

# SAINT OF THE DAY



# NOVEMBER

## **November 1:**        *Solemnity of All Saints*

Today, the Church remembers collectively all the saints. The feast day began in the 4<sup>th</sup> century as a day to honor martyrs of the Church, but later changed to a day to remember all holy men and women. The first official papal canonization of a saint took place in 993. Today we remember all saints—famous or obscure—for the amazing example they set for us how to follow in the footsteps of Christ.

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## **November 2:**        *Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed*

Praying for those who have died has been a part of Christian worship since the earliest days of the Church. This official feast day was begun by St. Odilo in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, who instructed the monks of Cluny to pray the Office for the Dead the day after the feast of All Saints. On this day we pray for the many souls in Purgatory with the knowledge that our fervent prayers can help them finally achieve union with God in Heaven.

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## **November 3:**        *St. Martin de Porres*

Martin de Porres, son of a wealthy Spaniard and a freed black woman from Panama, grew up in poverty in Lima, Peru in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. Apprenticed to a barber-surgeon at a young age, he joined the Dominicans at 15 as a lay helper. He used his simple medical knowledge to care for the poor and sick. His role in the convent grew, and he eventually became a fully professed brother. He ran the infirmary, cared for animals, collected alms for the poor, and devoted his nights to lengthy prayers before the Blessed Sacrament. Endowed with many spiritual gifts, including bilocation, St. Martin was always seeking ways to show charity to others, regardless of their race. He died in 1639 and is the patron saint of African-Americans.

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## **November 4:**        *St. Charles Borromeo*

St. Charles Borromeo, who lived in Italy from 1538-1584, is remembered as a great reformer of the Church during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A member of the powerful Medici family, his uncle was Pope Pius IV. He became a priest at the age of 25 and, because of his family connections, was immediately thrust into some important positions within the Church. He was named Secretary of State in 1559 and helped reconvene the Council of Trent in 1562. He oversaw the writing of the catechism, missal and breviary for the Council, helped

establish seminaries, founded the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine for educating young children, and helped promote the Jesuit missions in England. He continued to work tirelessly to institute Church reforms until his death in 1584.

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## **November 5:**      *Ss. Zechariah and Elizabeth*

Zechariah and Elizabeth were the parents of John the Baptist. Zechariah was a priest and Elizabeth was the cousin of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. In the Gospel of Luke we are told, “Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly” (Luke 1:6). In their old age, an angel visited Zechariah and told him Elizabeth would bear a son and they should name him John. Zechariah doubted this and lost his ability to speak. During her pregnancy, Elizabeth was visited by Mary and called out to her, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!” (Luke 1:42). After the birth of John, Zechariah’s speech was restored to him. He then spoke the hymn of praise known as the Canticle of Zechariah.

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## **November 6:**      *St. Leonard*

St. Leonard, a nobleman in the court of Clovis I, converted to Christianity in 496 under the influence of St. Remigius. He became a monk and hermit. King Clovis granted him the right to free any prisoner he met that he deemed worthy of release. After the wife of Clovis safely delivered after a difficult labor, Clovis granted St. Leonard a large piece of land in thanks for Leonard’s prayers. He founded Noblac Monastery there, now the site of the village of St. Leonard, and evangelized the surrounding community until his death. St. Leonard is the patron of people in prison and of women in labor.

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## **November 7:**      *St. Ernest, Martyr*

St. Ernest was a 12<sup>th</sup> century abbot of a Benedictine abbey in Germany. When Conrad III, after hearing St. Bernard of Clairvaux preach the Second Crusades, organized a crusade to the Holy Land, St. Ernest went along to fight. He stayed there and evangelized in Arabia and Persia. He was captured and taken to Mecca, where he was martyred in 1148.

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## **November 8:**      *Blessed John Duns Scotus*

Blessed John Duns Scotus was one of the most important philosophers and theologians of the Middle Ages. He lived in Scotland was ordained a Franciscan priest in 1291. From then until his death in 1308, he studied at Oxford and lectured at the prestigious University of Paris. During this time he wrote extensively, exploring the works of Aristotle, Aquinas, and many Muslim philosophers. His writing was instrumental in defining the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception by Pope Pius IX.

