



# Call to Holiness

July 2014

Bulletin Supplement

*Catholic saints are holy people and human people who lived extraordinary lives. Each saint the Church honors responded to God's invitation to use his or her unique gifts. God calls each one of us to be a saint.*

July 1: **Blessed Junipero Serra** (1713-1784)



In 1776, when the American Revolution was beginning in the east, another part of the future United States was being born in California. That year a gray-robed Franciscan founded Mission San Juan Capistrano, now famous for its annually returning swallows. San Juan was the seventh of nine missions established under the direction of this indomitable Spaniard.

Born on Spain's island of Mallorca, Serra entered the Franciscan Order, taking the name of Saint Francis' childlike companion, Brother Juniper. Until he was 35, he spent most of his time in the classroom—first as a student of theology and then as a professor. He also became famous for his preaching. Suddenly he gave it all up and followed the yearning that had begun years before when he heard about the missionary work of Saint Francis Solanus in South America. Junipero's desire was to convert native peoples in the New World.

Arriving by ship at Vera Cruz, Mexico, he and a companion walked the 250 miles to Mexico City. On the way Junipero's left leg became infected by an insect bite and would remain a cross—sometimes life-threatening—for the rest of his life. For 18 years he worked in central Mexico and in the Baja Peninsula. He became president of the missions there.

Enter politics: the threat of a Russian invasion south from Alaska. Charles III of Spain ordered an expedition to beat Russia to the territory. So the last two *conquistadors*—one military, one spiritual—began their quest. José de Galvez persuaded Junipero to set out with him for present-day Monterey, California. The first mission founded after the 900-mile journey north was San Diego (1769). That year a shortage of food almost canceled the expedition. Vowing to stay with the local people, Junipero and another friar began a novena in preparation for Saint Joseph's day, March 19, the scheduled day of departure. On that day, the relief ship arrived.

Other missions followed: Monterey/Carmel (1770); San Antonio and San Gabriel (1771); San Luís Obispo (1772); San Francisco and San Juan Capistrano (1776); Santa Clara (1777); San Buenaventura (1782). Twelve more were founded after Serra's death.

Junipero made the long trip to Mexico City to settle great differences with the military commander. He arrived at the point of death. The outcome was substantially what Junipero sought: the famous "Regulation" protecting the Indians and the missions. It was the basis for the first significant legislation in California, a "Bill of Rights" for Native Americans.

Because the Native Americans were living a nonhuman life from the Spanish point of view, the friars were made their legal guardians. The Native Americans were kept at the mission after Baptism lest they be corrupted in their former haunts—a move that has brought cries of "injustice" from some moderns.

Junipero's missionary life was a long battle with cold and hunger, with unsympathetic military commanders and even with danger of death from non-Christian native peoples. Through it all his unquenchable zeal was fed by prayer each night, often from midnight till dawn. He baptized over 6,000 people and confirmed 5,000. His travels would have circled the globe. He brought the Native Americans not only the gift of faith but also a decent standard of living. He won their love, as witnessed especially by their grief at his death. He is buried at Mission San Carlo Borromeo, Carmel, and was beatified in 1988.

## July 2: **Saint Oliver Plunkett** (1629-1681)

The name of today's saint is especially familiar to the Irish and the English—and with good reason. The English martyred Oliver Plunkett for defending the faith in his native Ireland during a period of severe persecution.

Born in County Meath in 1629, he studied for the priesthood in Rome and was ordained there in 1654. After some years of teaching and service to the poor of Rome he was appointed Archbishop of Armagh in Ireland. Four years later, in 1673, a new wave of anti-Catholic persecution began, forcing Archbishop Plunkett to do his pastoral work in secrecy and disguise and to live in hiding. Meanwhile, many of his priests were sent into exile; schools were closed; Church services had to be held in secret and convents and seminaries were suppressed. As archbishop, he was viewed as ultimately responsible for any rebellion or political activity among his parishioners.

Archbishop Plunkett was arrested and imprisoned in Dublin Castle in 1679, but his trial was moved to London. After deliberating for 15 minutes, a jury found him guilty of fomenting revolt. He was hanged, drawn and quartered in July 1681.

Pope Paul VI canonized Oliver Plunkett in 1975.



## July 3: **Saint Thomas the Apostle**

Poor Thomas! He made one remark and has been branded as “Doubting Thomas” ever since. But if he doubted, he also believed. He made what is certainly the most explicit statement of faith in the New Testament: “My Lord and My God!” (see John 20:24-28) and, in so expressing his faith, gave Christians a prayer that will be said till the end of time. He also occasioned a compliment from Jesus to all later Christians: “Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed” (John 20:29).

