

LIVES OF THE SAINTS

ST. SEBASTIAN - January 20th

Son of wealthy parents. Became captain of the soldiers who guarded the Roman Emperor. Sebastian visited the Christians in prison and brought them food and clothing. By his witness he converted soldiers, a governor of Rome and many others. He was accused of being a Christian and sentenced to death. Soldiers shot him with arrows but a Christian woman thinking he was dead took him home to prepare for burial but discovered he was still alive. Sebastian recovered and went back to the Emperor and begged him to be kind to the Christians. This time he was beaten to death with clubs. He is mentioned in books as early as 350 AD. Patron saint of athletes.

ST. AGNES - January 21st - ROME, ITALY

When she was 12 she was led to the altar of the pagan goddess Minerva to worship. Instead Agnes made the sign of the cross. Soldiers bound her hand and feet, but her hands were so small the chains slipped off her wrists. When the judge learned Agnes was not afraid of pain, they tried to embarrass her by stripping her of her clothes and making her stand in a public street before other pagans. Agnes was offered the hand of a rich young man in marriage but she answered "Christ is my spouse. He chose me first and His I will be." For this she was put to death. The name Agnes means "lamb".

ST. FRANCIS de SALES - January 24th

Born in a castle in France in 1567. He said: "Jesus is the teach of holiness. I go to Him because I want Him to teach me how to become a saint. Of what use to me is all I learn in school if I do not become holy?" Francis became a lawyer then a priest. He brought many back to God by his preaching and kindness. He eventually became a Bishop. He wrote many books and is honored as the patron saint of spiritual writers.

ST. ANGELA MERICI - January 27th

Was born in Italy in 1470 and became a member of the Third Order of St. Francis at age 15. In a vision God revealed to her that she would help a group of women to give themselves to the service of God. When she was 22, she gathered 12 friends and began the first teaching order of women to be founded in the Church. The Ursuline Order – named after their patron St. Ursula.

The women lived a holy life in their own families. They met for study and prayer and taught religion to poor children. Angela is the patroness for teachers of young people.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS - January 28th

Thomas joined the Dominicans after his university studies at Dominican. However his mother and brothers were against this idea and the Pope got involved to tell his family not to interfere with Thomas' vocation.

Thomas rejoined the Dominicans and studied in France and Germany, finally becoming a priest. He is known for writing many books about the teachings of the Catholic Church and since he was one of the greatest teachers of the Church he is called "Doctor" of the Church. He died at age 47 and is the patron saint of Catholic Schools.

ST. DYMPHNA - May 15th - IRELAND

Her father was a wealthy chieftain in the 7th century. Her Christian mother died when Dymphna was 14. Her father tried to find another woman to marry him and when none could be found he planned to marry his daughter, Dymphna. Dymphna fled to Belgium with a priest and two friends. Her father found them, cut off the priest's head and when Dymphna refused to return with her father, her father killed her. She was 15.

St. Dymphna is the patron saint of those who suffer with mental illness, because her father acted as a man out of his mind.

ST. ISIDORE - May 15th

Was born in Madrid, Spain in the 12th century. He was a farmer who never missed daily Mass. Some complained that he must neglect his work in order to go to Mass but Isidore said: "I know, sir, that I am your servant but I have another Master as well, to whom I owe service and obedience."

His nobleman Master saw two strangers helping Isidore while he was ploughing. Legend has it the two men were angels sent by God to share in Isidore's work in return for his attending Mass so faithfully.

ST. RITA -- May 22nd

Rita wanted to enter the convent at an early age but her parents arranged a marriage for her. She was a good wife and mother but her husband mistreated her and taught their children his evil ways. He did repent for his sins before he died and Rita entered the convent of Augustinian nuns. She spent much time in prayer, penance and good works. Legend has it once while in prayer she asked to suffer like Jesus and a thorn from a crucifix struck her on the forehead.

ST. JOAN OF ARC - May 30th

Joan was born in France in 1412. She prayed often at a chapel near her family's farm. When she was 17 she heard a voice from God (St. Catherine?) calling her to drive the enemies of France from the land. She went to the (defeated) King and asked for a small army. Her request was granted and she went before her soldiers carrying a banner with the names of Jesus and Mary. Her soldiers were filled with courage and drove the British army away.

