

SAINT OF THE DAY



OCTOBER

October 1: *St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Virgin and Doctor*

Thérèse was born in Normandy, France in 1873, the youngest of five daughters born to Blessed Zélie and Louis Martin. Throughout her childhood, St. Thérèse felt the call to be a Carmelite nun like her older sister Pauline. She entered the Carmelite monastery at Caen in 1888 when she was just fifteen. She lived a life of humility, simplicity, and trust in God. St. Thérèse wanted to always perform small acts, rather than great deeds, for the glory of God. This became her “little way,” and every sacrifice became a joy to her. St. Thérèse taught virtue by her word and example. Her sisters encouraged her to write about her own life. Later, this spiritual memoir became *The Story of a Soul*. St. Thérèse died in 1897 of tuberculosis at age 24, after much suffering. The story of her life quickly spread and devotion to her grew. She was canonized in 1925. In 1997, St. John Paul II declared her one of the thirty-three Doctors of the Church, one of four women to receive the title. St. Thérèse is the patroness of the missions. She is known as the Little Flower.

October 2: *Memorial of the Guardian Angels*

Angels are pure spirits created by God. The word angel means messenger. There are many stories about angels in the Bible. Angels give us God’s messages, keep us safe from harm, and pray for us.

Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God’s love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

October 3: *St. Mother Theodore Guerin (St. Theodora)*

Anne-Thérèse Guerin was born in France in 1798. From a young age, she wished to become a nun. She entered the Sisters of Providence of Ruille-sur-Loir and became Sister St. Theodore. Her first years were spent teaching at various schools. Then the Bishop of Vincennes, Indiana sent an appeal to France for an order of nuns to come and teach religious instruction and care for the poor and sick. Sister St. Theodore arrived with five other nuns in 1840 and settled in Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, Indiana, thus becoming the Sisters of Providence of Saint Mary-of-the-Woods. Now the superior of the order, Mother Theodore quickly founded a Catholic boarding school for girls, as well as several other schools throughout Indiana. Her small order grew from 6 nuns to 67 nuns at the time of her death in 1856. She was canonized as St. Theodora by Pope Benedict XVI in 2006.

October 4: *St. Francis of Assisi*

St. Francis founded the Franciscan Order. He was born in Assisi, Italy in 1181 to a wealthy family and given every comfort. His youth was full of parties and excess and he had hopes of becoming a knight. He distinguished himself in battle against the neighboring town of Perugia and was taken captive for a year. Intending to join the knights in the army of Walter of Brienne, Francis set out in magnificent armor only to return a few days later after a dream told him to return to Assisi. Slowly, he sought out a new and sober life. He began to seek out the poor and sick and made a pilgrimage to Rome. He gave up his inheritance and devoted himself to a life of poverty. Within a year he had eleven followers. In 1209, he wrote a simple rule for his followers, or “friars,” and gained official acceptance from Pope Innocent III in 1210. St. Francis and his friars embraced poverty, loved nature and animals, devoted themselves to the Eucharist and to helping the poor. He also received the stigmata. He died in 1226 and was made a saint just two years later.

October 5: *St. Faustina Kowalska*

St. Faustina was born Helena Kowalska in Poland in 1905. She entered the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy and became Sister Maria Faustina of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Throughout her life, she had mystical visions of Jesus, which was known only to her confessor. Jesus called her to be an apostle of Divine Mercy and to give her life over to Him to be an instrument for spreading God’s mercy in the world. Her confessor encouraged her to describe her mystical vision of Jesus to an artist who created an image of what she saw, with the words “Jesus I trust in you” at the bottom. Revealed on the first Sunday after Easter, this Sunday is now known as Divine Mercy Sunday. St. Faustina died in 1938 at the age of thirty-three and was canonized in 2000. Millions of Catholics now follow the Divine Mercy devotion by reciting the Divine Mercy chaplet.

October 6: *Bl. Marie-Rose Durocher*

Born on October 6, 1811 in Quebec, Canada, she was the tenth and youngest child of her family. She was educated in St. Denis and Montreal under the direction of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. For thirteen years she assisted her brother, a parish priest, in the parish household. She established the first Canadian parish Sodality for young women. In 1843, she founded the Sisters of the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary, who were dedicated to Christian education. Her concern was always for the poor. She died at the age of thirty-eight on October 6, 1849.

October 7: *Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary*

This commemorative feast was established by Saint Pius V to honor and thank the holy Mother of God whose aid was invoked through praying the rosary. The celebration of this day invites all to meditate upon the mysteries of Christ, following the example of the Blessed Virgin Mary who was so singularly associated with the incarnation, passion and glorious resurrection of the Son of God.

