers, confectioners, craftsmen, dying people, emigrants, expectant mothers, families, fathers, happy death, holy death, house hunters, immigrants, interior souls, laborers, married people, people in doubt, people who fight communism, pioneers, pregnant women, protection of the Church, social justice, travelers, unborn children, Universal Church, Vatican II, wheelwrights, workers, working people

Everything we know about the husband of [Mary](#) and the foster father of [Jesus](#) comes from [Scripture](#) and that has seemed too little for those who made up legends about him.

We know he was a carpenter, a working man, for the skeptical Nazarenes ask about Jesus, "Is this not the carpenter's son?" (Matthew 13:55). He wasn't rich for when he took [Jesus](#) to the [Temple](#) to be circumcised and [Mary](#) to be purified he offered the [sacrifice](#) of two turtledoves or a pair of pigeons, allowed only for those who could not afford a lamb (Luke 2:24). Despite his humble work and means, [Joseph](#) came from a royal lineage. [Luke](#) and [Matthew](#) disagree some about the details of Joseph's genealogy but they both [mark](#) his descent from David, the greatest king of Israel (Matthew 1:1-16 and [Luke](#) 3:23-38). Indeed the [angel](#) who first tells [Joseph](#) about [Jesus](#) greets him as "son of David," a royal title used also for Jesus.

We know [Joseph](#) was a compassionate, caring man. When he discovered [Mary](#) was pregnant after they had been betrothed, he knew the child was not his but was as yet unaware that she was carrying the Son of God. He planned to divorce [Mary](#) according to the [law](#) but he was concerned for her suffering and safety. He knew that women accused to [adultery](#) could be stoned to death, so he decided to divorce her quietly and not expose her to shame or cruelty (Matthew 1:19-25).

We know [Joseph](#) was [man](#) of faith, obedient to whatever [God](#) asked of him without knowing the outcome. When the [angel](#) came to [Joseph](#) in a dream and told him the [truth](#) about the child [Mary](#) was carrying, [Joseph](#) immediately and without question or concern for gossip, took [Mary](#) as his wife. When the [angel](#) came again to tell him that his [family](#) was in danger, he immediately left everything he owned, all his [family](#) and friends, and fled to a strange country with his young wife and the baby. He waited in [Egypt](#) without question until the [angel](#) told him it was safe to go back (Matthew 2:13-23).

We know [Joseph](#) loved Jesus. His one concern was for the safety of this child entrusted to him. Not only did he leave his home to protect Jesus, but upon his return settled in the obscure town of [Nazareth](#) out of fear for his life. When [Jesus](#) stayed in the [Temple](#) we are told [Joseph](#) (along with Mary) searched with great anxiety for three days for him (Luke 2:48). We also

know that Joseph treated Jesus as his own son for ever and over the people of Nazareth say of Jesus, "Is this not the son of Joseph?" (Luke 4:22)

We know Joseph respected God. He followed God's commands in handling the situation with Mary and going to Jerusalem to have Jesus circumcised and Mary purified after Jesus' birth. We are told that he took his family to Jerusalem every year for Passover, something that could not have been easy for a working man.

Since Joseph does not appear in Jesus' public life, at his death, or resurrection, many historians believe Joseph probably had died before Jesus entered public ministry.

Joseph is the patron of the dying because, assuming he died before Jesus' public life, he died with Jesus and Mary close to him, the way we all would like to leave this earth.

Joseph is also patron of the universal Church, fathers, carpenters, and social justice.

We celebrate two feast days for Joseph: March 19 for Joseph the Husband of Mary and May 1 for Joseph the Worker.

There is much we wish we could know about Joseph -- where and when he was born, how he spent his days, when and how he died. But Scripture has left us with the most important knowledge: who he was -- "a righteous man" (Matthew 1:18).

In His Footsteps:

Joseph was foster father to Jesus. There are many children separated from families and parents who need foster parents. Please consider contacting your local Catholic Charities or Division of Family Services about becoming a foster parent.

Prayer:

Saint Joseph, patron of the universal Church, watch over the Church as carefully as you watched over Jesus, help protect it and guide it as you did with your adopted son. Amen

**From Catholic Online** - [http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=4](http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=4)

A shrine is described as a place where something sacred or historical is housed. The National Shrine of Saint Joseph in De Pere, Wisconsin is the headquarters of the Archconfraternity of Saint Joseph and home to the Crowned Statue of Joseph and the Child Jesus. It was recognized by Pope Leo XIII as the National Shrine of Saint Joseph in 1892.

The National Shrine of Saint Joseph is located at Norbertine Fathers Saint Norbert Abbey, 1016 N. Broadway, De Pere, WI 54115. (920) 337-4307

## ***St. Joseph the Worker***

### ***Readings:***

He was chosen by the eternal Father as the trustworthy guardian and protector of his greatest treasures, namely, his divine Son and Mary, Joseph's wife. He carried out this vocation with complete fidelity until at last God called him, saying 'Good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.' *from a sermon by [Saint Bernardine of Siena](#)*

There is a general rule concerning all special graces granted to any human being. Whenever the divine favor chooses someone to receive a special grace, or to accept a lofty vocation, God adorns the person chosen with all the gifts of the Spirit needed to fulfill the task at hand. This general rule is especially verified in the case of Saint Joseph, the foster-father of our Lord, and the husband of the Queen of our world, enthroned above the angels. He was chosen by the eternal Father as the trustworthy guardian and protector of his greatest treasures, namely, his divine Son and Mary, Joseph's wife. He carried out this vocation with complete fidelity until at last God called him, saying "Good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord." Remember us, Saint Joseph, and plead for us to your foster child. Ask your most holy bride, the Virgin Mary, to look kindly upon us, since she is the mother of him who with the Father and the [Holy Spirit](#) lives and reigns eternally. Amen. - *From a sermon by [Saint Bernardine of Siena](#)*

What emanates from the figure of [Saint Joseph](#) is faith. Joseph of [Nazareth](#) is a "just man" because he totally "lives by faith." He is holy because his faith is truly heroic. Sacred Scripture says little of him. **It does not record even one word spoken by Joseph**, the [carpenter](#) of [Nazareth](#). And yet, even without words, he shows the depth of his faith, his greatness. [Saint Joseph](#) is a man of great spirit. He is great in faith, not because he speaks his own words, but above all because he listens to the words of the Living God. He listens in silence. And his heart ceaselessly perseveres in the readiness to accept the Truth contained in the word of the Living God. We see how the word of the Living God penetrates deeply into the soul of that man, that just man. And we, do we know how to listen to the word of God? Do we know how to absorb it into the depths of our human personalities? Do we open our conscience in the presence of this word? [Pope John Paul II](#) *from Daily Meditations*

*[From Saints.SQPN.com - notes about your extended family in heaven](#)*

# PRAYERS TO SAINT JOSEPH

## **Novena to Saint Joseph**

O Glorious Saint Joseph, faithful follower of Jesus Christ, to you do we raise our hearts and hands, to implore your powerful intercession in obtaining from the Heart of Jesus all the helps and graces necessary for our spiritual and temporal welfare, particularly the grace of a happy death, and the special favor we now implore.