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## **November 9:**      *Dedication of St. John Lateran Church*

The archbasilica of St. John Lateran is the most important church in Roman Catholicism since it is the cathedral church of the Diocese of Rome and the seat of the Bishop of Rome—the Pope. It is the oldest of the four Papa Basilicas in Rome. Emperor Constantine, who inherited the property through his wife, gave it to the Bishop of Rome around 313. The palace basilica was extended and Pope St. Sylvester I was the first Bishop of Rome to claim it as his seat. He dedicated the church, and the adjoining Lateran Palace, in 324. This was the home of the popes until the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The current church building dates from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, with the exterior façade finished in 1718.

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## **November 10:**      *St. Leo the Great, Pope and Doctor*

St. Leo was Pope from 440-461. He proved to be a brilliant administrator, prolific writer, and courageous defender of Rome. Famously, in 452 he met Attila the Hun and persuaded him not to invade Rome. He also worked hard to promote the doctrines of the Church, particularly the doctrine of Christ's union of two natures—fully human and fully divine. St. Leo diligently battled heresy and firmly established the Bishop of Rome as the successor of Peter and head of the universal Church. He is the first pope to be called "the Great."

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## **November 11:**      *St. Martin of Tours, Bishop*

St. Martin of Tours was born into a pagan family in 316. When he was ten he went against the wishes of his parents and knocked on the door of a Christian church and asked to become a catechumen. However, he was forced to join the army as a teenager. On a bitterly cold day, he came across a beggar and tore his cloak in half to share with the man. Later, St. Martin was baptized and left the army. He was ordained by St. Hilary and lived as a hermit.

In 361, St. Martin established the first monastery in Gaul. In 371, he was compelled by the people of Tours to become bishop. He continued to live a simple and humble life, to preach and evangelize, and to combat heresy. He died in 397.

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### **November 12:**     *St. Josaphat, Bishop and Martyr*

St. Josaphat was a monk in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, born in Polish-Lithuania in 1580. Around that time, the Orthodox bishops of Kiev decided to bring their community in union with the Roman Catholic Church. St. Josaphat grew up with many Orthodox Christians who were violently opposed to this union. He entered the monastery with the hope of working for greater Christian unity and later became a bishop, but he was met with opposition at every turn. There were several uprisings by the Orthodox Christians, including in 1623 when St. Josaphat was killed. He is held up as a martyr to Christian unity.

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### **November 13:**     *St. Frances Xavier Cabrini*

Frances was born in Italy in 1850. She was a school teacher in an orphanage in Italy. Frances founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart and, with seven other women, cared for poor children in schools and hospitals. Pope Leo XIII asked her to go to New York City to work with Italian immigrants. Although dreadfully afraid of water, she traveled to New York and in the next thirty years continued to travel, founding more than fifty schools, hospitals, and orphanages in England, France, Spain, and North and South America. She was canonized in 1946 and was the first citizen of the United States to be so recognized.

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### **November 14:**     *St. Nicholas Tavelic and Companions*

Born in 1340 to a wealthy family, St. Nicholas was inspired by the life of St. Francis to give up his wealth and devote his life to the Church. He became a Franciscan and was sent as a missionary to Bosnia. In 1384, he requested to be sent to the Holy Land, where the Franciscans has been given the responsibility of caring for the holy shrines. He studied Arabic and helped care for Christian pilgrims. He also strove to evangelize Muslims. In 1391, Nicholas and three other friars went to a large Mosque in Jerusalem and preached the Gospel to the people gathered there. There were arrested and martyred three days later.

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## **November 15:**     *St. Albert the Great, Doctor*

St. Albert was a German Dominican living during the 13<sup>th</sup> century. A brilliant philosopher, Albert chose to offer up his intellectual gifts to the Church. He was a master of theology at the University of Paris, where one of his students was St. Thomas Aquinas. St. Albert promoted the writings of ancient philosophers, such as Aristotle. Most especially, he worked to change attitudes towards science, believing that science and religion could and should peacefully coexist. He wrote a large book of general knowledge covering many topics, such as natural science, logic, math, astronomy, and economics. Even during his life, he was known as Albertus Magnus—Albert the Great. He died in 1280 and is the patron saint of scientists and philosophers.

