

# Saint GIANNA MOLLA

October 4, 1922 – April 28, 1962

Feast Day: April 28

Patron Saint of: Mothers, physicians, & unborn children



## QUOTE

"If you must decide between me and the child, do not hesitate: choose the child! I insist on it. Save the baby."



## QUOTES

"Love and sacrifice are closely linked, like the sun and the light. We cannot love without suffering and we cannot suffer without love."

"Whatever God wants."

"The secret of happiness is to live moment by moment and to thank God for all that He, in His goodness, sends to us day after day."

## FACTS

- Born in Italy in 1922, the 10<sup>th</sup> of 13 children in her family
- As a young girl, Gianna openly accepted her faith and the Catholic - Christian education provided to her from her loving parents. She grew up viewing life as God's beautiful gift and found the greatest necessity and effectiveness in prayer
- In 1942, Gianna began her study of medicine in Milan. She was a diligent and hardworking student, both at the university and in her faith
- A member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Gianna applied her faith in an apostolic service for the elderly and needy
- In 1952, Gianna specialized in pediatrics and was especially drawn toward mothers, babies, the elderly and the poor. Gianna considered the field of medicine to be her mission, and treated it as such. She increased her generous service to Catholic Action, a movement of lay Catholics dedicated to living and spreading the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church in the broader culture. The Catholic Action movement is still at work today, throughout the world
- In 1961, Gianna became pregnant with her 4<sup>th</sup> child. When, in her 2<sup>nd</sup> month of pregnancy, Gianna was struck with an unimaginable pain. Her doctors discovered she had developed a uterine fibroma, meaning she was carrying both a baby and a tumor
- Her doctors gave her 3 choices: abortion (save her life, but take the life of her child); a complete hysterectomy (preserve her life, but take the child's life, & prevent further pregnancy); or removal of only the fibroma, with the potential of further complications (could save the life of her baby). She decided to go with the 3<sup>rd</sup> choice & was willing to give her own life for her child
- On April 21, 1962, Gianna Emanuela Molla successfully delivered by Caesarean section
- Doctors tried many different treatments and procedures to ensure both lives would be saved. However, on April 28, 1962, a week after the baby was born, Gianna passed away from septic peritonitis
- During Gianna's canonization ceremony, John Paul II described her as, "a simple, but more than ever, significant messenger of divine love"



Saint

# JOSEMARÍA ESCRIVÁ

January 9, 1902 – June 26, 1975

Feast Day: June 26



**Patron Saint of:** People with diabetes and "the ordinary"

## QUOTE

"The life of a man who lives by faith will always be the story of the mercies of God. At some moments the story may perhaps be difficult to read, because everything can seem useless and even a failure. But at other times Our Lord lets one see how the fruit abounds and then it is natural for one's soul to break out in thanksgiving"



## QUOTE

"Sanctity is not for a privileged few. The Lord calls all of us. He expects love from all of us—from everyone, wherever they are; from everyone, whatever their state in life, their profession or job. For the daily life we live, apparently so ordinary, can be a path to sanctity: it is not necessary to abandon one's place in the world in order to search for God...because all the paths of the earth can be the occasion for an encounter with Christ"

## FACTS

- Born in Barbastro, Spain in 1902
- He was ordained to the priesthood in Zaragoza, Spain on March 28, 1925
- He developed a prayer life intensely centered on the Eucharist during his priestly studies in Logroño, and also cultivated deep devotion to Mary and would often pray for her to ask God to reveal his will to him
- While on retreat, Josemaría saw the mission God intended for him, that of opening up a new spirituality and vocational path for the laity in the form of Opus Dei ("the work of God"). This prelature would become the central focus of his life, serving many of the unmet spiritual needs of lay people at the time
- Opus Dei is a Personal Prelature of the Catholic Church that fosters among Christians the search for holiness in the world, especially in the ordinary circumstances of life and the sanctification of work
- Josemaría welcomed Pope John XXIII's calling of the Second Vatican Council. His work in expanding the way to holiness for lay persons was seen by the Council Fathers as a precursor to Vatican II's renewed focus on the life of the laity. He worked swiftly to implement the Council's decisions into the life and spirituality of Opus Dei
- Saint Josemaría Escrivá suffered from diabetes for over ten years. After a near-fatal anaphylactic shock in 1954, he was miraculously cured of the disease
- On June 26, 1975, Josemaría died in his workroom of a heart attack. The last thing he ever looked upon was an hanging icon of Our Lady. At his death, Opus Dei was present on all inhabited continents, numbering over 60,000 people from more than 80 nationalities



# Saint MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE

July 22, 1647 – October 17, 1690

Feast Day: October 16

**Patron Saint of:** Those suffering with polio, devotees of the Sacred Heart, loss of parents



## QUOTE

“I saw this divine Heart as on a throne of flames, more brilliant than the sun and transparent as crystal. It had its adorable wound and was encircled with a crown of thorns, which signified the pricks our sins caused Him.”