(Mention your petition.)

O Glorious Saint Joseph, through the love you had for Jesus and for the glory of His Name, hear our prayers and obtain our petitions. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist us in our need.

Amen.

## **Memorare of Saint Joseph**

Remember, O most illustrious Patriarch Saint Joseph, never has it been heard that anyone who asked for your protection or sought your intercession was left unaided. In this confidence, I come before you, my loving protector, chaste Spouse of Mary; foster father of the Savior and dispenser of the treasures of His Sacred Heart. Despise not my earnest prayer but graciously hear and obtain my petition.

(Name your request.)

O God, Who by Your providence chose Blessed Joseph for the spouse of Your Most Holy Mother, grant, I ask, that he whom we venerate as our protector on earth may be our intercessor in Heaven.

Amen.

## **Prayer for Special Favor**

O Blessed Saint Joseph, tenderhearted father, faithful guardian of Jesus, chaste spouse of the Mother of God, we pray that you obtain for us from God, the favor we ask.

Do not forget the sorrows of those who suffer, those who pray, those who weep. By your prayers and those of your most holy spouse, may God hear and answer us.

Saint Joseph Pray For Us.

Amen.

St. Dominic of the Holy Rosary – Feast Day June 1

## Saint Dominic and the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary



*"God has never,"* said St. Dominic, *"refused me what I have asked"* and he has left us the Rosary, that we may learn, with Mary's help, to pray easily and simply in the same Holy Faith.

It was only in the year 1214 that the Church received the Rosary in its present form and according to the method we use today.

It was given to the Church by St. Dominic, who had received it from the Blessed Virgin as a means of *converting the Albigensians and other sinners*. Saint Dominic, seeing that the gravity of people's sins was hindering the conversion of the Albigensians, withdrew into a forest near Toulouse, where *he prayed continuously for three days and three nights*.

During this time he did nothing but *weep and do harsh penances* in order to appease the anger of God. He used his discipline so much that his body was lacerated, and finally he fell into a coma. At this point our Lady appeared to him, accompanied by three angels, and she said,

*"Dear Dominic, do you know which weapon the Blessed Trinity wants to use to reform the world?"*

*"Oh, my Lady," answered Saint Dominic, "You know far better than I do, because next to Your Son Jesus Christ you have always been the chief instrument of our salvation."*

Then our Lady replied,

*"I want you to know that, in this kind of warfare, the principal weapon has always been the Angelic Psalter, which is the foundation-stone of the New Testament. Therefore, if you want to reach these hardened souls and win them over to God, preach my Psalter."*

So he arose, comforted, and burning with zeal for the conversion of the people in that district, he made straight for the cathedral.

At once unseen angels rang the bells to gather the people together, and Saint Dominic began to preach. At the very beginning of his sermon, an appalling storm broke out, the earth shook, the sun was darkened, and there was so much thunder and lightning that all were very much afraid.

Even greater was their fear when, looking at a picture of our Lady exposed in a prominent place, they saw her raise her arms to heaven three times to call down God's vengeance upon them if they failed to be converted, to amend their lives, and seek the protection of the holy Mother of God. God wished, by means of these supernatural phenomena, to spread the new devotion of the holy Rosary and to make it more widely known. At last, at the prayer of Saint Dominic, the storm came to an end, and he went on preaching. So fervently and compellingly did he explain the importance and value of the Rosary that almost all the people of Toulouse embraced it and renounced their false beliefs.

In a very short time a great improvement was seen in the town; people began leading Christian lives and gave up their former bad habits.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, instructed by the Blessed Virgin as well as by his own experience, Saint Dominic preached the Rosary for the rest of his life.

He preached it by his example as well as by his sermons, in cities and in country places, to people of high station and low, before scholars and the uneducated, to Catholics and to heretics. The Rosary, which he said every day, was his preparation for every sermon and his little union with our Lady immediately after preaching.

Saint Dominic pray for us; help us to pray faithfully the Holy Rosary.

**From BlessedCatholicSaints.Com - <http://blessedcatholicsaints.blogspot.com/>**

## St. Mary Magdalene "The Penitent" – Feast Day July 22

Patronage: against sexual temptation, apothecaries, contemplative life, converts, druggists, glove makers, hairdressers, hairstylists, penitent sinners, penitent women, people ridiculed for their piety, perfumeries, perfumers, pharmacists, reformed prostitutes, tanners, women

She is called "the Penitent". **St. Mary** was given the name 'Magdalene' because, though a **Jewish** girl, she lived in a Gentile town called Magdale, in northern Galilee, and her culture and manners were those of a Gentile. **St. Luke** records that she was a notorious sinner, and had seven devils removed from her. She was present at Our Lords' Crucifixion, and with Joanna and Mary, the mother of **James** and Salome, at Jesus' empty tomb. Fourteen years after Our Lord's death, **St. Mary** was put in a boat by the **Jews** without sails or oars - along with **Sts. Lazarus** and Martha, **St. Maximin** (who baptized her), **St. Sidonius** ("the **man** born blind"), her maid Sera, and the body of **St. Anne**, the mother of the Blessed Virgin. They were sent drifting out to sea and landed on the shores of Southern France, where **St. Mary** spent the rest of her **life** as a contemplative in a cave known as Sainte-Baume. She was given the Holy **Eucharist** daily by **angels** as her only food, and died when she was 72. **St. Mary** was transported miraculously, just before she died, to the **chapel** of **St. Maximin**, where she received the last sacraments.