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## **November 16:**     *St. Margaret of Scotland*

Margaret, a member of the Anglo-Saxon royal family, was born in 1045. She spent her early life in exile with her family in Hungary, but returned to England as a young child. Civil unrest forced her flee again as a teenager. This time she found refuge in Scotland at the court of King Malcolm III. In 1070, Margaret married the king and became Queen Margaret of Scotland and had eight children. She was known for her humble piety and love for the poor, whom she visited and cared for in person. Her love of the Church inspired her husband and children, and many good reforms were made in the Scottish Church. Queen Margaret was deeply loved by her people as a just and holy ruler. She died in 1093. Her son, King David I of Scotland, also became a saint.

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## **November 17:**     *St. Elizabeth of Hungary*

St. Elizabeth of Hungary, daughter of the King of Hungary, lived an exemplary life of simplicity and pious devotion despite being a wealthy princess. Born in 1207, she married a German count when she was just 14. It was a happy marriage, and the couple had three children. After meeting some Franciscan friars in 1223, Elizabeth was inspired to follow their lifestyle—one of austerity and special care for the poor. She personally distributed bread and alms each day, and founded a hospital for the poor. Her husband died suddenly in 1227, while Elizabeth was pregnant with their third child. After the birth, Elizabeth made a vow of celibacy and became a Third Order Franciscan. She founded another hospital for the poor and worked there until her death at the age of 23 in 1231. Because she gave bread to the poor, she is the patron saint of bakers.

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## **November 18:**     *St. Rose Philippine Duchesne*

Rose Philippine Duchesne, born in France in 1769, set aside her wealthy upbringing to become a Visitation nun in 1788. The outbreak of the French Revolution, which led to violence against priests and nuns, forced the closure of her convent. After the violence died down, St. Rose joined the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1805. In 1818, she was chosen to lead a group of sisters to the Louisiana territory and founded a convent and school in a log cabin in St. Charles, Missouri. Despite the extreme hardships of pioneer life, she created many schools from Louisiana to Colorado. In Kansas, she founded a school for Native American children and evangelized the tribes there. The Native Americans named her “Woman Who Always Prays.” She died in Missouri in 1852.

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## **November 19:**     *Our Lady of Divine Providence*

On November 19, 1969 Pope Paul VI declared Our Lady, Mother of Divine Providence, principal patroness of the island of Puerto Rico, since November 19 was the date that the island was discovered. The image of Our Lady that is so special to the people of Puerto Rico shows the Divine Child sleeping peacefully in the Virgin Mary’s arms. However, the name and worship of Our Lady of the Divine Providence originated in Italy in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, then spread to Spain and then to Puerto Rico.

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## **November 20:**     *St. Bernward of Hildesheim, Bishop*

St. Bernward, Bishop of Hildesheim, lived from 960-1022 in Germany. Born to a noble Saxon family, he studied painting, architecture and metal sculpture along with his theological studies to become a priest. Although he tutored the son of the Saxon emperor and managed his diocese ably and with loving charity, St. Bernward is best known for his artistic metal work and influence on Romanesque architecture. He made chalices, crosses, candlesticks and other religious items from gold and silver. His most famous work is a pair of massive bronze doors detailing scenes from the life of Adam and Eve and the life of Christ, set in St. Mary’s Cathedral in Hildesheim.

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## **November 21:**     *Presentation of Mary*

The Presentation of Mary is a unique feast day. Although the event is not in the Bible, we learn from other sources that Mary’s parents, Ann and Joachim, offered Mary to God in the

Temple when she was only three years old. We celebrate this event because it helps us to understand Mary's unique holiness, which was nurtured from the very beginning of her life.

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## **November 22:**     *St. Cecilia, Martyr*

St. Cecilia was an early Christian martyr living in Rome, probably in the early part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. She came from a wealthy family and was betrothed to a young Roman named Valerian, whom she converted to Christianity along with his brother. When Valerian and his brother were martyred, Cecilia was arrested and condemned to die. She initially survived the execution, but died three days later after receiving Holy Communion. Legends say she died while singing praises to God, and for this reason St. Cecilia is the patron saint of musicians. A church founded in her house in Rome in the 5<sup>th</sup> century exists in the same spot today, one of the oldest known sites for an early Christian church in Rome.