## QUOTE

“I need nothing but God, and to lose myself in the heart of Jesus”

## FACTS

- Her early years were marked by sickness and a painful home situation. Rheumatic fever confined her to her bed for four years. After making a vow to the Blessed Virgin Mary to consecrate herself to religious life, Margaret instantly returned to perfect health. In recognition of this favor, Margaret added the name Mary to her baptismal name
- After considering marriage for some time, Margaret Mary entered the Order of the Visitation nuns at the age of 24
- In December 1674, after 3 years as a nun, Margaret Mary Alacoque received the first of her revelations. She felt “infested” with the presence of God, though always afraid of deceiving herself in such matters. The request of Christ was that his love for humankind be made evident through her
- During the next 13 months, Christ appeared to her. His human heart was to be the symbol of his divine-human love. By her own love Margaret Mary was to make up for the coldness and ingratitude of the world—by frequent and loving Holy Communion, especially on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday each month, and by an hour's vigil of prayer every Thursday night. He also asked that a feast of reparation be instituted
- She has always shown an intense love for the Blessed Sacrament and preferred silence over typical play
- Started what we commonly call “Holy Hour” after she was commanded by Jesus, in a vision, to meditate on Jesus' Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane
- Started the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus after she saw a vision of his Sacred Heart
- In 1673, Jesus appeared to Margaret Mary again, and allowed her to rest her head on His heart. His human heart was to be the symbol of His divine-human love. He revealed to her the wonders of His love. He explained to her that he wished to make these wonders known to all the world, and that He chose her for His work
- She died a couple of years later, at the age of 43, on October 17, 1690, while being anointed. She spoke the words, “I need nothing but God, and to lose myself in the heart of Jesus”



Saint

# TERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS

October 12, 1891 – August 9, 1942

Feast Day: August 9

Patron Saint of: Europe, Loss of Parents, Converted Jews, & Martyrs



## QUOTES

“The world doesn't need what women have, it needs what women are”

“Anyone who seeks truth seeks God, whether or not he realizes it”



## QUOTE

Our love of neighbor is the measure of our love of God. For Christians — and not only for them — no one is a ‘stranger’. The love of Christ knows no borders.

## FACTS

- Also known as Edith Stein
- Edith Stein was born into a devout Jewish family in Germany, on October 12, 1891. She was an intellectually gifted child who, by her adolescence, declared herself an atheist
- Her journey into academia led her to the University of Göttingen, where she completed her doctorate on the topic of empathy, which only became more important in her later religious vocation. Her conversion to Catholicism in 1922 was sparked by an encounter with the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila, which revealed to her that intellectual pursuits and spirituality could go hand in hand
- As Nazism spread across Germany, Edith's dual identity as a Jew and a Catholic placed her in the crosshairs of escalating persecution. She didn't back down. Instead, she entered the Carmelite convent in 1933, adopting the name Teresa Benedicta of the Cross
- The escalation of World War II forced Teresa Benedicta and her sister Rosa, also a convert, to relocate to a Carmelite monastery in the Netherlands for safety. But when a Dutch Bishop publicly condemned Nazi policies, the Gestapo retaliated by arresting Teresa and her sister and bringing them to Auschwitz
- One of the officials at Auschwitz was so impressed by Teresa Benedicta's peace and spiritual strength that he offered to help her escape. This was her response: “If somebody intervened at this point and took away my chance to share in the fate of my brothers and sisters, that would be utter annihilation.” She was eventually executed in a gas chamber in 1942
- She became involved in the fractured politics of her time, but was instrumental in restoring the Papacy to Rome and in brokering peace deals during a time of factional conflict and war between the Italian city states
- Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross never doubted the existence of good and evil. She chose the good, clung to the good, and brought the good to others in the worst of circumstances. Her life challenged the depths of evil with the profound power of faith and sacrifice



# Saint AGNES OF ROME

291 AD – 304 AD

Feast Day: January 21

**Patron Saint of:** Young girls, chastity, rape survivors,  
and the Children of Mary



## QUOTES

"Jesus Christ is my only Spouse"

"Christ made my soul beautiful  
with the jewels of grace and  
virtue. I belong to Him whom the  
angels serve."



## QUOTE

"I am already promised to the Lord  
of the Universe. He is more splendid  
than the sun and the stars, and He  
has said He will never leave me."