**More about this saint: St. Mary Magdalene (Feast day - July 22) Mary Magdalene** was well known as a sinner when she first saw Our Lord. She was very beautiful and very proud, but after she met Jesus, she felt great sorrow for her **evil** life. When **Jesus** went to supper at the home of a rich **man** named Simon, **Mary** came to weep at His feet. Then with her long beautiful hair, she wiped His feet dry and anointed them with expensive perfume. Some people were surprised that **Jesus** let such a sinner touch Him, but Our **Lord** could see into Mary's heart, and He said: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she has loved very much." Then to **Mary**, He said kindly "your **faith** has made you safe; go in peace." From then on, with the other holy women, **Mary** humbly served **Jesus** and His Apostles. When Our **Lord** was crucified, she was there at the foot of His cross, unafraid for herself, and thinking only of His sufferings. No wonder **Jesus** said of her: "She has loved much." After Jesus' body had been placed in the tomb, **Mary** went to anoint it with spices early **Easter Sunday** morning. Not finding the Sacred Body, she began to weep, and seeing someone whom she thought was the gardener, she asked him if he knew where the Body of her beloved Master had been taken. But then the **person** spoke in a voice she knew so well: "Mary!" It was Jesus, risen from the dead! He had chosen to show Himself first to **Mary** Magdalene, the repentant sinner.

From Catholic Online – [http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=83](http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=83)

Ultimate Victory – Mary Magdala must have felt alone at the tomb of Jesus – grief-stricken over his death. But she never stopped following him, even when all seemed lost. And it was then in her despair that she came face to face with the resurrected Christ and experienced firsthand the ultimate victory of life over death. New life will come. Christ is alive. Alleluia! **By Bill Tonnis, Living Faith Daily Catholic Devotions April 26, 2011**

## St. Michael, the Archangel – Feast Day September 29

Patronage: against dangers at sea, against temptations, ambulance drivers, artists, bakers, bankers, banking, barrel makers, battle, boatmen, coopers, dying people, emergency medical technicians, fencing, greengrocers, grocers, haberdashers, hat-makers, hatters, holy death, knights, mariners, milliners, paramedics, paratroopers, police officers, radiologists, radiotherapists, sailors, security guards, sick people, soldiers, storms at sea, sword-smiths, watermen

St. Michael, the Archangel - [Feast day](#) - September 29th The name Michael signifies "Who is like to God?" and was the war cry of the [good angels](#) in the battle fought in [heaven](#) against [satan](#) and his followers.

Holy [Scripture](#) describes St. Michael as "one of the chief princes," and leader of the forces of [heaven](#) in their triumph over the powers of hell. He has been especially honored and invoked as patron and protector by the Church from the [time](#) of the Apostles.

Although he is always called "the Archangel," the Greek Fathers and many others place him over all the [angels](#) - as Prince of the Seraphim.

**From Catholic Online** - [http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=308](http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=308)

You should be aware that the word "[angel](#)" denotes a function rather than a nature. Those holy spirits of heaven have indeed always been spirits. They can only be called [angels](#) when they deliver some message. Moreover, those who deliver messages of lesser importance are called [angels](#); and those who proclaim messages of supreme importance are called [archangels](#).

Whenever some act of wondrous power must be performed, Michael is sent, so that his action and his name may make it clear that no one can do what [God](#) does by his superior power.



From a [homily](#) by [Pope Saint Gregory the Great](#)

# Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

One day, after celebrating Mass, the aged Pope Leo XIII was in conference with the Cardinals when suddenly he sank to the floor in a deep swoon. Physicians who hastened to his side could find no trace of his pulse and feared that he had expired. However, after a short interval the Holy Father regained consciousness and exclaimed with great emotion: "Oh, what a horrible picture I have been permitted to see!"

He had been shown a vision of evil spirits who had been released from Hell and their efforts to destroy the Church. But in the midst of the horror the archangel St. Michael appeared and cast Satan and his legions into the abyss of hell. Soon afterwards Pope Leo XIII composed the following prayer to Saint Michael, which is the original version:

## Original - Prayer to St. Michael

“O Glorious Prince of the heavenly host, St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in the battle and in the terrible warfare that we are waging against the principalities and powers, against the rulers of this world of darkness, against the evil spirits. Come to the aid of man, whom Almighty God created immortal, made in His own image and likeness, and redeemed at a great price from the tyranny of Satan. “Fight this day the battle of the Lord, together with the holy angels, as already thou hast fought the leader of the proud angels, Lucifer, and his apostate host, who were powerless to resist thee, nor was there place for them any longer in Heaven. That cruel, ancient serpent, who is called the devil or Satan who seduces the whole world, was cast into the abyss with his angels. Behold this primeval enemy and slayer of men has taken courage. Transformed into an angel of light, he wanders about with all the multitude of wicked spirits, invading the earth in order to blot out the name of God and of His Christ, to seize upon, slay and cast into eternal perdition souls destined for the crown of eternal glory. This wicked dragon pours out, as a most impure flood, the venom of his malice on men of depraved mind and corrupt heart, the spirit of lying, of impiety, of blasphemy, and the pestilent breath of impurity, and of every vice and iniquity.

“These most crafty enemies have filled and inebriated with gall and bitterness the Church, the spouse of the immaculate Lamb, and have laid impious hands on her most sacred possessions. In the Holy Place itself, where the See of Holy Peter and the Chair of Truth has been set up as the light of the world, they have raised the throne of their abominable impiety, with the iniquitous design that when the Pastor has been struck, the sheep may be.

“Arise then, O invincible Prince, bring help against the attacks of the lost spirits to the people of God, and give them the victory.

They venerate thee as their protector and patron; in thee holy Church glories as her defense against the malicious power of hell; to thee has God entrusted the souls of men to be established in heavenly beatitude. Oh, pray to the God of peace that He may put Satan under our feet, so far conquered that he may no longer be able to hold men in captivity and harm the Church. Offer our prayers in the sight of the Most High, so that they may quickly find mercy in the sight of the Lord; and vanquishing the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, do thou again make him captive in the abyss, that he may no longer seduce the nations. Amen.

V. Behold the Cross of the Lord; be scattered ye hostile powers.

R. The Lion of the tribe of Judah has conquered the root of David.

V. Let Thy mercies be upon us, O Lord.

R. As we have hoped in Thee.

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto Thee.

Let us pray.

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we call upon Thy holy Name, and as supplicants, we implore Thy clemency, that by the intercession of Mary, ever Virgin Immaculate and our Mother, and of the glorious St. Michael the Archangel, Thou wouldst deign to help us against Satan and all the other unclean spirits who wander about the world for the injury of the human race and the ruin of souls. Amen.”

