

SAINT OF THE DAY



SEPTEMBER

September 1: *St. Giles, Abbot*

St. Giles was a pious and learned nobleman in the 7th century who left his home to live in the wilderness of France. He was accidentally shot with an arrow by the king's hunters, but survived. He founded a monastery, and the monks there followed the Rule of St. Benedict. He is the patron of the physically disabled.

September 2: *St. Stephen, King of Hungary*

St. Stephen was the first king of Hungary and remains their most popular saint. He was born a pagan and was baptized by St. Adalbert of Prague in 985. When he became king in 997, he set out to establish Hungary as a Christian nation. He founded many hospices for pilgrims near holy sites in Italy and the Middle East. He died on the Feast of the Assumption in 1038.

September 3: *St. Gregory the Great, Pope and Doctor*

Gregory is one of the most important figures in the development of the early Church. Born to a wealthy family in the 6th century, Gregory gave up a promising political career to become a monk. He founded six monasteries in Sicily and one in his own home in Rome. He returned to Rome and became abbot of St. Andrew's Monastery, which thrived under his leadership. He was elected Pope in 590. During the fourteen years of his papacy, Gregory reformed the liturgy, laid out guidelines for the duties of bishops, and aided the poor. He also instituted the Stations of the Cross. He is the patron saint of teachers.

September 4: *St. Rose of Viterbo*

St. Rose of Viterbo demonstrated great holiness from the beginning of her short life. Born in 1233 in Verterbo, Italy, Rose began living a life of seclusion and penance at the age of seven. When her health failed, she was cured by the Blessed Virgin Mary. Too poor to enter the Franciscan convent, Rose spent two years preaching penance and was eventually expelled from Viterbo. She died at the age of 17 and was later buried at the same convent that rejected her. Her body remains incorrupt. She is the patron of those in exile.

September 5: *St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta*

Agnes Gonxka Bojaxhia was born in Yugoslavia on August 27, 1910. Active in her home parish, she felt called to be a missionary. At the age of eighteen, she joined the Sisters of Loretto in Ireland and journeyed to India in 1929. For the next seventeen years, she taught at St. Mary's School for girls in Calcutta. On September 10th, 1946, Mother Teresa received a "call within a call" and she felt a newfound desire to help the poor and bring souls to Jesus. She formed a new religious community, the Missionaries of Charity. They opened a home for the dying and went out into the streets to work with the poorest of the poor in the slums. They cared for them, believing, as Christians, that all people are worthy of love because they have been made in the image and likeness of God. The Missionaries of Charity grew quickly and spread their work to many other countries. Mother Teresa was awarded the Pope John XXIII Peace Prize in 1971 and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979, as well as many other international accolades. She died on September 5, 1997 and was beatified by St. John Paul II in 2003.

September 6: *St. Eleutherius, Abbot*

A close friend of St. Gregory the Great, St. Eleutherius was a 6th century abbot known for his holy simplicity. St. Gregory the Great was not able to fast on Easter-eve on account of extreme weakness. He engaged this saint to go with him to the Church of St. Andrew. St. Gregory asked St. Eleutherius to offer up his prayers to God for his health, that he might join the faithful in that solemn practice of penance. Eleutherius prayed with many tears, and the Pope, coming out of the church, found that he was enabled to perform the fast as he desired. It is also said that St. Eleutherius raised a dead man to life. Resigning his abbacy, he died in St. Andrew's monastery in Rome about the year 585.

September 7: *St. Cloud*

St. Cloud was born in 522, grandson of Clovis, King of the Franks. When his uncle plotted to kill him and take away his inheritance, he fled to safety and abandoned all his wealth. He never attempted to recover his kingdom. Instead, he was raised by his grandmother, St. Clothide, in Paris. He became a hermit and disciple of St. Severinus of Noricum, and was ordained a priest in 551. Visited by many for counsel and healing, St. Cloud died at the age of thirty-six in 560.

September 8: *Feast of the Birth of Mary*

Mary was the daughter of Saints Ann and Joachim. They prayed that God would bless them with a child, and He rewarded their faithfulness with a daughter set apart to be the mother of the Son of God. Because of this, she was conceived and born immaculate and full of grace. We do not know from the Gospels the exact date of Mary's birth. However, Christians have celebrated it on September 8th since the 7th century. Mary's birth is one of only three celebrated on the liturgical calendar.

September 9: *St. Peter Claver, Priest*

St. Peter Claver was born in Spain in 1580. He entered the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1602. He heard and followed the call to the missions. St. Peter Claver worked in Columbia among the black slaves until his death on September 8, 1654. He is the patron saint of slaves and African missions.