## FACTS

- St. Agnes of Rome was born in 291 AD into Roman nobility, and raised as a Christian
- Her hand in marriage was highly sought after. However, Agnes made a promise to God never to stain her purity. Her love for the Lord was great and she hated sin even more than death
- A beautiful young girl, Agnes had many suitors who were young men of high rank. Slighted by her resolute devotion to religious purity, they submitted her name to the authorities as a follower of Christianity. One of them, a man named Procop, brought Agnes to his father, who was the local governor. He urged Agnes to deny God, but she refused
- The Prefect Sempronius condemned Agnes to be dragged naked through the streets to a brothel. In one account, as she prayed, her hair grew and covered her body
- It was also said that all of the men who attempted to rape her were immediately struck blind. The son of the prefect was struck dead but revived after she prayed for him, causing her release
- After Agnes was sentenced to death, she was led out and bound to a stake to be burned, but the bundle of wood would not burn, or the flames parted away from her. The officer in charge of the troops drew his sword and beheaded her
- She suffered martyrdom on 21 January 304, aged 12 or 13, and during the reign of the Roman emperor Diocletian
- Agnes was buried beside the Via Nomentana in Rome. The daughter of Constantine I, Constantina, was said to have been cured of leprosy after praying at Agnes' tomb
- On her feast day, it is customary for two lambs to be blessed by the pope. On Holy Thursday, the lambs' wool is removed and woven into the pallium the pope gives to a newly consecrated archbishop as a sign of his power and union with the pope



# Saint TERESA OF AVILA

March 28, 1515 – October 4, 1582

Feast Day: October 15

**Patron Saint of:** Headache sufferers, Spanish Catholic Writers



## QUOTES

"We can only learn to know ourselves and do what we can, namely, surrender our will and fulfill God's will in us"

"The important thing is not to think much, but to love much"



## QUOTE

"Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you, all things are passing away: God never changes. Patience obtains all things. Whoever has God lacks nothing; God alone suffices"

## FACTS

- St. Teresa of Avila was born Teresa Ali Fatim Corella Sanchez de Capeda y Ahumada, just two years before the Protestant Reformation began in Avila, Spain
- Teresa's father was rigidly honest and pious, and he carried his strictness to extremes. Teresa's mother loved romance novels, but her husband objected to these; she hid them, putting Teresa in the middle. Her father told her never to lie, but her mother told her not to tell. Later she was always afraid that no matter what she did, she was going to do everything wrong
- Teresa's mother raised her as a dedicated Christian. When she was seven-years-old, fascinated by accounts of the lives of the saints, she convinced her older brother that they should "go off to the land of the Moors and beg them, out of love of God, to cut off our heads." They got as far as the road from the city before their uncle found them and brought them back
- Teresa entered the cloistered Carmelite Convent of the Incarnation at the age of 20 against her father's wishes. Her health began to decline only a couple of years into religious life, stricken with malaria. After she had a seizure, people were so sure she was dead; she woke up four days later and learned they had dug a grave for her. Never completely recovering, she was paralyzed for three years, during which time she developed a love for mental prayer
- At the age of 43, she became the key reformer of the Carmelite Order and founded a new branch, known as the Discalced Carmelites; she aimed to renew the ancient Carmelite Order for the sake of both tradition and longevity that went back to the basics of a contemplative order: a simple life of poverty devoted to prayer
- She experienced several miracles, including the miraculous cure from a three-year paralysis, a physical wound to her heart from a divine piercing (transverberation), and levitation during spiritual ecstasies. She brought her crushed and lifeless nephew back to life after holding him and praying. Her body has also been noted for its incorruptibility in death
- In 1970, Pope Paul VI gave her the title Doctor of the Church. She was the first woman even to be given this title



# Saint JOHN OF THE CROSS

June 24, 1542 – December 14, 1591

Feast Day: December 14

Patron Saint of: Spanish Poets, Contemplatives and Mystics



## QUOTES

“Silence is God’s first language”

“Whenever anything disagreeable or displeasing happens to you, remember Christ crucified and be silent”



## QUOTE

“In the twilight of life, God will not judge us on our earthly possessions and human successes, but on how well we have loved.”

## FACTS

- St. John of the Cross was born Juan de Yepes y Alvarez, in Fontiveros, Avila, Spain into a Christian family
- His father died when he was three, and his older brother, Luis died two years after that, likely because of malnutrition. John’s mother eventually found work weaving which helped her to feed her family when John was 9
- As a child, John was sent to a boarding school for poor and orphaned children. He was given a religious education from a young age and chose to follow a religious path. This led him to enter the Carmelite order at age 21, where he took the name John of St. Matthias. He was ordained as a priest 4 years later
- In 1567, John met the Carmelite nun St. Teresa of Avila, and they spoke about reform to the Carmelite Order and reintroducing some of the stricter practices of the Order, including an injunction against wearing covered shoes. This distinguished the reformed order as the Order of the Discalced Carmelites, officially recognized in 1580
- John travelled with Teresa, establishing convents for the new Order. In November 1568, the first monastery for friars was established by John, who then took the new religious name of John of the Cross. He would go on to help Teresa establish many religious communities over the next few years
- The calced Carmelites were not happy with this new order and would try to squash the efforts of Teresa and John throughout the years, even imprisoning John in 1567. He was released with the help of an apostolic nuncio, but the nuncio died the next year and John was again captured and jailed
- He was publicly lashed, kept in severe isolation with little food or water and no change of clothing. There he wrote much of his most famous poem, *Spiritual Canticle*. He escaped 8 months later
- Though the tensions between the orders mostly resolved peacefully, after a disagreement with the Discalced’s Vicar General, John was sent to an isolated monastery where he fell ill and died