[Roman Raccolta, July 23, 1898, supplement approved July 31, 1902,  
London: Burnes, Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1935, 12th edition.](#)

## **Short Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel**

The well-known short version of this prayer follows in English and Latin. The Pope ordered this prayer to be recited daily after Low Mass in all the churches throughout the Catholic world. However this practice was almost completely swept away in the 1960s by liturgical changes made in the wake of Vatican Council II.

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the malice and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

## St. Paul – Feast Day June 29

Patronage: against hailstorms, against poisonous snakes, against snake bites, against snakes, authors, Catholic Action, Cursillo movement, evangelists, hospital public relations, journalists, lay people, missionary bishops, musicians, newspaper editorial staff, public relations personnel, public relations work, publishers, reporters, rope braiders, rope makers, saddle makers, saddlers, tent makers, writers

St. Paul, the indefatigable [Apostle](#) of the Gentiles, was converted from [Judaism](#) on the road to Damascus. He remained some days in [Damascus](#) after his Baptism, and then went to Arabia, possibly for a year or two to prepare himself for his future missionary activity. Having returned to Damascus, he stayed there for a time, preaching in the synagogues that [Jesus](#) is the Christ, the Son of God. For this he incurred the [hatred](#) of the [Jews](#) and had to flee from the city. He then went to [Jerusalem](#) to see Peter and pay his homage to the head of the Church. Later he went back to his native Tarsus, where he began to evangelize his own province until called by Barnabus to Antioch. After one year, on the occasion of a famine, both Barnabus and Paul were sent with alms to the poor [Christian](#) community at Jerusalem. Having fulfilled their mission they returned to Antioch.

Soon after this, Paul and Barnabus made the first missionary journey, visiting the island of Cypress, then Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia, all in [Asia](#) Minor, and establishing churches at Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

After the Apostolic Council of [Jerusalem](#) Paul, accompanied by Silas and later also by Timothy and Luke, made his second missionary journey, first revisiting the churches previously established by him in [Asia](#) Minor, and then passing through Galatia. At [Troas](#) a vision of a Macedonian was had by Paul, which impressed him as a call from [God](#) to evangelize in Macedonia. He accordingly sailed for Europe, and preached the Gospel in Philippi, Thessalonica, Beroea, Athens, and Corinth. Then he returned to [Antioch](#) by way of [Ephesus](#) and Jerusalem.

On his third missionary journey, Paul visited nearly the same regions as on the second trip, but made [Ephesus](#) where he remained nearly three years, the center of his missionary activity. He laid plans also for another missionary journey, intending to leave [Jerusalem](#) for [Rome](#) and Spain. Persecutions by the [Jews](#) hindered him from accomplishing his purpose. After two years of imprisonment at Caesarea he finally reached Rome, where he was kept another two years in chains.

The [Acts](#) of the [Apostles](#) gives us no further information on the [life](#) of the Apostle. We gather, however, from the Pastoral Epistles and from tradition that at the end of the two years [St. Paul](#) was released from his Roman imprisonment, and then traveled to Spain, later to the East again, and then

back to Rome, where he was imprisoned a second [time](#) and in the year 67, was beheaded.

St. Paul untiring interest in and paternal affection for the churches established by him have given us fourteen canonical Epistles. It is, however, quite certain that he wrote other letters which are no longer extant. In his Epistles, [St. Paul](#) shows himself to be a profound religious thinker and he has had an enduring formative influence in the development of Christianity. The centuries only make more apparent his greatness of [mind](#) and spirit.

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### ***Readings:***

I assure you, brothers, the gospel I proclaimed to you is no mere human invention. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I schooled in it. It came by revelation from Jesus Christ. You have heard, I know, the story of my former way of life in Judaism. You know that I went to extremes in persecuting the Church of God, and tried to destroy it. But the time came when he who had set me apart before I was born and called me by his favor chose to reveal his Son to me that I might spread among the Gentiles the good tidings concerning him. Immediately, without seeking human advisers or even going to [Jerusalem](#) to see those who were apostles before me, I went off to [Arabia](#); later I returned to [Damascus](#). Three years after that I went up to [Jerusalem](#) to get to know Cephas, with whom I stayed fifteen days. I did not meet any other apostles except James, the brother of the Lord. The communities of Christ in Judea had no idea what I looked like; they had only heard that "he who was formerly persecuting us is now preaching the faith he tried to destroy," and they gave glory to God on my account. - *From a letter from [Saint Paul the Apostle to the Christians in Galatia](#)*

I remind you to stir into flame the gift of God that you have through the imposition of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of cowardice but rather of power and love and self-control. So do not be ashamed of your testimony to our Lord, nor of me, a prisoner for his sake; but bear your share of the hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God. - *[Saint Paul in his second letter to Saint Timothy](#)*

*From Saints.SQPN.com - notes about your extended family in heaven*



## Doctors of the Church

The Doctors of the Church are **writers** who received this title from the **Church** owing to their eminence in **theology** and holiness. They are extolled by the **Church** not primarily as witnesses of **her faith** (as are the **Fathers**), but on account of their brilliant exposition and skilful **defense** of **Catholic** doctrine. Unlike the titles of *Doctor Subtilis*, *Doctor Resolutissimus*, *Doctor Irrefragabilis*, which enthusiastic **scholars** of the **Middle Ages** bestowed on renowned **professors**, this title is official. The first to confer it was **Pope Boniface VIII**, who in **1295** declared four **Fathers** the great Doctors of the Latin Church: **Saint Ambrose of Milan**, **Saint Augustine of Hippo**, **Saint Jerome**, and **Saint Gregory the Great**. The next to be declared a Doctor was **Saint Thomas Aquinas** in **1567**. Since then more than twenty renowned **theologians**, all of them **canonized saints**, have received the same seal of approval, either from a **pope** or from the *Sacred Congregation of Rites*. Owing to their title, the Doctors of the Church enjoy a special authority in the **Church**, though not all in the same degree nor in the same manner. As a rule, the range and degree of their authority are set forth in the decree by which the title is

conferred. Thus **Saint Alphonsus of Liguori** is recommended to **theologians** as a master of **moral theology**, **Saint Jerome** as **biblical scholar**, **Saint Bonaventure** as eminent in scholastic **theology**. Still, their **writings** are not thereby pronounced infallible throughout, but they are proposed as safe guides, so that their doctrines are to be preferred unless solid reasons favor the opposite.