September 10: *St. Nicholas of Tolentino*

Nicholas of Tolentino, patron of holy souls, was an Italian mystic. His parents had been childless for many years but became pregnant after praying at the shrine of St. Nicholas of Myra, after whom they named their son. At the age of eighteen, Nicholas became an Augustinian friar. He had visions of angels telling him to go to the city of Tolentino. He spent the rest of his life there working for peace between two warring factions in the city. Nicholas also had many visions of Purgatory and because of this maintained a special devotion to pray for the recently deceased. When very ill, Nicholas had a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saints Augustine and Monica. They told him to eat a certain type of bread roll dipped in water. He did this and was immediately cured. This bread became known as Saint Nicholas Bread and is still distributed at his shrine. He died in 1306. At his canonization, Nicholas was credited with three hundred miracles.

September 11: *St. John Gabriel Perboyre, Priest and Martyr*

Born in France in 1802, St. John Gabriel was raised in a very holy family. Originally sent to the seminary to help his younger brother get adjusted, St. John Gabriel soon realized he had a vocation of his own. In 1818 he joined the Congregation of the Mission, founded by St. Vincent de Paul. He was first a missionary in his home country of France, working to re-

evangelize a country torn apart by the French Revolution. In 1835, he was sent to China, a country that new virtually nothing of Jesus Christ. The work there was difficult and dangerous. In 1839, persecution against Christians became widespread and St. John Gabriel was arrested. Dragged from trial to trial, he was repeatedly asked to deny Christ and he repeatedly said, "I would sooner die than deny my faith!" After much suffering, St. John Gabriel Perboyre was martyred on September 11, 1840. He was canonized by St. John Paul II in 1996.

September 12: *Feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary*

In accordance with Jewish custom, Mary's parents named her several days after her birth and we celebrate this feast after the Feast of the Birth of Mary. We call Mary by many names, including "Morning Star," "Star of the Sea," and "Mother of the Lord." On this day dedicated to the Holy Name of Mary let us repeat that wonderful prayer of Saint Bernard, responding to Pope Benedict XVI's call to "invite everyone to become a trusting child before Mary, even as the Son of God did. Saint Bernard says, and we say with him: 'Look to the star of the sea, call upon Mary... in danger, in distress, in doubt, think of Mary, call upon Mary. May her name never be far from your lips, or far from your heart ... If you follow her, you will not stray; if you pray to her, you will not despair; if you turn your thoughts to her, you will not err. If she holds you, you will not fall; if she protects you, you need not fear; if she is your guide, you will not tire; if she is gracious to you, you will surely reach your destination'"(Benedict XVI, address at Heiligenkreuz Abbey, September 9, 2007).

September 13: *St. John Chrysostom, Priest and Doctor*

St. John, named Chrysostom (golden-mouthed) on account of his eloquence, is known for his beautiful and poetic writings. Born in Antioch in 344, he wished to become a hermit; however, his poor health forced him back to the city where he became a priest in 386. He quickly became popular for his eloquent homilies and insightful moral teaching. He tried to connect Bible stories to people's everyday lives and emphasized the importance of the poor. Speaking out against the extravagances of the rich meant that he made many enemies. He was banished from Constantinople in 403 and spent the remaining four years of his life traveling in exile until his death in 407.

September 14: *Feast of the Triumph of the Cross*

This feast commemorates the recovery of the Holy Cross, which had been placed on Mt. Calvary by St. Helena and preserved in Jerusalem. However, Chosroas, King of the Persians, took the Cross. The precious relic was recovered by Emperor Heraclius in 629. On this day, we also celebrate the Cross itself, on which Jesus our Savior was raised. We make the Sign of the Cross before prayer, which helps us to turn our hearts and minds to God and is a special mark of our Christian faith.

September 15: *Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows*

Today, we remember how Mary, as the mother of Jesus, suffered greatly. There are seven events in particular that we recognize, called the Seven Sorrows. The Sorrows, which are all found in the Gospels, are the prophecy of Simeon (Lk. 2:34-35), the flight into Egypt to escape Herod (Mt. 2:13-21), the loss of Jesus for three days in the Temple (Lk. 2:41-50), meeting Jesus on the road Calvary (Jn. 19:17), the crucifixion and death of Jesus (Jn. 19:18-30), holding Jesus when He was taken down from the cross (Jn. 19:39-40), and Jesus laid in the tomb (Jn. 19:40-42). St. Bernard wrote, “Truly, O Blessed Mother, a sword has pierced your heart...He died in body through a love greater than anyone had known. She died in spirit through a love unlike any other since His.” Our Lady of Sorrows, pray for us.