October 8: *St. Keyne, Virgin*

St. Keyne lived in Wales in the 5th century. Her father was King Brychan and she was one of twenty-four children. Despite having many offers of marriage, St. Keyne chose instead to become a hermitess and to devote her life to prayer. She also traveled widely, founded many churches in England and Wales, and was the aunt of St. Cadoc. St. Keyne's Well in Wales has been a popular place for newly married couples to visit for many centuries.

October 9: *St. Marciano Jose and Companions, Martyrs*

St. Marciano Jose was a De La Salle Brother living in Spain during the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. He lived with seven other brothers in a community in Turon where they taught in the church school. On October 5, 1934 a group of armed miners arrested the eight Christian Brothers at the school, along with a Passionist priest who was there hearing confessions. They were tried by a revolutionary court and executed four days later. St. Marciano Jose and the eight other holy men martyred with him that day were canonized by St. John Paul II in 1999. Together they are known as the Martyrs of Turon.

October 10: *St. Francis Borgia*

Francis Borgia was a nobleman and Duke at the court of the King of Spain in the 16th century. He and his wife Eleanor had eight children and lived as a devout Christian family. Upon the death of his beloved wife in 1546, Francis renounced his title to his eldest son and joined the newly formed Society of Jesus. By 1565, he had been named Superior General and founded the Gregorian University in Rome. He advised many of the leaders of the day

and dispatched missionaries all over the world. Despite all this, St. Francis Borgia led a pious and humble life. He died in 1572.

October 11: *St. Maria Soledad*

Bibiana Emanuela was born in Spain in 1826 and longed to be a nun. Due to her poor health, she was rejected. Then, in 1851, her parish priest wished to start an order of nuns devoted to caring for the sick and asked Bibiana to join him. She was given the name Sister Maria Soledad and happily began her new life among the poor. The new community often struggled to stay together, but eventually they were called the Handmaids of Mary Serving the Sick and began to grow under St. Maria Soledad's leadership. The sisters proved their worth by caring for those suffering from the cholera epidemic in 1865. They expanded rapidly, and St. Maria eventually went to Cuba to start a new house there. She died there in 1887. The order is now called the Sisters Servants of Mary, Ministers of the Sick.

October 12: *St. Wilfrid, Bishop*

St. Wilfrid was an English bishop in the 7th century. Born to a noble family, he chose instead to join a Benedictine monastery. At that time, Christianity in England was in a confused and divided state. St. Wilfrid worked hard to bring the Church in England in line with the practices of Rome. For this, he often suffered under the hands of the local authorities. He also spent much time converting the pagan Saxons to Christianity. He died in 709.

October 13: *Our Lady of Fatima*

In 1917, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to three young children in Fatima, Portugal. Blessed Francisco Marto, Blessed Jacinta Marto and their cousin Lucia dos Santo received a vision of Our Lady while they were tending their sheep. She implored them to do penance and sacrifice for the sake of sinners. She also asked for a devotion to her Immaculate Heart. They saw her several more times, with the last vision occurring on October 13. That day, thousands witnessed the "Miracle of the Sun." In honor of Our Lady of Fatima, we pray this prayer at the end of each decade of the Rosary: *Oh my Jesus, forgive us our sins. Save us from the fires of Hell. Lead all souls to Heaven, especially those in most need of thy mercy.*

October 14: *St. Callistus I, Pope and Martyr*

Callistus was a slave in a Christian household at the end of the 2nd century. He was accused of stealing money meant for widows from his master's bank and fled. He was arrested and sent to the mines in Sardinia, repented and converted to Christianity. Release from this work, along with other persecuted Christians there, Callistus began a new free life as a deacon of the Church and later became pope. He emphasized mercy for repentant sinners. He was martyred c. 222 during a riot against Christians in Rome.

October 15: *St. Teresa of Avila, Virgin and Doctor*

St. Teresa was born into a rich Spanish family in 1515. When she was fourteen, her mother died and her father sent her to be educated by the Augustinian Sisters. She eventually decided to enter the Carmelites. Her early years were marked by illness and migraines, and she often found it difficult to pray. Years later she received help from two deeply spiritual persons, St. Francis Borgia and St. Peter Alcantara. Through their encouragement, she made great progress in her prayer life and began to experience ecstatic visions. After this period, she led a reform of her Carmelite order because she felt the spiritual life of the order was hurting. She traveled throughout Spain and reformed many religious houses, aided by St. John of the Cross. Teresa wrote extensively, including the great work of mystical spiritualism, *Interior Castle*. She died in 1582 and was named a Doctor of the Church by Pope Paul VI in 1970.