# Saint FRANCIS DE SALES

August 21, 1567 – December 28, 1622

Feast Day: January 24

**Patron Saint of:** Catholic writers, the Catholic press, the deaf, journalists, adult education



## QUOTES

“Be who you are, and be that well”

"Have patience with all things, but first with yourself"



## QUOTE

“Mere silence is not wisdom, for wisdom consists of knowing when and how to speak, and when and where to keep silent”

## FACTS

- St. Francis de Sales was born into a noble family at Chateau de Sales in the Kingdom of Savoy near Geneva, Switzerland. He was a Bishop and Doctor of the Church
- From a very early age, he desired to serve God. He knew for years he had a vocation to the priesthood, but kept it from his family. He was destined by his father to be a lawyer so that he could eventually take his place as a senator from the province of Savoy in France
- In 1580, Francis attended the University of Paris, and at 24-years-old, he received his doctorate in law at the University of Padua. All the time, he never lost his passion for God. He studied theology and practiced mental prayers
- Francis also studied fencing and riding. One day while he was riding, God made His will clear when he fell from his horse three times. Each time he fell, the sword came out of the scabbard, and each time it came out, the sword and scabbard came to rest on the ground in the shape of the Christian cross
- His father strongly opposed Francis entering the priesthood, and only after much patient persuasiveness by gentle Francis did his father finally consent. Francis was ordained and elected provost of the Diocese of Geneva, in 1593, by the Bishop of Geneva
- During the Protestant reformation, Francis led an expedition to bring 60,000 Calvinists back to the Catholic Church. For three years, he trudged through the countryside, had doors slammed in his face and rocks thrown at him. Francis wrote pamphlets explaining true Catholic doctrine and slipped them under peoples doors. As parents saw how kind he was with their children, they began to talk to him. By the time he returned home, he brought 40,000 people back to the Catholic Church
- Francis was consecrated Bishop of Geneva in 1602
- In 1610, Francis worked closely with St. Jane Frances de Chantal in founding a women's religious community, called the Order of Visitation
- It took him 20 years to conquer his quick temper, but no one ever suspected he had a problem; overflowing with good nature and kindness was his usual manner. His meekness and sunny disposition won for him the title of “Gentleman Saint”



# Saint MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

**Feast Day:** September 29

**Patron Saint of:** grocers, soldiers, doctors, mariners, paratroopers, police, and sickness



## PRAYER

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls.

Amen



## QUOTE

“The battle against the Devil, which is the principal task of Saint Michael the Archangel, is still being fought today, because the Devil is still alive and active in the world”

--Pope John Paul II

## FACTS

- St. Michael the Archangel, holds a significant place within the Roman Catholic tradition as a defender of faith, protector of souls, and a symbol of divine justice. While not formally canonized as a saint, he is revered as a celestial being with immense significance
- In the battle fought in heaven against Satan and his followers, St. Michael lead the army of angels against the rebellion, casting evil spirits down to hell. *Rv 12:7-12*
- St. Michael's presence can be traced back to early Jewish writings, particularly in texts from the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. In these ancient texts, he is depicted as the chief among angels and archangels, responsible for guarding and caring for Israel
- Holy Scripture describes St. Michael as “one of the chief princes, and defender of God’s people” *Dn 10:12-21; 12:1* and leader of the forces of heaven in their triumph over the powers of hell. He has been especially honored and invoked as patron and protector by the Church from the time of the Apostles
- We recognize that St. Michael has four "offices" or roles
  - Leader of the Army of God: St. Michael is seen as the commander of heaven's forces, leading the angelic host in their battle against the powers of darkness. He serves as a model of spiritual warfare, reflecting the ongoing struggle between good and evil
  - Angel of Death: St. Michael is regarded as the angel of death, accompanying the souls of departed Christians to heaven. At the moment of death, he offers the souls an opportunity for redemption, thwarting the devil's attempts to claim them
  - Weigher of Souls: St. Michael is often depicted holding balanced scales, symbolizing his role in weighing souls during the Last Judgment. This signifies his involvement in the divine judgment of humanity
  - Guardian of the Church: St. Michael serves as the guardian of the Church and the Chosen People. Throughout history, he has been revered by military orders of knights and is considered the patron saint of various cities and countries
- He appears in the Book of Enoch as one of the seven archangels, alongside Uriel, Raguel, Raphael, Sariel, Gabriel, and Remiel, in Jewish tradition. These archangels are described as standing before the glory of the Lord



# Saint FLORIAN

250 AD – 304 AD

Feast Day: May 4th

**Patron Saint of:** Poland, Linz, Austria, chimney sweeps, soap makers, brewers and firefighters



## QUOTE

"If you wish to know that I am not afraid of your torture, light the fire, and in the name of the Lord I will climb onto it"



