

Catholic Saints – Mini Bios

Saint Thomas Aquinas

Thomas was a gentle teacher who believed faith and reason when used wisely would enable all humanity to know and love God as the angels. He studied in Paris from 1245-1248 under Saint Albert the Great, then accompanied Albertus to Cologne. Here he received the nickname “dumb ox,” though he is now considered a Doctor of the Church, and one of the most intelligent philosophers of all time.



Saint Francis of Assisi

‘It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching’. Son of a rich cloth merchant, misspent youth, street brawler and for some-time a soldier. During an imprisonment in Perugia, he had a conversion experience, including a reported message from Christ calling him to leave this worldly life. Upon release, Francis began taking his religion seriously.



Saint Christopher

His fame derives from the pious legend of him being a “Christ-bearer” (=Christopher). He was a powerfully built man who wandered the world in

search of novelty and adventure. He came upon a hermit who lived beside a dangerous stream and served others by guiding them to safe places to cross.



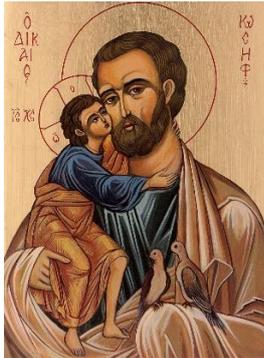
Saint Aloysius Gonzaga

Italian noble who grew up in a castle, the son of a compulsive gambler. Cousin of Saint Rudolph Aquaviva. Trained from age four as a soldier and courtier. Suffered from kidney disease which he considered a blessing as it left him bed-ridden with time for prayer. While still a boy himself, he taught catechism to poor boys. Received First Communion from Saint Charles Borromeo. At age 18 he signed away his legal claim to his family's lands and title to his brother, and became a Jesuit novice. Spiritual student of Saint Robert Bellarmine. Tended plague victims in Rome in the outbreak of 1591.



Saint Joseph

Descendant of the house of David. Layman. Carpenter. Earthly spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Foster and adoptive father of Jesus Christ. Visionary who was visited by angels. Noted for his willingness to immediately get up and do what God told him.



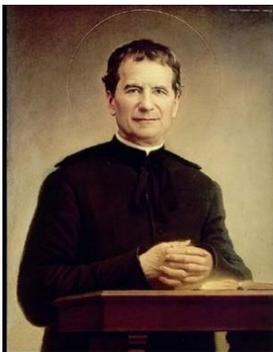
Saint John the Apostle

Son of Zebedee and Salome. Fisherman. Brother of Saint James the Great, and called one of the Sons of Thunder. Disciple of Saint John the Baptist. Friend of Saint Peter the Apostle. Called by Jesus during the first year of His ministry, and travelled everywhere with Him, becoming as close as to be known as beloved disciple. Took part in the Last Supper. The only one of the Twelve not to forsake the Saviour in the hour of His Passion, standing at the foot of the cross.



Saint John Bosco

“All for God and for His Glory. In whatever you do, think of the Glory of God as your main goal.” Bosco would go to circuses, fairs and carnivals, practice the tricks he saw magicians perform, and then present one-boy shows. After his performance, while he still had an audience of boys, he would repeat the homily he had heard earlier in church. He was a teacher. Worked with youth, finding places where they could meet, and play and pray, teaching catechism to orphans and apprentices. Chaplain in a hospice for girls. Wrote short treatises aimed at explaining the faith to children, and then taught children how to print them. Founded the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) in 1859, priests who work with and educate boys, under the protection of Our Lady, Help of Christians, and Saint Francis de Sales. Founded the Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians in 1872, and Union of Co-operator Salesians in 1875.



Saint Francis De Sales

“Do not wish to be anything but what you are, and try to be that perfectly.” Born in a castle to a well-placed family, his parents intended that he become a lawyer, enter politics, and carry on the family line and power. Doctor of Law. It was at this point that he received a message telling him to "Leave all and follow me." He took this as a call to the priesthood, a move his family fiercely opposed. However, he pursued a devoted prayer life, and his gentle ways won over the family. Preacher, writer and spiritual director in the district of Chablais. His simple, clear explanations of Catholic doctrine, and his gentle way with everyone, brought many back to the Roman Church. Bishop of Geneva at age 35. Travelled and evangelized throughout the Duchy of Savoy, working with children whenever he could. Helped found the Order of the Visitation with Saint Jeanne de Chantal.

