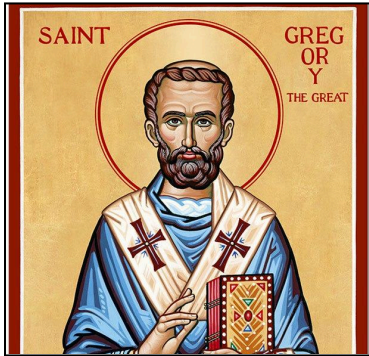


Pope Saint Gregory the Great



Date of birth: 540
Birthplace: Rome, Italy
Date of death: March 12, 604
Canonization: March 12, 604
Feast Day: September 3

Patron Saint of: Musicians, Singers, and Teachers

About Gregory the Great:

Born the son of the Roman prefect in a war-stricken Rome, it is thought that Gregory spent his young years being educated on his family's Sicilian estate before returning around the end of the war in 542. Gregory was known for being very intelligent and fluent in imperial law, likely influencing his future career as Prefect of Rome. He achieved this prestigious position at age 33. Just one year later, Gregory would abandon this life of prestige and become a monk, converting his family home into a monastery. He began to live a life of quiet contemplation.

Just 5 years later in 579, Gregory was appointed by the Pope as ambassador to the Imperial Court in Constantinople. He would serve in this position for 6 years, before returning to his life of contemplation at the monastery on his estate. In 590, Pope Pelagius II died of the plague, and Gregory was unexpectedly chosen as his successor. Once again pulled away from his monastic life, Pope Gregory began his papacy by writing a series of letters disavowing any ambition to the Throne of Peter. He re-invigorated mission work in the Church, sending missionaries to Britain to Christianize the pagan Anglo-Saxons. He was known for his almsgiving, saying the wealth of the Church belongs to the poor, with the Church merely being the steward. He leased farmland to produce food for the poor in famine-stricken Rome. He began a food distribution program for the ill or infirm, and would not dine himself until the infirm were fed and 12 indigent guests were sat at his family table, where they would dine together.

Among these things, Gregory's papacy would become known for his liturgical reforms, the creation of Gregorian Chant, and his many writings. Because of his papacy, the citizens of Rome began looking toward the Pope for governance, instead of the state at Constantinople. Pope Gregory was so popular, he was canonized by popularity after his death in 604. He is named a Doctor of the Church.

A word from St. Gregory:

"The proof of love is in the works. Where love exists, it works great things. But when it ceases to act, it ceases to exist."

Find out more:

Books: *In the Eye of the Storm* by Sigrid Grabner
Formed.org: Pope Saint Gregory the Great | Catholic Saints