The following are Doctors of the Church

- **Albert the Great**
- **Alphonsus Maria de Liguori**
- **Ambrose of Milan**
- **Anselm of Canterbury**
- **Anthony of Padua**
- **Athanasius**
- **Augustine of Hippo**
- **Basil the Great**
- **Bede the Venerable**
- **Bernard of Clairvaux**
- **Bonaventure**
- **Catherine of Siena**

- Cyril of Alexandria
- Cyril of Jerusalem
- Ephrem of Syria
- Francis of Sales
- Gregory Nazianzen
- Gregory the Great
- Hilary of Poitiers
- Isidore
- Jerome
- John Chrystostom
- John Damascene
- John of the Cross
- Lawrence of Brindisi
- Leo the Great
- Peter Canisius
- Peter Chrysologus
- Peter Damian
- Robert Bellarmine
- Teresa of Avila
- Therese of Lisieux
- Thomas Aquinas

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**Grant me, O Lord my God, a mind to know you, a heart to seek you, wisdom to find you, conduct pleasing to you, faithful perseverance in waiting for you, and a hope of finally embracing you. - [Saint Thomas Aquinas](#)**

**Conquer yourself and the world lies at your feet. - [Saint Augustine](#)**

**We are like children, who stand in need of masters to enlighten us and direct us; and God has provided for this, by appointing his angels to be our teachers and guides. - [Saint Thomas Aquinas](#)**

**God has no need of your money, but the poor have. You give it to the poor, and God receives it. - [Saint Augustine](#)**

## Saint Gregory the Great

Pope and Doctor of the Church – Feast Day September 2

Patronage: against gout, against plague, choir boys, educators, masons, musicians, papacy, Popes, schoolchildren, singers, stone masons, stonecutters, students, teachers

St. Gregory, born at [Rome](#) about the year 540, was the son of Gordianus, a wealthy senator, who later renounced the world and became one of the seven [deacons](#) of Rome. After he had acquired the usual thorough education and though he was only thirty-four years of age, Emperor Justin the Younger appointed him, in 574, as Chief Magistrate of Rome. After the death of his father, he built six monasteries in [Sicily](#) and founded a seventh in his own house in Rome, which became the Benedictine Monastery of St. Andrew. Here, he himself assumed the monastic [habit](#) in 575, at the age of thirty-five. After the death of Pelagius, St. Gregory was chosen Pope by the unanimous consent of priests and people. Now began those labors which merited for him the title of Great. His [zeal](#) extended over the entire known world, he was in contact with all the Churches of [Christendom](#) and, in spite of his bodily sufferings, and innumerable labors, and he found [time](#) to compose a great number of works. He is known above all for his magnificent contributions to the [Liturgy](#) of the [Mass](#) and Office. He is one of the four great Doctors of the Latin Church. He died March 12, 604. He is the patron of teachers.

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The proof of love is in the works. Where love exists, it works great things. But when it ceases to act, it ceases to exist. - [Saint Gregory the Great](#)

If we knew at what time we were to depart from this world, we would be able to select a season for pleasure and another for repentance. But God, who has promised pardon to every repentant sinner, has not promised us tomorrow. Therefore we must always dread the final day, which we can never foresee. This very day is a day of truce, a day for conversion. And yet we refuse to cry over the evil we have done! Not only do we not weep for the sins we have committed, we even add to them.... If we are, in fact, now occupied in good deeds, we should not attribute the strength with which we are doing them to ourselves. We must not count on ourselves, because even if we know what kind of person we are today, we do not know what we will be tomorrow. Nobody must rejoice in the security of their own good deeds. As long as we are still experiencing the uncertainties of this life, we do not know what end may follow...we must not trust in our own virtues. - [Saint Gregory the Great, from Be Friends of God](#)

[From Saints.SQPN.com – notes about your extended family in heaven](#)

# St. Augustine of Hippo Doctor of the Church

Feast Day August 28

Patronage: against sore eyes, brewers, printers, theologians, Superior Diocese of Wisconsin

St. Augustine of Hippo is the patron of brewers because of his conversion from a former life of loose living, which included parties, entertainment, and worldly ambitions. His complete turnaround and conversion has been an inspiration to many who struggle with a particular vice or habit they long to break.

This famous son of St. Monica was born in Africa and spent many years of his life in wicked living and in false beliefs. Though he was one of the most intelligent men who ever lived and though he had been brought up a Christian, his sins of impurity and his pride darkened his mind so much, that he could not see or understand the Divine Truth anymore. Through the prayers of his holy mother and the marvelous preaching of St. Ambrose, Augustine finally became convinced that Christianity was the one true religion. Yet he did not become a Christian then, because he thought he could never live a pure life. One day, however, he heard about two men who had suddenly been converted on reading the life of St. Antony, and he felt terrible ashamed of himself. "What are we doing?" he cried to his friend Alipius. "Unlearned people are taking Heaven by force, while we, with all our knowledge, are so cowardly that we keep rolling around in the mud of our sins!"

Full of bitter sorrow, Augustine flung himself out into the garden and cried out to God, "How long more, O Lord? Why does not this hour put an end to my sins?" Just then he heard a child singing, "Take up and read!" Thinking that God intended him to hear those words, he picked up the book of the Letters of St. Paul, and read the first passage his gaze fell on. It was just what Augustine needed, for in it, St. Paul says to put away all impurity and to live in imitation of Jesus. That did it! From then on, Augustine began a new life. He was baptized, became a priest, a bishop, a famous Catholic writer, Founder of religious orders, and one of the greatest saints that ever lived. He became very devout and charitable, too. On the wall of his room he had the following sentence written in large letters: "Here we do not speak evil of anyone." St. Augustine overcame strong heresies, practiced great poverty and supported the poor, preached very often and prayed with great fervor right up until his death. "Too late have I loved You!" he once cried to God, but with his holy life he certainly made up for the sins he committed before his conversion.

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O Sacrament of Love! O sign of Unity! O bond of Charity!  
He who would have Life finds here indeed a Life to live in and a  
Life to live by. - *Saint Augustine*

## St. Thomas Aquinas Doctor of the Church – Feast Day January 28

Patronage: academics, against storms, against lightning, apologists, book sellers, Catholic academics, Catholic Schools, Catholic Universities, chastity, colleges, learning, pencil makers, philosophers, publishers, scholars, schools, students, theologians, universities

St. Thomas Aquinas - [priest](#) and [doctor](#) of the Church, patron of all [universities](#) and of students. He was born toward the end of the year 1226. He was the son of Landulph, Count of Aquino, who, when [St. Thomas](#) was five years old, placed him under the care of the Benedictines of Monte Casino. His teachers were surprised at the progress he made, for he surpassed all his fellow pupils in learning as well as in the practice of virtue. When he became of age to choose his state of life, [St. Thomas](#) renounced the things of this world and resolved to enter the Order of [St. Dominic](#) in spite of the opposition of his family. In 1243, at the age of seventeen, he joined the [Dominicans](#) of Naples. Some members of his [family](#) resorted to all manner of means over a two year period to break his constancy. They even went so far as to send an impure [woman](#) to tempt him. But all their efforts were in vain and [St. Thomas](#) persevered in his vocation. As a reward for his fidelity, [God](#) conferred upon him the gift of perfect chastity, which has merited for him the title of the "Angelic Doctor".