She was imprisoned for 9 months by some enemies. She was asked why she went to confession regularly. She replied: "My soul can never be made too clean. I firmly believe that I shall surely be saved."

She was burned to death while she cried out the name of Jesus.

ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA - June 21st

Aloysius lived in the family castle in Italy. When he spent time as a boy with his father in the army and he picked up vulgar language, his mother scolded him and taught him it was a terrible thing to offend God. Aloysius turned to prayer and thought more about God. His motto was: "I was born for greater things." At 20 he gave up his rights to family lands and became a Jesuit novice. He took care of sick people in a hospital until he himself became painfully ill. He died gazing at the crucifix which gave him strength to endure his suffering. He was 23. He is a patron saint of young people.

ST. MARIA GORETTI - JULY 6th

Maria was a beautiful 12 year old Italian girl. One day an older farmworker wanted to do wrong with her. She fought him off but was stabbed 14 times. She was taken to a hospital where with a priest, she forgave her murderer. She said, "I forgive him for the love of Jesus and I want him to be with me in heaven. May God forgive him!" In 1902 Maria died kissing the crucifix and holding a medal of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was chosen to be the patron of boys and girls who they might be pure.

ST. BENEDICT - July 11th

Was born in the year 480 AD to a noble family of Rome. He went to a mountain cave forty miles away to live for 3 years. Legend has it a raven sometimes brought him food. People heard about this holy man and soon more than 140 monks joined him at a monastery. They prayed, farmed, taught school and fed the poor.

His motto was “Pray and work.”

Eventually thousands of followers call Benedictines would go out to teach all through Europe. Today there are Benedictine monasteries all over the world.

ST. TARCISIUS - August 15th

Tarcisus lived in 3rd century Rome where he went to Mass in the catacombs because Christians were persecuted by the pagans. One day he was taking Holy Communion to the Christian martyrs in prison when he was caught and beaten. He did not give up the Eucharist. Christians loved the Blessed Sacrament. Mass and Holy Communion gave them strength to die for their faith.

We ask St. Tarcisus for a greater love of Jesus in Holy Communion.

ST. ROSE OF LIMA - August 27th

Rose was born in Peru (South America) obedient, happy, helpful, beautiful but did not choose to wear beautiful clothes. Focused on the beauty of the soul as more important. Refused to marry a rich young man with a beautiful home and servants. She wanted to serve God. She visited the poor and brought them food. Died at age 31. She is the first saint of the Americas.

ST. AUGUSTINE - August 28th

Was born in North Africa in 354 AD

His mother urged her son to lead a good life. However he fell into bad company and read bad books and led an evil selfish life. His mother prayed for him for over 13 years and one day Augustine decided to become a Christian at age 33. He became a priest 3 years later and a bishop 5 years after that. He preached often and wrote many books during 35 years as Bishop of Hippo in North Africa. He died in 430 AD and is honored as “Doctor” of the Church and is a patron saint of theologians.

ST. THERESE OF THE CHILD JESUS - October 1st

She became very close to Jesus at a young age. She entered a convent at age 15. She wanted to help save souls by prayer, sacrifice and suffering. Her “Little Way” means loving and trusting in God as a child. She died at 24 in 1897 saying: “I love Him! My God, I love You!”

Therese is the patroness of the foreign missions.

ST. CHARLES BORROMEIO - November 4th

Was born in 1538 to a noble family in a castle in Italy. When he was only 22 Pope Pius made him a cardinal & archbishop of Milan. Charles was a great teacher and writer during the “Reformation”. His great work was in the Council of Trent. He founded schools, seminaries and hospitals. He is the patron of seminaries and catechists.

ST. TERESA OF AVILA - October 15th

St. Teresa was born at Avila in Spain in 1515. She joined the Carmelite Order of nuns, and made great progress in the way of following Jesus. She later reformed the Order in spite of much resistance, wrote great books about doctrine. She died at Avila in 1582. The Carmelites are cloistered nuns, who do not leave their monastery, pray much and lead very simple and austere lives. We had a Carmelite Monastery on Jefferson Road in Rochester. It recently closed.

ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH - October 17th

St. Ignatius was a successor of St. Peter as bishop of Antioch in Asia Minor. Condemned to death by being thrown to wild animals, he was brought to Rome for execution and was martyred there in 107. On the journey to Rome he wrote seven letters to different churches. At Antioch, this day was observed in his memory as early as the fourth century.

ST. LUKE, EVANGELIST - October 18th

St. Luke was born of a pagan family. Converted to the faith, he became a fellow-worker of the apostle Paul. He compiled one of the gospels, and handed down an account of the beginnings of the Church in the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, which tells of events up to the time of St. Paul’s first sojourn in Rome.

NORTH AMERICAN MARTYRS - October 19th

Not all saints lived in far distant countries. These martyrs lived among the Indians here in America between 1642 and 1649. After fearful torture, they were killed by the Indians. These men worked hard to bring the natives to the true faith. Most were French. Three of them were killed at Auriesville, here in New York State. At least one, St. Isaac Jogues, probably passed through this part of the state. Imagine, a great missionary and saint, living and working right here where we are now learning about our faith!

ST. FRANCES CABRINI - November 13th

Was born in Italy in 1850 to a family of 13 children. At a young age she was too sick to become a Sister so she helped her parents and then her brother and sister with their work. She taught in a school for girls and was asked to start a missionary order to care for poor children in schools and hospitals. Pope Leo XIII sent her to the United States in 1889 where she began working among the Italian people of New York.

She became an American citizen.

“Mother Cabrini” started 67 orphanages, schools and hospitals in 35 years. She was the 1st United States citizen to become a saint (1946).

ST. ELIZABETH - November 17th

Was the daughter of the King of Hungary. She married a German prince and led a life of prayer, sacrifice and service to the poor and sick. Wore simple clothing and took bread to hundreds of the poor who called her “Dear St. Elizabeth”. One day her husband tried to stop her and when he searched her he found only roses (instead of the bread she was carrying). After her husband’s death, she gave her money to the poor and worked to support her family. She joined the Third Order of St. Francis and spent her last years caring for the poor in a hospital. She died at age 24 and is the patron of hospitals.

ST. CECILIA -- November 22nd

Famous and loved of the Roman martyrs.

Her husband converted to Christianity and was also martyred along with his brother. She refused to sacrifice to the Roman gods. The judge sentenced her to death but her death did not come easily. She is honored as the patroness of religious music. She has become a symbol of the church’s teaching that good music is an important part of liturgy.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER -- December 3rd

Was born in 1506 in Spain to noble parents. Went to Paris to become a teacher. Joined St. Ignatius and four others who vowed to work for the conversion of souls. They formed the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). He traveled to India to preach and teach and help the sick. He helped thousands convert. He sailed in 1549 for Japan where thousands more were brought to the faith.

St. Francis Xavier is the patron of foreign missions. He is pictured with a flaming heart which meant his great love for God and for people's souls.

ST. LUCY - December 13th

Lucy lived in pagan Syracuse, Sicily about 300 AD. Offered herself to God at a young age. Refused to marry a rich young man who then accused her of being Christian. The governor tried her and attempted to make her commit sin. She responded by saying "You see now that I am the temple of the Holy Spirit and that He protects me." A fire was lit to kill her but she was not harmed. One legend has it that her eyes were put out then healed. Her name means "light". St. Lucy is invoked by those with eye problems.

KATERI TEKAKWITHA

Born near Auriesville, NY in 1656, the daughter of a fierce Mohawk warrior. Jesuit missionaries brought the Catholic Faith to the Mohawk Valley. Her mother died of smallpox when she was 4. She had also contracted smallpox, which left her face disfigured. She was baptized at age 20 and said she would rather die than give up her faith. She went to a Christian colony of Indians in Canada where she attended Mass daily and prayed much. She died at age 24 and is known as the "Lily of the Mohawks."