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## **November 23:**     *Bl. Miguel Augustin Pro*

Blessed Miguel Augustin Pro was a Mexican Jesuit priest. He was born in Guadalupe in 1891 and entered the novitiate in 1911. However, political upheaval led to the persecution of Catholics. Miguel fled to the US and then was sent to study in Spain. After his ordination in 1926, he returned to Mexico to begin his ministry in secret. Despite suffering an illness, he was known to be always joyful. A year later, Fr. Pro and two of his brothers were arrested on false charges and imprisoned. Without any trial, Fr. Pro sentenced to death. With his last breath he forgave his killers, blessed them, and shouted "Viva Christo Rey!" (Long live Christ the King!).

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## **November 24:**     *The Martyrs of Vietnam*

Between 1798 and 1861, many Catholics were killed for their faith in Vietnam. Jesuit and Dominican missionaries from Portugal first came to the area now known as Vietnam in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, but Christianity was forbidden. Later, after a mission school was founded in Paris, many more priests and nuns arrived in Vietnam to baptize and minister to the local people. Christians there were ordered to denounce their faith and trample on crucifixes, and they were killed if they refused. Bishops, priests, nuns and regular believers, European and Vietnamese, died for their faith, including St. Andrew Dung-Lac, St. Vincente Liem de la Paz, St. Joachim Ho, St. Stephen Vinh, St. Thephane Venard, and hundreds of



others. At this time, tensions remain between the Vietnamese government and faithful Catholics.

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### **November 25:**     *St. Catherine of Alexandria, Martyr*

Catherine of Alexandria, born in 282, was an early Christian martyr. Daughter of pagan nobility, she was highly educated, beautiful and wealthy. When she was 18, she had a dream in which the Virgin Mary betrothed her to Christ and she converted to Christianity. She tried to convince the Roman Emperor Maxentius to stop persecuting Christians. He arranged for her to debate a large number of pagan philosophers, in hopes that they would appeal to her intellect and convince her to give up the Church. However, Catherine won the debate and converted all of the philosophers. She was imprisoned, but continued converting many people who came to visit her in prison. St. Catherine was martyred in 305.

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### **November 26:**     *St. Leonard of Port Maurice*

Born to the family of a ship captain in Italy in 1676, St. Leonard became a Franciscan and was ordained in 1703. Health problems forced him to return home to Port Maurice and, after he recovered, he began preaching in the surrounding area. He quickly became known for his preaching abilities. Through the many missions he preached, he worked to spread devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacred Heart, the Stations of the Cross, and the Immaculate Conception. He died in Rome in 1751.

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### **November 27:**     *Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal*

The Miraculous Medal came from a vision given to St. Catherine Laboure in 1830. Our Lady appeared to St. Catherine standing on a white globe with rays of light streaming from her fingers with the words “O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.” Beginning in 1832, 20,000 medals bearing this image were distributed around Paris and many miracles began to be reported. Many millions of medals have been distributed since then. These medals are an approved sacramental of the Church.

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## **November 28:**     *St. Catherine Labouré*

St. Catherine Labouré, born in 1806, joined the Daughters of Charity, a nursing order in Paris, France, when she was very young woman. In 1830, she experienced the first of three visions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. These visions, in which Our Lady appeared standing on a globe, with rays of light coming from her hands, became the foundation for the Miraculous Medal. Despite dealing with the doubt and disbelief of many around her, St. Catherine humbly persisted in carrying out the mission given to her. The medals were first made in 1832 and have since become an official sacramental of the Church. St. Catherine lived as a nun and nurse for the remainder of her life. She revealed that she was the visionary behind the medals only a few months before her death in 1876.

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## **November 29:**     *St. Brendan of Birr*

St. Brendan was a monk living in the earliest days of Christianity in Ireland. He was one of twelve students of St. Finian, and these twelve became known as the Twelve Apostles of Ireland because of their role in spreading Christianity. St. Brendan founded a monastery at Birr and became an important person in the early Church. His monastery created beautiful manuscripts, some of which still exist. St. Brendan died in 573.

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## **November 30:**     *Feast of St. Andrew, Apostle*

St. Andrew was one of the Twelve Apostles and the brother of St. Peter. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus sees Andrew and Peter (called Simon) fishing and calls out to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:18-20). In the Gospels of John, we are told that Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. When John pointed to Jesus and said, “Behold the Lamb of God,” Andrew left John to follow Jesus (John 1:35-40). However, we know very little about his life in the early Church. It is commonly believed that he preached the Gospels in Greece and Turkey and was crucified at Patras.

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