## QUOTE

"Even if you threaten me with death, I will never betray my Lord and Savior"

## FACTS

- St. Florian was born in the ancient Roman city of Aelium Cetium, present-day Sankt Pölten, Austria
- He was a Christian holy man
- He joined the Roman Army and advanced in the ranks, rising to commander of the imperial army in the Roman province of Noricum. In addition to his military duties, he was also responsible for organizing and leading firefighting brigades. Florian organized and trained an elite group of soldiers whose sole duty was to fight fires
- During the Diocletianic Persecution of Christians, reports reached Rome that Florian was not enforcing the proscriptions against Christians in his territory. Aquilinus was sent to investigate these reports. When Aquilinus ordered Florian to offer sacrifice to the Roman gods in accordance with Roman religion, Florian refused
- He gave himself up at Lorch when they were rounding up the Christians, and after making a bold confession, Florian was sentenced to be burned at the stake. He was twice scourged, half-flayed alive, set on fire, and finally thrown into the river Enns with a millstone tied around his neck
- His body, recovered and buried by a pious woman, was eventually removed to the Augustinian Abbey of St. Florian, near Linz. It was transported to Rome, at a later date, and Pope Lucius III, in 1138, gave some of the saint's relics to King Casimir of Poland and to the Bishop of Krakow
- There has been popular devotion to St. Florian in many parts of central Europe, and the tradition as to his martyrdom, not far from the spot where the Enns flows into the Danube, is ancient and reliable. Many miracles of healing are attributed to his intercession and he is invoked as a powerful protector in danger from fire or water.
- St. Florian is invoked against fires, floods, lightning, and the pains of Purgatory
- In Austria and Germany, "Florian" is the call sign for fire engines



# Saint KATHERINE DREXEL

November 26, 1858–March 3, 1955

Feast Day: March 3

Patron Saint of: racial justice and philanthropists



## QUOTES

“The Eucharist is a never-ending sacrifice. It is the Sacrament of love, the supreme love, the act of love”

“Ours is the Spirit of the Eucharist, the total Gift of Self”



## QUOTE

“The patient and humble endurance of the cross – whatever nature it may be – is the highest work we have to do”

## FACTS

- St. Katharine Drexel is the 2<sup>nd</sup> American-born saint to be canonized by the Catholic Church. She was an heiress to a large bequest who became a religious sister & a brilliant educator
- Katherine was born in Philadelphia, the 2<sup>nd</sup> child of a prominent & wealthy banker, Francis Anthony Drexel & his wife, Hannah Langstroth. She had an older sister, Elizabeth. Her mother passed away just 5 weeks after Katherine was born. Her father remarried to Emma Bouvier in 1860 & together they had another daughter in 1863, Louisa Drexel
- The Drexels were devout in the practice of their faith, setting an excellent example of true Christian living for their 3 daughters. They not only prayed but practiced the spiritual & corporal works of mercy. Every week, her stepmother opened their doors to house & care for the poor. The Drexels distributed food, clothing & provided rent assistance to those in need. They would also seek out & visit women who were too afraid or proud to approach the home in order to care for their needs in Christian charity
- Katharine learned that no amount of money could shelter her from pain or suffering & her life took a turn. She became inspired with a passionate love for God and neighbor, & took an avid interest in the material & spiritual well-being of Native Americans & African-Americans. In 1884, while her family was visiting the Western states, she saw first-hand the troubling & poor situation of the Native Americans
- One of their first acts following their father's death, Katharine & her sisters contributed money to assist the St. Francis Mission of South Dakota's Rosebud Reservation. Katherine soon concluded that more was needed to help the Native Americans. In 1887, the Drexel sisters were given a private audience with Pope Leo XIII. They were seeking missionaries to help with the missions they were financing
- Katharine decided she would give herself & her inheritance to God through service to both Native Americans & African-Americans. On February 12, 1891, Katharine made her first vows as a religious & eventually established a religious congregation called the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for the betterment of Native Americans & African-Americans
- She took part in opening the first mission boarding school called St. Katherine's Indian School, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. In 1915, Katherine founded Xavier University in New Orleans, the first Catholic University in the United States for African-Americans
- By the time of her death, she had more than 500 Sisters teaching in 63 schools throughout the country & she established 50 missions for Native Americans in 16 different states



# Saint FAUSTINA KOWALSKA

August 25, 1905 – October 5, 1938

Feast Day: October 5

Patron Saint of: Mercy



## QUOTES

"He who wants to learn true humility should reflect upon the Passion of Jesus"

"A humble soul does not trust itself but places all its confidence in God."



## QUOTE

"If the angels were capable of envy, they would envy us for two things: one is the receiving of Holy Communion, and the other is suffering."