October 16: *St. Hedwig of Silesia*

Born in 1174 in Bavaria as the daughter of a Duke, Hedwig was married to Duke Henry I of Silesia at the age of twelve. Her husband was a good and pious man, and they had seven children. After his death in 1238, Hedwig gave up her life of luxury and retired to the Cistercian monastery where her husband was buried. She gave her fortune to the Church and lived a quiet life of poverty and prayer. She died in 1243.

October 17: *St. Margaret Mary Alacoque*

Margaret Mary was born in 1647 into a well-known family in Burgundy, France. Desiring to dedicate her life to the service of God, she entered the Visitation Convent at Paray-Le-Monial at the age of twenty-two. She had a great devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As a

gift from Jesus, she received private revelations from him. Through her intercession, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus spread throughout Europe. In 1765, this devotion to the Sacred Heart was approved for liturgical observance by the Pope.

Jesus' message was, "See this heart which has loved so much and received so little love in return ... tell everyone that I really love them and I want to be loved in return. If you love me, pray and sacrifice for those who do not believe in my love or do not care about my love. (Saints and Feasts, Loyola Press, p.31)

October 18: *Feast of St. Luke, Evangelist*

Luke was born in Antioch, Syria, and was the only Gentile Christian among the Gospel writers. He wrote the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. Paul calls him "our beloved physician," and thus he is the patron saint of physicians and surgeons. He became a missionary companion of St. Paul, and even accompanied him on his last journey to Rome. Luke's Gospel is unique in that he includes six miracles and eighteen parables not found in the other Gospels. Luke also writes more about Mary and about Jesus as a child. Each of the four Gospel writers has a unique symbol and Luke's is an ox, symbolizing sacrifice.

October 19: *The North American Martyrs*

Around 1630, eight French Jesuits—St. John de Brebeuf, St. Isaac Jogues, St. Gabriel Lalemant, St. Noel Chabanel, St. Charles Garnier, St. Anthony Daniel, St. Rene Goupil and St. John de Lalande—traveled to the wilds of North America to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to the Native American peoples. They built a mission near what is now Quebec, Canada and preached among the Huron Indians, who called the men "Black Robes." They created the first dictionary of the Huron language and also translated the catechism. Despite converting some 7,000 souls, a devastating smallpox epidemic as well as tensions with the Iroquois Indians placed the Jesuits in danger. They were captured during the warfare between the Huron and Iroquois tribes in 1649 and executed for their faith.

October 20: *St. Paul of the Cross*

St. Paul of the Cross was born in northern Italy in 1694. He felt the call to the priesthood when he was nineteen. He began to experience mystical visions during prayer and knew that God was calling him to form a new community devoted to promoting the love of God

revealed in the Passion of Jesus. He wrote the rule of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, or the Passionists, in 1720. St. Paul spent much of his life traveling throughout Italy preaching in parishes without enough priests and leading retreats at seminaries. Through this work, the Passionist order grew and today contains many priests and nuns. St. Paul of the Cross died in 1775.

October 21: *St. Ursula, Martyr*

Various legends tell us that Ursula lived during the 5th century, and was the daughter of a Christian king in Britain. Ursula set sail to marry a pagan prince, but was allowed three years delay to make pilgrimages to Christian sites in Europe. Upon reaching Cologne, Germany, she was martyred along with her handmaidens by the Huns. She and her companions were immediately venerated as virgin martyrs and a great church was built in Cologne in her honor.

October 22: *St. John Paul II, Pope*

St. John Paul II became pope at the age of fifty eight in 1978. Born in Poland in 1920, his call to the priesthood came amidst the turmoil of World War II. He became known for his philosophical and theological writings, his contributions at the Second Vatican Council, and his love of working with young people. Many of these things shaped his papacy. As pope, St. John Paul II effectively used his visibility as a world leader to draw attention to the most pressing issues of the time, especially protection for the unborn, bringing an end to communism in eastern Europe, and interfaith dialogues. He survived an attempt made on his life in 1981. He initiated World Youth Day in 1985, of which he is patron, which brings together millions of young Catholics from all over the world for a week of prayer and celebration. After a long and painful struggle with Parkinson's disease, St. John Paul II died on April 2, 2005.