Saint Raphael—Guardian Angels Archangel

One of the three angels known by name, and one of the seven that stand before God's throne. Lead character in the deuterocanonical book of Tobit in which he travelled with (and guarded) Tobias, and cured a man's blindness; hence his connection with travellers, young people, blindness, healing and healers. The force behind the healing power of the sheep pool mentioned in John 5:1-4.



Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Wounded in the leg by a cannonball at the siege of Pampeluna on 20 May 1521, an injury that left him partially crippled for life. During his recuperation the only books he had access to were The Golden Legend, a collection of lives of the saints, and the Life of Christ by Ludolph the Carthusian. On his recovery he took a vow of chastity, hung his sword before the altar of the Virgin of Montserrat, and donned a pilgrim's robes. Lived in a cave from 1522 to 1523. Journeyed to Rome and the Holy Land where he worked to convert Muslims. His meditations, prayers, visions and insights led to forming the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) on 15 August 1534.



Saint Sebastien

In the third century, Saint Sebastien was a young captain of the Praetorian Guard. It is said that he spoke constantly of Christ and tried to convert his companions, to the point that he was ordered to renounce his faith. Since he refused, he was shot with arrows, yet he survived and continued to proclaim Christ fearlessly.



Saint Joan of Arc

Saint Joan of Arc was born in 1412. She was a young peasant girl who, despite her tender years, fought to defend France from invaders. Misunderstood for her demeanour, her actions and her way of living the faith, Joan was burned at the stake.





Saint Kateri Tekakwitha

In the seventeenth century, Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, a young native of North America, was persecuted for her faith and, to escape, walked over three hundred kilometres in the wilderness. Kateri consecrated herself to god and died saying:” Jesus I love you”!



Saint Dominic Savio

Saint Dominic Savio offered all his sufferings to Mary. When Saint John Bosco taught him, that holiness involves being constantly joyful, he opened his heart to a contagious joy. Dominic died in 1857 at fourteen years of age, saying:” What a wondrous thing I am experiencing!”

Saint Therese of Lisieux

Saint Therese of the Child Jesus was born in 1873. At fifteen years of age, having overcome many difficulties, she succeeded in entering the Carmelite convent. Therese lived the little way of complete trust in the Lord's love and determined to fan with her prayers the fire of love burning in the heart of the Church.



Saint Carlos Acutis

An Italian teenager who used the internet to spread his faith. Carlos Acutis, who died of leukaemia in 2006 aged 15, has already been dubbed “the patron saint of the internet.” He used the internet in service of the Gospel, to reach as many people as possible. Carlos is a concrete example of what holiness looks like in the 21st century. At the age of 14, he designed a website to share his great love for the Eucharist.





Saint Valentine

Heart-shaped cards, chocolates, roses and romance. All these things capture the essence of the popular romantic holiday Valentine's Day. After all, the origin of this holiday doesn't spark from romantic love at all, but more of a platonic sacrificial love as displayed by the most honoured Saint Valentine.



Saint Padre Pio

St. Padre Pio, was born May 25, 1887 to peasant farmers. A devout boy, he was a Capuchin novice in 1903 entering the priesthood in 1910 where he became known as Padre Pio.

Kneeling before a large crucifix on Sept. 20, 1918, Padre Pio was stigmatized with marks of the cross, the first priest to show those signs. He predicted the wounds would disappear upon his death. This was found to be true when he died in 1968. Known for devotion to the confessional where he sometimes attended to penitents for 12 hours a day, or more, Padre Pio was canonized by Pope John Paul II on June 16, 2002 before half a million devotees. Padre Pio's work lives on with prayer groups in his name. He is honoured by a feast day on Sept. 23.

Saint Augustine of Hippo

A man of great intellect and one of the most important Church fathers, sought comfort in worldly pleasures but found no solace in them. His life is an example of how worldly distractions interfere with living a true Christian life. His quote, “I have learned to love you late, beauty at once so ancient and so new!” is testament to his powerful and beautiful conversion to Christianity.



Pope Boniface VII designated St. Augustine as Doctor of the Church in 1298. The Western Church celebrates the feast of St. Augustine on August 28. Eastern Christianity designates June 15 as his feast day. He is the patron saint of brewers, printers and theologians. His search for truth and subsequent devotion to Christ also makes St. Augustine a saintly hero for recent converts to Catholicism.