## FACTS

- Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska was born as Helena Kowalska, in Glogowiec, Leczyca County, north-west of Łódź in Poland. She was the 3<sup>rd</sup> of 10 children to a poor and religious family
- Faustina first felt a calling to the religious life when she was seven-years-old and attended the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. After finishing her schooling, Faustina wanted to immediately join a convent. However, her parents refused
- At 16, Helen left home and went to work as a housekeeper in Aleksandrów, Lodi, and Ostrówek in order to find the means to support herself and to help her parents
- Helena's life took a dramatic turn at 19 years old when she had a vision of the scourged, suffering Christ while at a dance in the park with her sister. As she witnessed His body covered in wounds, she was compelled at that moment to enter religious life immediately. She packed her bags that night, and traveled to Warsaw where she was refused by several convents before finally being accepted by the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy
- On April 30, 1926, at 20-years-old, she finally received her habit and took the religious name of Sister Maria Faustina of the Most Blessed Sacrament and in 1928, she took her first religious vows as a nun
- On February 22, 1931, Faustina was visited by Jesus, who presented himself as the "King of Divine Mercy" wearing a white garment with red and pale rays coming from his heart. She was asked to become the apostle and "Secretary of Mercy", a model of how to be merciful to others, and an instrument for reemphasizing God's plan of mercy for the world
- Her confessor, Father Sopocko encouraged her to start keeping a diary and to record all of her conversations with Jesus. On Good Friday, April 19, 1935, Jesus told her he wanted the Divine Mercy image publicly honored
- In July 1937, the first holy cards with the Divine Mercy image were created and Faustina provided instructions for the Novena of Divine Mercy, which she reported was a message from Jesus. Throughout the rest of 1937, the Divine Mercy image continued to be promoted and grow in popularity
- Her health deteriorated by the end of 1937. Faustina passed away on October 5, 1938. Her resting place is at the Basilica of Divine Mercy in Krakow, Poland

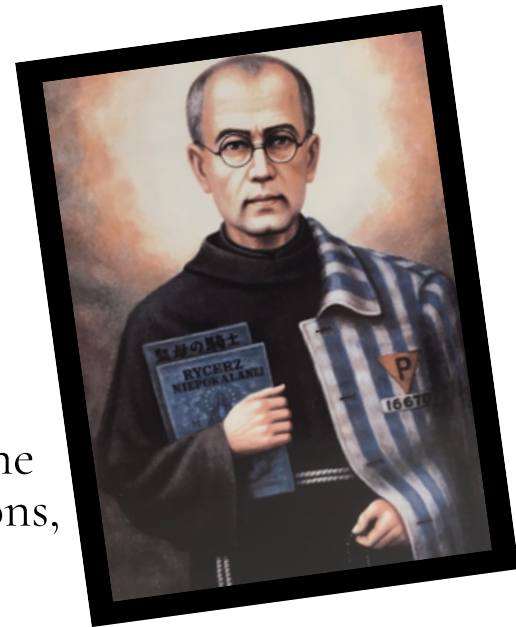


# Saint MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

January 8, 1894 – August 14, 1941

Feast Day: August 14

**Patron Saint of:** drug addicts, prisoners, families, the pro-life movement, journalists, media communications, and the family



## QUOTE

That night I asked the Mother of God what was to become of me. Then she came to me holding two crowns, one white, the other red. She asked me if I was willing to accept either of these crowns. The white one meant that I should persevere in purity, and the red that I should become a martyr. I said that I would accept them both



## QUOTES

“Let us not forget that Jesus not only suffered, but also rose in glory; so, too, we go to the glory of the Resurrection by way of suffering and the Cross”

“The most deadly poison of our times is indifference. And this happens, although the praise of God should know no limits. Let us strive, therefore, to praise Him to the greatest extent of our powers”