October 23: *St. John of Capistrano*

Born near Naples, Italy in 1386, St. John of Capistrano worked as a lawyer before joining the Franciscans in 1416. Considered a brilliant preacher, St. John instituted the devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus and Mary. He traveled all over Europe, preaching and establishing new Franciscan communities. At the age of 70, he was asked by Pope Callistus III to lead a crusade against the invading Turks. The soldier friar marched at the head of 70,000

soldiers and led them to victory at the Battle of Belgrade in 1456. He died three months later. St. John of Capistrano, the soldier saint, is the patron of military chaplains.

October 24: *St. Anthony Mary Claret*

Born the son of a weaver in Spain in 1807, St. Anthony Mary Claret had poor and humble beginnings. He was ordained a priest in 1835 and founded the Congregation of the Missionary Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1849. Today, they are known as the Claretians. He was named Archbishop of Santiago, Cuba and spent many years there reforming the seminary, strengthening the clergy, building hospitals and schools and validating marriages. This work of reform was not always popular and St. Anthony survived many attempts on his life. Upon returning to Spain in 1857, he devoted his ministry to serving the poor and expanding education. Like in Cuba, these works brought him many enemies and he eventually died under house arrest at a Cistercian abbey in 1870.

October 25: *St. John Roberts, Martyr*

St. John Roberts is counted among the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. Born in England in 1575, he converted to Catholicism as a young man during a time when Catholics were banned from practicing or acknowledging their faith. Because of this, John went to France to study and eventually became a Benedictine priest. In 1602, he returned to England to secretly begin his ministry. He became famous for his compassionate care of many victims of the plague in 1603. Arrested in 1607, he escaped prison and continued his secret priestly ministry. Finally, in 1610 he was arrested again while saying Mass and martyred at Tyburn.

October 26: *St. Alfred the Great, King*

St. Alfred was a 9th century king of Wessex in southern Britain. As the fifth son of the king, he initially sought out a life of learning and scholarship and hoped to enter the Church. However, he did become king after his elder brothers died. He worked hard to defend his people from the invading Vikings, promoted education, reformed his kingdom's legal system and reorganized the military. He was known for his mercy towards the poor. Alfred was also a patron of the arts and literature and much loved by his people. He died in 899.

October 27: *St. Abraham the Poor*

Born in Egypt in the 4th century, St. Abraham was known for his childlike purity of heart. A disciple of St. Pachomius, he lived as a hermit in a cave near the Nile River for over twenty years. He is called “the Poor” because of his simple faith.

October 28: *Feast of Ss. Simon and Jude, Apostles*

Simon is shown on all four lists of Apostles. He is called the Zealot, after a sect of Jewish nationalists, who thought that the Messianic Promise meant that the Jews would be free and independent of the foreign domination of Rome. St. Jude is referred to as Jude in the Gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles. However, in the Gospels of Mark and Matthew he is referred to as Thaddeus. He was the brother of James, the Apostle. Jude traveled to Mesopotamia to preach and Simon went to Egypt. Eventually, they worked together evangelizing in Persia until they were martyred.

October 29: *St. Cuthbert Mayne*

Like St. John Roberts, St. Cuthbert Mayne is one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. Born in 1544, he first became a Protestant minister at the young age of eighteen. He converted to Catholicism while attending Oxford due to the influence of St. Edmund Campion. He was nearly arrested for his conversion. Like many men, he fled to Douai, France to attend the English seminary there. He was ordained in 1575 and immediately returned to England to begin his clandestine ministry. He was arrested in 1577, and sentenced to death. The night before his martyrdom, many witnesses reported seeing a strange bright light emanating from his cell. He was martyred at Launceston.

October 30: *St. Dorothea of Montau*

Despite being born a peasant in 1347, St. Dorothea married a wealthy swordsman, Albrecht of Danzing, Poland. His bad temper and gruff nature was gradually softened and changed by her humility and gentleness. Shortly after their marriage, she began to experience ecstatic visions. Dorothea and Albrecht began to make pilgrimages throughout Europe, but he was too ill to accompany her to Rome. While she was there, Albrecht died. They had nine children, all but one of whom died young. Dorothea’s surviving daughter entered a Benedictine convent and Dorothea became a hermitess. She was constantly sought out for

advice and spiritual council, and continued to experience mystical visions until her death in 1394.

October 31: *St. Wolfgang*

St. Wolfgang was a 10th century bishop and reformer in Germany. He was greatly involved in converting the pagan Magyar tribe to Christianity, but spent his years as bishop by working to reform and organize the many various monasteries and abbeys in his diocese, promoting education, and caring for the poor. He died in 994.