After making his profession at Naples, he studied at [Cologne](#) under the celebrated St. Albert the Great. Here he was nicknamed the "dumb ox" because of his silent ways and huge size, but he was really a brilliant student. At the age of twenty-two, he was appointed to teach in the same city. At the same time, he also began to publish his first works. After four years he was sent to Paris. The saint was then a priest. At the age of thirty-one, he received his doctorate.

At [Paris](#) he was honored with the friendship of the King, St. Louis, with whom he frequently dined. In 1261, [Urban IV](#) called him to [Rome](#) where he was appointed to teach, but he positively declined to accept any ecclesiastical dignity. [St. Thomas](#) not only wrote (his writings filled twenty hefty tomes characterized by brilliance of thought and lucidity of language), but he preached often and with greatest fruit. [Clement IV](#) offered him the archbishopric of [Naples](#) which he also refused. He left the great monument of his learning, the "Summa Theologica", unfinished, for on his way to the second Council of Lyons, ordered there by Gregory X, he fell sick and died at the Cistercian monastery of Fossa Nuova in 1274.

St. Thomas was one of the greatest and most influential theologians of all time. He was canonized in 1323 and declared [Doctor](#) of the Church by Pope Pius V.

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**Charity is the form, mover, mother and root of all the virtues.** - [Saint Thomas Aquinas](#)

## St. Francis of Assisi – Feast Day October 4

Patronage: against dying alone, against fire, animal welfare societies, animals, birds, ecologists, ecology, environment, environmentalism, environmentalists, families, lace makers, lace workers, merchants, needle workers, peace, tapestry workers, zoos, Catholic Action, Franciscan Order

St. Francis of Assisi - founder of the Franciscan Order, was born at [Assisi](#) in Umbria, in 1181.

In 1182, Pietro Bernardone returned from a trip to [France](#) to find out his wife had given birth to a son. Far from being excited or apologetic because he'd been gone, Pietro was furious because she'd had his new son baptized Giovanni after [John](#) the Baptist. The last thing Pietro wanted in his son was a [man](#) of [God](#) -- he wanted a [man](#) of business, a cloth merchant like he was, and he especially wanted a son who would reflect his infatuation with France. So he renamed his son Francesco -- which is the equivalent of calling him Frenchman.

Francis enjoyed a very rich easy [life](#) growing up because of his father's wealth and the permissiveness of the times. From the beginning everyone -- and I mean everyone -- loved Francis. He was constantly happy, charming, and a born leader. If he was picky, people excused him. If he was ill, people took care of him. If he was so much of a dreamer he did poorly in school, no one minded. In many ways he was too easy to like for his own good. No one tried to control him or teach him.

As he grew up, Francis became the leader of a crowd of young people who spent their nights in wild parties. Thomas of Celano, his biographer who knew him well, said, "In other respects an exquisite youth, he attracted to himself a whole retinue of young people addicted to [evil](#) and accustomed to vice." Francis himself said, "I lived in sin" during that time.

Francis fulfilled every [hope](#) of Pietro's -- even falling in love with France. He loved the songs of France, the romance of France, and especially the free adventurous troubadours of [France](#) who wandered through Europe. And despite his dreaming, Francis was also [good](#) at business. But Francis wanted more, more than wealth. But not holiness! Francis wanted to be a noble, a knight. Battle was the best place to win the [glory](#) and prestige he longed for. He got his first chance when [Assisi](#) declared [war](#) on their longtime enemy, the nearby town of Perugia.

Most of the troops from [Assisi](#) were butchered in the fight. Only those wealthy enough to expect to be ransomed were taken prisoner. At last Francis was among the nobility like he always wanted to be...but chained in a harsh, dark dungeon. All accounts say that he never lost his happy manner in that horrible place. Finally, after a year in the dungeon, he was ransomed. Strangely, the experience didn't seem to change him. He gave

himself to partying with as much joy and abandon as he had before the battle.

The experience didn't change what he wanted from [life](#) either: Glory. Finally a call for knights for the Fourth Crusade gave him a chance for his dream. But before he left Francis had to have a suit of armor and a horse -- no problem for the son of a wealthy father. And not just any suit of armor would do but one decorated with gold with a magnificent cloak. Any relief we feel in hearing that Francis gave the cloak to a poor knight [will](#) be destroyed by the boasts that Francis left behind that he would return a prince.

But Francis never got farther than one day's ride from Assisi. There he had a dream in which [God](#) told him he had it all wrong and told him to return home. And return home he did. What must it have been like to return without ever making it to battle -- the boy who wanted nothing more than to be liked was humiliated, laughed at, called a coward by the village and raged at by his father for the money wasted on armor.

Francis' [conversion](#) did not happen over night. [God](#) had waited for him for twenty-five years and now it was Francis' turn to wait. Francis started to spend more [time](#) in prayer. He went off to a cave and wept for his sins. Sometimes God's [grace](#) overwhelmed him with joy. But [life](#) couldn't just stop for God. There was a business to run, customers to wait on.

One day while riding through the countryside, Francis, the [man](#) who loved beauty, who was so picky about food, who hated deformity, came face to face with a leper. Repelled by the appearance and the smell of the leper, Francis nevertheless jumped down from his horse and kissed the hand of the leper. When his [kiss](#) of peace was returned, Francis was filled with joy. As he rode off, he turned around for a last wave, and saw that the leper had disappeared. He always looked upon it as a test from God...that he had passed.

His search for [conversion](#) led him to the ancient church at San Damiano. While he was praying there, he heard [Christ](#) on the crucifix speak to him, "Francis, repair my church." Francis assumed this meant church with a small c -- the crumbling building he was in. Acting again in his impetuous way, he took fabric from his father's shop and sold it to get money to repair the church. His father saw this as an act of [theft](#) -- and put together with Francis' cowardice, waste of money, and his growing disinterest in money made Francis seem more like a madman than his son. Pietro dragged Francis before the [bishop](#) and in front of the whole town demanded that Francis return the money and renounce all rights as his heir.