Saint Anthony of Padua

Crowds of over 30,000 people would come to hear him preach, and this was before the comfort of modern transportation! Surprisingly enough, St. Anthony himself had no desire to become a preacher; he would have preferred to spend his days quietly in prayer, hidden away in a cave.

Though revered as one of the great Italian saints, St. Anthony was actually born in Lisbon, Portugal. He was baptized under the name Fernando and at the young age of 15, he left the comforts of his wealthy, noble family to enter the Canons Regular of St. Augustine. There he mastered theology and Sacred Scripture, which, although he didn't know at the time, it would later prove to be extremely useful. He grew in knowledge, but he grew even more so in the order of grace, through prayer and the practicing every virtue. Once given the mission to preach, St. Anthony was consumed with zeal for the salvation of souls and he went from town to town, preaching and performing miracles. He quickly gained a reputation as a wonder-worker, but the miracles he performed always were for

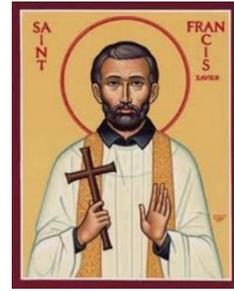
the sake of saving souls. He performed such an astounding number of miracles, that he easily inspires us with confidence, that in our needs, he can help us even today.



Saint Gabriel Possenti

He lived in the 20th century and grew up in Piedmont, Italy. He shocked the town when he announced that he would become a Passionist monk upon graduation. This change of heart came from a promise he made to God while he was at school. He had fallen quite sick he promised to dedicate his life to God if he were to get better.

St. Gabriel was responsible for showing that holiness is not opposed to qualities of manhood. He was courageous in the face of danger and this is meant to remind everyone that courage is needed to witness faith. St. Gabriel Possenti's day of feast is on February 27 every year.



Saint Francis Xavier

Born to nobility in the Basque region of Spain in 1506, St. Francis Xavier began his renowned career by teaching philosophy at the University of Paris. An adventurous life found him performing sterling missionary work in India, Japan, and the East Indies for a decade along with helping found the Jesuit Order.

Francis Xavier was the first Jesuit missionary. He opposed slavery and spread the Gospel at the urging of his friend, St. Ignatius of Loyola. It was said he baptized as many as 10,000 Indians in a month and more than 40,000 in all. He helped lepers and taught catechism to Indian kids.

Prophet and healer, noted for missionary fervour, Francis Xavier died from a fever while performing missionary work in China in 1552. Pope Gregory V canonized him in 1622. Pope Pius X declared him patron of all foreign missions. His feast day is Dec. 3.



Saint Dymphna

She was a seventh century Irish virgin martyr. She was 15 (in about 620) when she lost her life spurning the incestuous advances of her father who insisted on marrying her to replace her deceased mother. When she learned of his plan, she fled from Ireland to Gheel, Belgium, but he found her there and beheaded her when she would not cooperate with him.

There have been many reports of St. Dymphna miraculously curing the mental, emotional, and neurological afflictions of pilgrims to her burial site in Gheel. Based on these miracles and the story of her martyrdom, she was canonized in

1247 and named patron saint of the mentally ill. Her patronage also extends to incest and rape victims and runaways.

St. Dymphna is most often shown with a sword or lamp in her hand and a restrained devil at her feet. Her feast day is May 15.



Saint John the Baptist

He is remembered as a prophet, the forerunner of Christ and the man who baptized Jesus. He was known for calling people to turn away from sin, and first recognizing Jesus for who he was.

The saint lived as a hermit for many years in the desert of Judea. He began to publicly preach on the banks of the Jordan River at the age of 30. He educated large crowds in regards to the need for baptism and forgiveness to redeem one's sins. One day while baptizing and preaching John encountered Jesus who came to be baptized. John at first refused saying he was unworthy but relented. Following the Baptism of Jesus by John a voice was heard from the heavens proclaiming "this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

John was beheaded, and his head was given by Herod as a reward for the dancing of Salome. The Feast Day of John the Baptist is celebrated on June 24. The patronage for St John the Baptist includes the sick, nurses, booksellers, printers, heart patients and firefighters.



Saint Teresa of Calcutta

She was born Gonxha Agnes in 1910. She joined the Irish Sisters of Loretto and taught in Calcutta. She founded the Missionaries of Charity in 1950 in order to serve the poor and destitute in both their physical needs and their spiritual needs. She died in 1997.