September 16: *St. Cyprian, Bishop and Martyr*

Cyprian was bishop of Carthage and an important Early Christian writer. He was born around the beginning of the 3rd century in North Africa, where he received a classical education. After converting to Christianity, he became a bishop in 249 and eventually died a martyr at Carthage during the Christian persecution of Valerian in 258. His most famous work, “The Unity of the Church,” emphasizes the primacy of the Pope.

September 17: *St. Hildegard of Bingen, Doctor*

St. Hildegard was a Benedictine abbess, mystic, writer, composer, and artist who lived during the 12th century in what is now Germany. Her parents offered her as an oblate to the Church when she was just eight years old. Through her studies in the convent, she would become one of the most learned women of the time. She wrote on a wide range of subjects, including theology, philosophy, botany, medicine, music, and poetry. She composed *Ordo Virtutum*, now considered to be the earliest example of liturgical drama and the oldest morality play. She corresponded with many important people, such as Pope Eugene III, and

St. Bernard of Clairvaux, which was unheard of for a woman at that time. She was never formerly canonized, although long recognized as a saint by the Church. She was officially given the title of “saint” in 2012. Pope Benedict XVI proclaimed her a Doctor of the Church on October 7, 2012, calling her “an authentic teacher of theology and a profound scholar of natural science and music.”

September 18: *St. Joseph of Cupertino*

St. Joseph of Cupertino was born near Naples in 1603. He wanted to become a Franciscan at a young age but was rejected because of his difficulty in learning. He studied and worked hard, however, even agreeing to become a lowly stable hand to the monastery. His persistence paid off and he was admitted to the Franciscan Friars Minor, becoming a priest three years later in 1625. From the beginning of his life, he had ecstatic visions whenever God or holy things were referenced. In particular, many witnesses throughout his life saw him levitate during prayers. For this reason, he is the patron of flying and aviation.

September 19: *St. Januarius, Martyr*

Little is known about the life of St. Januarius. He was martyred during the persecution of Emperor Diocletian around 305. His body was taken to Naples and interred in the Cathedral, while a small amount of his blood was placed in a glass vial and sealed. Today, he is known for the ongoing miracle of the liquefaction of his blood. Usually kept dried in a small bottle, this blood liquefies and bubbles when exposed to the bodily relics of the saint. The Cathedral of Naples continues to celebrate this miracle three times a year, drawing huge crowds of pilgrims.

September 20: *Memorial of St. Andrew Kim Taegon, Priest and Martyr, Paul Chong Hasang, and Companions, Martyrs*

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, through the efforts of several lay persons, the Christian faith reached Korea, where a strong and vital Christian community flourished under lay leadership. During the persecutions of the 1800's, 103 members of the Christian community gave their lives as martyrs. Among the martyrs were bishops and priests, but for the most part they were laity - men and women, married and unmarried, children, young people, and elderly. All suffered greatly for the faith and consecrated the rich beginnings of the Church in Korea with their blood as martyrs.

September 21: *St. Matthew, Apostle*

St. Matthew was born in Capernaum and was also known as Levi. Jesus chose him to be one of the twelve apostles. Before his work with Jesus, he was a tax collector and therefore most likely more educated than some of the other apostles. Matthew was a witness to Jesus' death and resurrection. He first preached the Good News that Jesus taught in Judea, and later traveled to other countries. He wrote the Gospel of Matthew, which is the first of the Synoptic Gospels since he likely wrote it fifteen to twenty years after the resurrection of Jesus. Although we do not know for certain how he died, he is believed to have been martyred. In Christian art, St. Matthew is symbolized by an angel.

September 22: *St. Thomas of Villanova*

St. Thomas of Villanova was a Spanish friar of the Order of Saint Augustine who was a noted preacher, ascetic and religious writer of his day. He became an archbishop who was famous for the extent of his care for the poor of his See. In particular, St. Thomas wanted to help those in need rise out of poverty. He was known for his beautiful sermons and devotion to the Virgin Mary.