## FACTS

- Born Raymund Kolbe on Jan. 8, 1894, in the Poland, A part of the Russian Empire. He was a Polish Conventual Franciscan friar & a martyr in the German death Camp of Auschwitz during World War II
- St. Maximilian Kolbe was very active in promoting the Immaculate Virgin Mary & is known as the Apostle of Consecration to Mary. Much of his life was strongly influenced by a vision he had of the Virgin Mary when he was 12
- A year after, Kolbe and his brother, Francis, joined the Conventual Franciscans. In 1910, Kolbe was given the religious name Maximilian, and in 1911, he professed his first vows
- At 21, Kolbe earned a doctorate in philosophy from the Pontifical Gregorian University. He would also earn a doctorate in theology by the time he was 28
- St. Maximilian Kolbe organized the Militia Immaculata (Army of the Immaculate One) after witnessing demonstrations against Pope St. Pius X and Benedict XV. His goal was to work for the conversion of sinners and enemies of the Church, specifically, the Freemasons and he would do so with the intercession of Mary
- In 1918, he was ordained a priest & continued his work of promoting Mary in Poland. He founded a monthly periodical, "Rycerz Niepokalanej" (Knight of the Immaculate). He operated a religious publishing press & founded a new Conventual Franciscan monastery, which became a major religious publishing center. He also founded monasteries in Japan and India. Today, the monastery in Japan remains prominent in the Roman Catholic Church in Japan
- In 1936, Kolbe's health forced him to return home to Poland, & once the WWII invasion began, he became one of the only brothers to remain in the monastery. He opened up a temporary hospital to aid those in need. When his town was captured, Kolbe was sent to prison but released 3 months later
- Kolbe refused to sign a document that would recognize him as a German citizen & continued to work in his monastery, providing shelter for refugees - including hiding 2,000 Jews from German persecution. After receiving permission to continue his religious publishing, Kolbe's monastery acted as a publishing house again and issued many anti-Nazi German publications
- On Feb. 17, 1941, the monastery was shut down; Kolbe was arrested by the German Gestapo and taken to the Pawiak prison. 3 months later, he was transferred to Auschwitz
- Never abandoning his priesthood, Kolbe was the victim to severe violence & harassment. Toward the end of his 2<sup>nd</sup> month in Auschwitz, men were chosen to face death by starvation to warn against escapes. Kolbe was not chosen but volunteered to take the place of a man with a family
- During the last days of his life Kolbe led prayers to Our Lady with the prisoners and remained calm. Survivors of the camp testified that the starving prisoners could be heard praying and singing hymns, led by the priest who had volunteered for an agonizing death. He was the last of the group to remain alive, after two weeks of dehydration and starvation. The guards gave him a lethal injection of carbolic acid
- St. Maximilian Kolbe died on August 14 and his remains were cremated on August 15, the same day as the Assumption of Mary feast day



# Saint JOSEPH

Unknown – 18 A.D.

Feast Day: March 19

**Patron Saint of:** of the Universal Church, unborn children, fathers, workers, travelers, immigrants, & a happy death



## FACTS

- Everything we know about the husband of Mary & the foster father of Jesus comes from Scripture
- We know he was a carpenter, a working man, for the Nazarenes ask about Jesus, "Is this not the carpenter's son?" (Mt 13:55). He wasn't rich for when he took Jesus to the Temple to be circumcised & Mary to be purified he offered the sacrifice of 2 turtledoves or a pair of pigeons, allowed only for those who could not afford a lamb (Lk 2:24)
- Despite his humble work & means, Joseph came from a royal lineage. The Gospels of Luke & Mark indicate Joseph's descent from David, the greatest king of Israel (Mt 1:1-16 and Lk 3:23-38). Indeed the angel who first tells Joseph about Jesus greets him as "son of David," a royal title also used for Jesus
- Joseph was a compassionate, caring man. When he discovered Mary was pregnant after they were betrothed, he knew the child wasn't his but unaware that she was carrying the Son of God. Women accused of adultery could be stoned to death, so he resolved to send Mary away quietly to not expose her to shame or cruelty. But, when an angel came to Joseph in a dream and told him, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, & you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins," he did as the angel told him & took Mary as his wife (Mt 1:19-21)
- When the angel came again to tell him that his family was in danger, he immediately left everything he owned, all his family and friends, and fled to a strange country with his young wife and the baby. He waited in Egypt without question until the angel told him it was safe to go back (Mt 2:13-23)
- Joseph loved Jesus. His one concern was for the safety of this child entrusted to him. He left his home to protect Jesus, & upon his return settled in Nazareth out of fear for his life. When Jesus stayed in the Temple we are told Joseph (along with Mary) searched with great anxiety for three days for him (Lk 2:48). We also know that Joseph treated Jesus as his own son for over and over the people of Nazareth say of Jesus, "Is this not the son of Joseph?" (Lk 4:22)
- In art, Joseph is typically portrayed as an older man, with grey hair and a beard, often balding, sometimes appearing frail and a marginal figure next to Mary and Jesus, if not entirely in the background. Some statues of Joseph show his staff topped with flowers. St. Joseph is shown with the attributes of a carpenter's square or tools, the infant Jesus, his lily blossomed staff, two turtle doves, or a spikenard

## QUOTES

"Saint Joseph was a just man, a tireless worker, the upright guardian of those entrusted to his care. May he always guard, protect, and enlighten families."  
- Pope St. John Paul II

"The silence of St. Joseph is the perfect silence of a man who listens intently to the voice of God and who lives in perfect harmony with the divine will."  
- Pope Benedict XVI





# Saint ELIZABETH OF THE TRINITY

July 18, 1880 – November 9, 1906

Feast Day: November 8

Patron Saint of: sick people, loss of parents



## QUOTE

“A praise of glory is a soul of silence that remains like a lyre under the mysterious touch of the Holy Spirit so that he may draw from it divine harmonies; it knows that suffering is a string that produces still more beautiful sounds”



## QUOTE

“Believe that at those times he is hollowing out in your soul capacities to receive him, capacities that are, in a way, as infinite as he is himself. Try then to be wholly joyful under the hand that crucifies you”