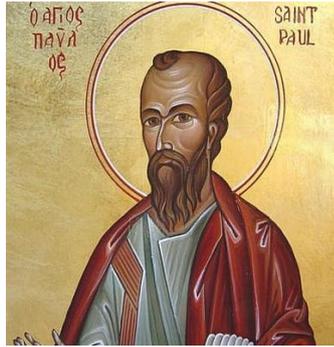
Canonized in 2016 by Pope Francis, Mother Teresa, as she was known during her years of ministry, saw Jesus in the poor for whom she and the sisters in her order cared.



Saint Maria Faustina

Born in a small village in Poland, St. Maria Faustina Kowalska came from a poor family on a small farm. She served as a very young nun in the convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Cracow, Poland. Because her family had no means of supporting her education, she was uneducated. Despite the fact that she completed very simple task assignments for the convent, she received incredible signs, messages and revelations from Jesus.

Saint Maria Faustina recorded all of her revelations in a diary, at the request of her confessors, and it has been published. The Diary of Saint Maria Faustina reveals messages of God's love, grace and mercy. Her diary also records conversations that she had with Jesus. "I do not want to punish aching mankind," he once told St. Faustina, "but I desire to heal it, pressing it to my merciful heart". She is credited with being an apostle of the message of Divine Mercy which assures God's mercy for each of us individually and for all.



Saint Paul

The Apostle is a seminal figure of Christianity. A Tarsus native, he was transformed from a persecutor of Christians to a passionate promoter of growth in the early Church. He was the tireless apostle among the Gentiles, a converted Jew who spread Christ's word throughout Arabia, Syria, and the Eastern World. His feast day is June 29, a day he shares with fellow apostle Peter.

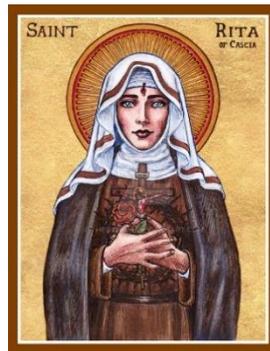


Saint Michael the Archangel

St. Michael was a great leader of the angels in the war against Satan and his followers. His name, meaning “Who is like to God?” served as the war-cry of the good angels as they plunged into battle to “fight the dragon”. The image of Michael defeating Satan is one of the most popular depictions of the archangel prince. He's often shown with a spear, sword, armour, banner, and/or scales. Michael was known especially for his strength and courage, and many applaud him for his chivalry and determination to boldly fight for justice- he was essentially the perfect knight. He is featured more than any other named angel in religious texts, and is the oldest angelic devotion.

Michael is charged with the tasks of protecting those who love God, transporting the souls of the dead, and leading the battle against Satan. He also is traditionally the one called upon for the freeing of the possessed in spiritual

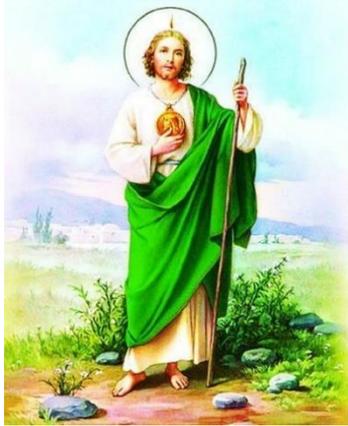
bondage from evil spirits. Michael is the patron saint of the Military, Police officers, Firemen, death, and people who work in dangerous conditions. His feast day is celebrated on the 29th of September.



Saint Rita of Cascia

She was a female saint living during the 14th and 15th century in Italy. Although she was married at any early age to an abusive husband, with whom her relationship lasted for more than 18 years, she was a model wife who prayed constantly for her husband. Even after her husband died in a feud, she discouraged her sons from trying to seek revenge. Following their death, Rita entered the convent in Cascia.

Today, St. Rita is known as the patron saint for abused women, mourning wives and impossible causes. Many women turn to her during times of despair, after a death in the family or even after a divorce. She is often depicted in artwork and on medals in a religious sister's habit, with roses or a rose crown.



Saint Jude

Though he is sometimes called “the Forgotten Saint”, St. Jude has never been one to forget those who turn to him. Unlike other saints who are given a limited and narrow patronage, St. Jude Thaddeus is invoked in innumerable situations, as the patron saint for all those cases which are most desperate, most hopeless, and most impossible.