The [bishop](#) was very kind to Francis; he told him to return the money and said [God](#) would provide. That was all Francis needed to hear. He not only gave back the money but stripped off all his clothes -- the clothes his father had given him -- until he was wearing only a hair shirt. In front of the crowd that had gathered he said, "Pietro Bernardone is no longer my father. From now on I can say with complete freedom, 'Our Father who art in

heaven." Wearing nothing but castoff rags, he went off into the freezing woods -- singing. And when robbers beat him later and took his clothes, he climbed out of the ditch and went off singing again. From then on Francis had nothing...and everything.

Francis went back to what he considered God's call. He begged for stones and rebuilt the San Damiano church with his own hands, not realizing that it was the Church with a capital C that God wanted repaired. Scandal and avarice were working on the Church from the inside while outside heresies flourished by appealing to those longing for something different or adventurous.

Soon Francis started to preach. (He was never a priest, though he was later ordained a deacon under his protest.) Francis was not a reformer; he preached about returning to God and obedience to the Church. Francis must have known about the decay in the Church, but he always showed the Church and its people his utmost respect. When someone told him of priest living openly with a woman and asked him if that meant the Mass was polluted, Francis went to the priest, knelt before him, and kissed his hands -- because those hands had held God.

Slowly companions came to Francis, people who wanted to follow his life of sleeping in the open, begging for garbage to eat...and loving God. With companions, Francis knew he now had to have some kind of direction to this life so he opened the Bible in three places. He read the command to the rich young man to sell all his good and give to the poor, the order to the apostles to take nothing on their journey, and the demand to take up the cross daily. "Here is our rule," Francis said -- as simple, and as seemingly impossible, as that. He was going to do what no one thought possible any more -- live by the Gospel. Francis took these commands so literally that he made one brother run after the thief who stole his hood and offer him his robe!

Francis never wanted to found a religious order -- this former knight thought that sounded too military. He thought of what he was doing as expressing God's brotherhood. His companions came from all walks of life, from fields and towns, nobility and common people, universities, the Church, and the merchant class. Francis practiced true equality by showing honor, respect, and love to every person whether they were beggar or pope. Francis' brotherhood included all of God's creation. Much has been written about Francis' love of nature but his relationship was deeper than that. We call someone a lover of nature if they spend their free time in the woods or admire its beauty. But Francis really felt that nature, all God's creations, were part of his brotherhood. The sparrow was as much his brother as the pope.

In one famous story, Francis preached to hundreds of birds about being thankful to God for their wonderful clothes, for their independence, and for God's care. The story tells us the birds stood still as he walked among them, only flying off when he said they could leave.

Another famous story involves a wolf that had been eating human beings. Francis intervened when the town wanted to kill the wolf and talked the wolf into never killing again. The wolf became a pet of the townspeople who made sure that he always had plenty to eat.

Following the Gospel literally, Francis and his companions went out to preach two by two. At first, listeners were understandably hostile to these men in rags trying to talk about God's love. People even ran from them for fear they'd catch this strange madness! And they were right. Because soon these same people noticed that these barefoot beggars wearing sacks seemed filled with constant joy. They celebrated life. And people had to ask themselves: Could one own nothing and be happy? Soon those who had met them with mud and rocks greeted them with [bells](#) and smiles.

Francis did not try to abolish poverty; he tried to make it holy. When his friars met someone poorer than they, they would eagerly rip off the sleeve of their [habit](#) to give to the person. They worked for all necessities and only begged if they had to. But Francis would not let them accept any money. He told them to treat coins as if they were pebbles in the road. When the [bishop](#) showed horror at the friars' hard life, Francis said, "If we had any possessions we should need weapons and laws to defend them."

Possessing something was the death of love for Francis. Also, Francis reasoned, what could you do to a [man](#) who owns nothing? You can't starve a [fasting](#) man, you can't steal from someone who has no money, and you can't ruin someone who hates prestige. They were truly free.

Francis was a [man](#) of action. His simplicity of [life](#) extended to ideas and deeds.

If there was a simple way, no [matter](#) how impossible it seemed, Francis would take it. So when Francis wanted approval for his brotherhood, he went straight to [Rome](#) to see Pope Innocent III. You can imagine what the pope thought when this beggar approached him! As a [matter](#) of fact he threw Francis out. But when he had a dream that this tiny [man](#) in rags held up the tilting Lateran basilica, he quickly called Francis back and gave him permission to preach.

Sometimes this direct approach led to mistakes that he corrected with the same spontaneity that he made them. Once he ordered a brother who hesitated to speak because he stuttered to go preach half-naked. When Francis realized how he had hurt someone he loved he ran to town, stopped the brother, took off his own clothes, and preached instead.

Francis acted quickly because he acted from the heart; he didn't have [time](#) to put on a role. Once he was so sick and exhausted, his companions borrowed a mule for him to ride. When the [man](#) who owned the mule recognized Francis he said, "Try to be as virtuous as everyone

thinks you are because many have a lot of confidence in you." Francis dropped off the mule and knelt before the man to thank him for his advice. Another example of his directness came when he decided to go to Syria to convert the Moslems while the Fifth Crusade was being fought. In the middle of a battle, Francis decided to do the simplest thing and go straight to the sultan to make peace. When he and his companion were captured, the real miracle was that they weren't killed. Instead Francis was taken to the sultan who was charmed by Francis and his preaching. He told Francis, "I would convert to your religion which is a beautiful one -- but both of us would be murdered."

Francis did find persecution and martyrdom of a kind -- not among the Moslems, but among his own brothers. When he returned to Italy, he came back to a brotherhood that had grown to 5000 in ten years. Pressure came from outside to control this great movement, to make them conform to the standards of others. His dream of radical poverty was too harsh, people said. Francis responded, "Lord, didn't I tell you they wouldn't trust you?" He finally gave up authority in his order -- but he probably wasn't too upset about it. Now he was just another brother, like he'd always wanted.