## FACTS

- Elizabeth Catez was born in 1880 in France. She was very close with her parents. Her father was an army captain & died when she was 7
- After the death of her father, her family moved to a town called Dijon where there was a Carmelite convent near her home. The life of the sisters intrigued the young Elizabeth.
- At 7, Elizabeth told a friend of the family, Canon Angles, that she would be a religious. She was a precocious child with a flashing temper until she made her First Communion. From that time on she was noticeably calm in temperament
- Since her First Communion, she “wanted to give her life and to return a little of His great love.” At age 13 she bound herself to Jesus with a vow of virginity. Elizabeth’s heart had been captured, & now she could think only of Him. On her twenty-first birthday she had her mother’s blessing at last to enter the Carmel in Dijon, close to her home. Elizabeth expresses in her letters a deep joy at being in Carmel. Everything led her to her “Three,” the Trinity.
- She became ill shortly after entering Carmel & suffered for 5 years from a stomach ailment, now thought to have been Addison’s disease. Her suffering was intense both spiritually and physically; this caused her love for Jesus to increase, & also her desire to offer these sufferings to Him
- Her 5 short years in the convent were intensely happy for her, despite the suffering she endured because of the Addison’s disease that would eventually end her life on 9th November in 1906, at 26
- Apart from her chores in the community, the common life of prayer shared with the sisters & other responsibilities, Elizabeth had a great passion for music & writing. She was a talented pianist & used the analogy of music to describe the spiritual life & how God seeks to attune us to his song of love.
- God’s love was near & intimate for Elizabeth. For her, we are within the mystery of the Triune God, & He dwells in us. For this Carmelite saint, conversion is about attunement to the harmonies of God’s life within us & holiness is living in joyful melody with the dynamics of divine love. In her beautiful prayer to the Trinity, she wrote: “O my beloved Christ, crucified by love . . . I feel my weakness & ask You to clothe me with Yourself; to identify my soul with all the movements of Your soul, to overwhelm me, to possess me, to substitute Yourself for me that my life may be but a radiance of Your life.” For Elizabeth, her life of prayer and contemplation was like listening to the music of a song: “I listened to my Word whom I adore and I heard the song that is sung in the bosom of the Divine”



# Saints LOUIS & ZÉLIE

Aug. 22, 1823 – Jul. 29, 1894 | Dec. 23, 1831 – Aug. 28, 1877

Feast Day: July 12

Patron Saint of: illness, mental illness, marriage, parenting, and widowers



## QUOTES

“We must dispose ourselves to accept generously the will of God, whatever that may be, since that is always what is best for us”  
– St. Zélie

“Soon, we’ll have the intimate of happiness of the family, and it’s this beauty that brings us closer to Him.”  
– St. Louis”



## FACTS

- Desiring like each other to become religious, but eventually left the seminary or convent, and fell in love with each other. Their youngest daughter is St. Thérèse of Lisieux
- Louis Martin was born in 1823. Son of a soldier, his early years were marked by mobility. He learned watchmaking. Decisive years during which the desire to enter the monastery, but due to his difficulty in mastering Latin forced him to leave & open a watchmaking-jewelry store
- Zélie Guérin was born in 1831. Her father was a former soldier of the empire, was enlisted in the gendarmerie. At 1 day old, she was baptized
- After studying at the Convent of Perpetual Adoration, she felt called to religious life but was rejected by Mother Superior. She then turned to vocational training and successfully initiated herself in manufacturing and helped provide work for those in need. The quality of her work had her workshop famous.
- Louis’s mother, set up a meeting for him with Zélie Guérin, with whom she was learning the art of lace. A few months after this initial meeting, they got married on July 12, 1858. They were married for 19 years.
- After Louis married Zélie, he gave up his watchmaking-jewelry business to assist Zélie in the management of the lace factory that she founded.
- For almost a year the couple lived as celibates, but the advice of a confessor changed their minds and they decided to raise as many children as possible for the glory of God
- The family lived a comfortable lifestyle, but also suffered the loss of 4 children in infancy & had to deal with a rebellious daughter. Their devotion never wavered, however. The couple lived modestly, reached out to the poor and the needy, and led daily prayers in the household. St. Therese would later write: “God gave me a father and a mother who were more worthy of heaven than of earth.”
- Zélie was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1865. On August 28, 1877 at half past midnight, Zélie died, surrounded by her husband & her brother
- Louis, a widow, decides - on the instructions of Zélie - to live in Lisieux with the Guérins, his in-laws.
- Gradually his daughters left to enter the convent. Despite his loneliness he said: “It is a great, great honor for me that the Good Lord desires to take all of my children. If I had anything better, I would not hesitate to offer it to him.”
- After his youngest daughter, Thérèse, entered Carmel, in 1888 he began to experience illness which led him to a three-year stay in a psychiatric hospital. Paralyzed, he returned to his family where he died on July 29, 1894, at 71