September 23: *St. Pio of Pietreclina (Padre Pio)*

In 1887, Francesco Forgione was born to peasant farmers in the small Italian village of Pietreclina. Drawn to holiness from the beginning, he became a Capuchin novice at the young age of sixteen. He became a priest in 1910 and was then called Padre Pio. In 1918, he received the physical wounds of Christ, known as the stigmata, during prayer before a crucifix. These painful wounds stayed with him until his death and no doctor was ever able to find a natural cause. In addition to the stigmata, Padre Pio had the gift of bilocation and the ability to read the hearts of penitents. He was devoted to hearing confession, often spending twelve hours a day in the confessional. He even heard the confession of a young Polish priest in 1947, Fr. Karol Wojtyla, who later became St. John Paul II. A gifted spiritual director, Padre Pio had five rules for spiritual growth: weekly confession, daily Communion, spiritual reading, meditation, and examination of conscience. He died in 1968.

September 24: *Martyrs of Chalcedon*

The reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, which lasted from 284-305, was a particularly dangerous time for Christians. They were widely persecuted and many lost their lives. Today we remember forty-nine members of a choir in Chalcedon. They were asked to renounce their faith and perform sacrifices to the pagan Roman gods. When they refused, they were martyred in the public arena in 304.

September 25: *Bl. Herman of Reichenau*

Herman of Reichenau, born in 1013, had a severe physical disability (likely cerebral palsy) that left him nearly helpless from birth. He was left in the care of Reichenau Abbey in Switzerland as a child. The monks soon saw that his physical disability had not touched his mind and Herman was given a good education. Known to scholars all over Europe for his intellect, he was fluent in several languages, wrote mathematical treatises and poetry, and built his own musical instruments. Herman wrote two hymns to Our Lady that we still sing today—*Salve Regina* and *Alma Redemptoris Mater*.

September 26: *Sts. Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs*

St. Cosmas and St. Damian were twin brothers who lived in Turkey in the 3rd century, and both were doctors. They devoted their lives to charitably practicing medicine and never accepted payment for their work. By this example of charity, they converted many to Christianity. They were arrested during the Christian persecution under Diocletian. After refusing to deny their faith, they were martyred with their two younger brothers in 283.

September 27: *Memorial of St. Vincent de Paul, Priest*

Vincent was born in France in 1580. He spent his whole life finding ways to end human misery and suffering. He founded the Vincentian Order of priests and the Sisters of Charity to help the poor and the sick. He gathered funds to buy freedom for more than 1,200 galley slaves from North Africa. He died September 27, 1660 and was canonized in 1737.

September 28: *St. Lorenzo Ruiz and Companions, Martyrs*

Sixteen martyrs shed their blood for love of Jesus Christ during the 17th century in the city of Nagasaki, Japan. All of these men and women in various ways spread the Christian faith in the Philippine Islands, Formosa and Japan. Lawrence Ruiz was a Filipino, born to a Catholic family in 1600. He was educated by Dominican friars and worked as a calligrapher. He married a woman named Rosario and had two sons. His life was quiet and peaceful until 1636 when he was falsely accused of killing a man from Spain. He escaped on a ship with some Dominican priests and they sailed to Japan. There, they worked as missionaries but were arrested for being Christians in 1637. After much suffering, they were martyred. St. Lorenzo Ruiz was made the first Filipino saint by St. John Paul II in 1987.

September 29: *Feasts of Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael: Archangels*

The *Book of Revelation* tells how St. Michael defeated Lucifer in a heavenly battle. Michael, an archangel, is often portrayed clothed in armor, wearing sandals, and carrying a sword. The *Book of Daniel* describes him as the heavenly prince who stands guard over God's people.

St. Gabriel is often depicted as someone communicating God's message. In the Bible, he is seen in three events: 1) in the *Book of Daniel* in a vision concerning the Messiah; 2) in the temple with Zachary to announce the birth of John the Baptist, and 3) with Mary to deliver the message that she is to be the Mother of God.

St. Raphael appears in the *Book of Tobit* as a companion on the long journey that young Tobit must make: "*But Raphael said to them: 'No need to fear; you are safe. Thank God now and forever. As for me, when I came to you it was not out of any favor on my part, but because it was God's will. So continue to thank Him every day; praise Him with song.'*" (Tobit 12:17-18)

September 30: *Memorial of St. Jerome, Priest and Doctor*

Jerome was a man of extremes. His real name was Eusebius Hieronymus Sophronius. He was born around 345 A.D. in the area of present day Yugoslavia. His Christian family was able to send him to Rome at the age of twelve for a good education. There he excelled in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. After a period of time in the desert, he was ordained a priest. He spent much time counseling his friends in the spiritual life. Later, Pope Damasas, realizing

his talents, commissioned Jerome to translate the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin. His translation was called the Vulgate. The Vulgate became the official biblical text of the Catholic Church.