Francis' final years were filled with suffering as well as humiliation. Praying to share in Christ's passion he had a vision received the stigmata, the marks of the nails and the lance wound that Christ suffered, in his own body. Years of poverty and wandering had made Francis ill. When he began to go blind, the pope ordered that his eyes be operated on. This meant cauterizing his face with a hot iron. Francis spoke to "Brother Fire": "Brother Fire, the Most High has made you strong and beautiful and useful. Be courteous to me now in this hour, for I have always loved you, and temper your heat so that I can endure it." And Francis reported that Brother Fire had been so kind that he felt nothing at all. How did Francis respond to blindness and suffering? That was when he wrote his beautiful Canticle of the Sun that expresses his brotherhood with creation in praising God. Francis never recovered from this illness. He died on October 4, 1226 at the age of 45. Francis is considered the founder of all Franciscan orders and the patron saint of ecologists and merchants.

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Jesus is happy to come with us, as truth is happy to be spoken, as life to be lived, as light to be lit, as love is to be loved, as joy to be given, as peace to be spread. *Saint Francis of Assisi*

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## St. John the Baptist – Feast Day June 24

Patronage: against convulsions, against epilepsy, against hail, against hailstorms, against spasms, baptism, bird dealers, converts, convulsive children, cutters, epileptics, furriers, lambs, monastic life, motorways, printers, tailors

John the Baptist was the son of Zachary, a [priest](#) of the [Temple](#) in Jerusalem, and Elizabeth, a kinswoman of [Mary](#) who visited her. He was probably born at Ain-Karim southwest of [Jerusalem](#) after the [Angel](#) Gabriel had told Zachary that his wife would bear a child even though she was an old woman. He lived as a hermit in the [desert](#) of [Judea](#) until about A.D. 27. When he was thirty, he began to preach on the banks of the [Jordan](#) against the evils of the times and called men to [penance](#) and [baptism](#) "for the Kingdom of [Heaven](#) is close at hand". He attracted large crowds, and when [Christ](#) came to him, [John](#) recognized Him as the [Messiah](#) and baptized Him, saying, "It is I who need [baptism](#) from You". When [Christ](#) left to preach in Galilee, [John](#) continued preaching in the [Jordan](#) valley. Fearful of his great power with the people, [Herod](#) Antipas, Tetrarch of Perea and Galilee, had him arrested and imprisoned at Machaerus Fortress on the [Dead Sea](#) when [John](#) denounced his adulterous and incestuous marriage with Herodias, wife of his half brother Philip. [John](#) was beheaded at the request of Salome, daughter of Herodias, who asked for his head at the instigation of her mother. [John](#) inspired many of his followers to follow [Christ](#) when he designated Him "the Lamb of God," among them Andrew and John, who came to know [Christ](#) through John's preaching. [John](#) is presented in the [New Testament](#) as the last of the [Old Testament](#) prophets and the precursor of the Messiah. His [feast day](#) is June 24th and the feast for his beheading is August 29th.

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Imprisoned by King Herod, He died a victim of the vengeance of a jealous woman; he was beheaded, and his head brought to her on a platter. Saint Jerome says Herodias kept the head for a long time after, occasionally stabbing the tongue with his dagger because of what John had said in life.

## **Readings:**

The Church observes the birth of John as a hallowed event. We have no such commemoration for any other fathers; but it is significant that we celebrate the birthdays of John and of Jesus. This day cannot be passed by. And even if my explanation does not match the dignity of the feast, you may still meditate on it with great depth and profit.

John appears as the boundary between the two testaments, the old and the new. That he is a sort of boundary the Lord himself bears witness, when he speaks of "the law and the prophets up until John the Baptist." Thus he represents times past and is the herald of the new era to come. As a representative of the past, he is born of aged parents; as a herald of the new era, he is declared to be a prophet while still in his mother's womb. For when yet unborn, he leapt in his mother's womb at the arrival of blessed Mary. In that womb he had already been designated a prophet, even before he was born; it was revealed that he was to be Christ's precursor, before they ever saw one another. These are divine happenings, going beyond the limits of our human frailty. When John was preaching the Lord's coming he was asked, "Who are you?" And he replied: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." The voice is John, but the Lord "in the beginning was the Word." John was a voice that lasted only for a time; Christ, the Word in the beginning, is eternal. - *From a sermon by [Saint Augustine](#) on the birth of John the Baptist*

So they came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing and everyone is coming to him.' John answered and said, 'No one can receive anything except what has been given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said that I am not the Messiah, but that I was sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, who stands and listens for him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made complete. He must increase; I must decrease' - *John 3:26-30*

There is no doubt that blessed John suffered imprisonment and [chains](#) as a witness to our Redeemer, whose forerunner he was, and gave his life for him. His persecutor had demanded not that he should deny Christ, but only that he should keep silent about the truth. Nevertheless, he died for Christ.

Does Christ not say: "I am the truth"? Therefore, because John shed his blood for the truth, he surely died for Christ. Through his birth, preaching and baptizing, he bore witness to the coming birth, preaching and [baptism](#) of Christ, and by his own suffering he showed that Christ also would suffer. Such was the quality and strength of the man who accepted the end of this present life by shedding his blood after the long imprisonment. He preached the freedom of heavenly peace, yet was thrown into irons by ungodly men. He was locked away in the darkness of prison, through he came bearing witness to the Light of life and deserved to be called a bright and shining lamp by that Light itself, which is Christ.

To endure temporal agonies for the sake of the truth was not a heavy burden for such men as John; rather it was easily borne and even desirable, for he knew eternal joy would be his reward. Since death was ever at hand, such men considered it a blessing to embrace it and thus gain the reward of eternal life by acknowledging Christ's name. Hence the apostle Paul rightly says: "You have been granted the privilege not only to believe in Christ but also to suffer for his sake." He tells us why it is Christ's gift that his chosen ones should suffer for him: "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us." - *From a homily by [Saint Bede](#) the Venerable on the death of John the Baptist*

Herodias harbored a grudge against him and wanted to kill him but was unable to do so. Herod feared John, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man, and kept him in custody. When he heard him speak he was very much perplexed, yet he liked to listen to him. She had an opportunity one day when Herod, on his birthday, gave a banquet for his courtiers, his military officers and the leading men of Galilee. Herodias's own daughter came in and performed a dance that delighted Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask of me whatever you wish and I will grant it to you." She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the Baptist." The girl hurried back to the king's presence and made her request, "I want you to give me at once on a platter the head of John the Baptist." The king was deeply distressed, but because of his oaths and the guests he did not wish to break his word to her. So he promptly dispatched an executioner with orders to bring back his head. He went off and beheaded him in the [prison](#). He brought in the head on a platter and gave it to the girl. The girl in turn gave it to her [mother](#). When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb. - *Mark 6:19-29*