Thomas should be equally well known for his courage. Perhaps what he said was impetuous—since he ran, like the rest, at the showdown—but he can scarcely have been insincere when he expressed his willingness to die with Jesus. The occasion was when Jesus proposed to go to Bethany after Lazarus had died. Since Bethany was near Jerusalem, this meant walking into the

very midst of his enemies and to almost certain death. Realizing this, Thomas said to the other apostles, “Let us also go to die with him” (John 11:16b).



## July 4: **Saint Elizabeth of Portugal** (1271-1336)

Elizabeth is usually depicted in royal garb with a dove or an olive branch. At her birth in 1271, her father, Pedro III, future king of Aragon, was reconciled with his father, James, the reigning monarch. This proved to be a portent of things to come. Under the healthful influences surrounding her early years, she quickly learned self-discipline and acquired a taste for spirituality. Thus fortunately

prepared, she was able to meet the challenge when, at the age of 12, she was given in marriage to Denis, king of Portugal. She was able to establish for herself a pattern of life conducive to growth in God's love, not merely through her exercises of piety, including daily Mass, but also through her exercise of charity, by which she was able to befriend and help pilgrims, strangers, the sick, the poor—in a word, all those whose need came to her notice. At the same time she remained devoted to her husband, whose infidelity to her was a scandal to the kingdom.

He, too, was the object of many of her peace endeavors. She long sought peace for him with God, and was finally rewarded when he gave up his life of sin. She repeatedly sought and effected peace between the king and their rebellious son, Alfonso, who thought that he was passed over to favor the king's illegitimate children. She acted as peacemaker in the struggle between Ferdinand, king of Aragon, and his cousin James, who claimed the crown. And finally from Coimbra, where she had retired as a Franciscan tertiary to the monastery of the Poor Clares after the death of her husband, she set out and was able to bring about a lasting peace between her son Alfonso, now king of Portugal, and his son-in-law, the king of Castile.



#### July 5: **Saint Anthony Zaccaria** (1502-1539)



At the same time that Martin Luther was attacking abuses in the Church, a reformation within the Church was already being attempted. Among the early movers of the Counter-Reformation was Anthony Zaccaria. His mother became a widow at 18 and devoted herself to the spiritual education of her son. He received a medical doctorate at 22 and, while working among the poor of his native Cremona in Italy, was attracted to the religious apostolate. He renounced his rights to any future inheritance, worked as a catechist and was ordained a priest at the age of 26. Called to Milan in a few years, he laid the foundations of three religious congregations, one for men and one for women, plus an association of married couples. Their aim was the reform of the decadent society of their day, beginning with the clergy, religious and lay people.

Greatly inspired by Saint Paul (his congregation is named the Barnabites, after the companion of that saint), Anthony preached with great vigor in church and street, conducted popular missions and was not ashamed of doing public penance.

He encouraged such innovations as the collaboration of the laity in the apostolate, frequent Communion, the Forty Hours devotion and the ringing of church bells at 3:00 p.m. on Fridays.

His holiness moved many to reform their lives but, as with all saints, it also moved many to oppose him. Twice his community had to undergo official religious investigation, and twice it was exonerated.

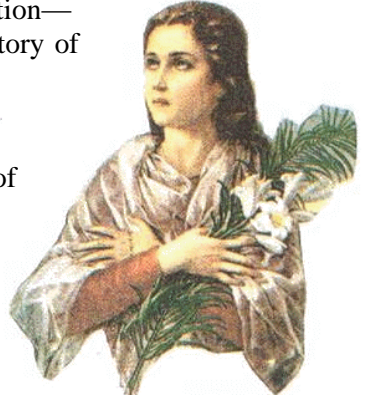
While on a mission of peace, he became seriously ill and was brought home for a visit to his mother. He died at Cremona at the age of 36.

### July 6: **Saint Maria Goretti** (1890-1902)

One of the largest crowds ever assembled for a canonization—250,000—symbolized the reaction of millions touched by the simple story of Maria Goretti.

She was the daughter of a poor Italian tenant farmer, had no chance to go to school, never learned to read or write. When she made her First Communion not long before her death at age 12, she was one of the larger and somewhat backward members of the class.

On a hot afternoon in July, Maria was sitting at the top of the stairs of her house, mending a shirt. She was not quite 12 years old, but physically mature. A cart stopped outside, and a neighbor, Alessandro, 18 years old, ran up the stairs. He seized her and pulled her into a bedroom. She struggled and tried to call for help. “No, God does not wish it,” she cried out. “It is a sin. You would go to hell for it.” Alessandro began striking at her blindly with a long dagger.



She was taken to a hospital. Her last hours were marked by the usual simple compassion of the good—concern about where her mother would sleep, forgiveness of her murderer (she had been in fear of him, but did not say anything lest she cause trouble to his family) and her devout welcoming of Viaticum, her last Holy Communion. She died about 24 hours after the attack.

Her murderer was sentenced to 30 years in prison. For a long time he was unrepentant and surly. One night he had a dream or vision of Maria, gathering flowers and offering them to him. His life changed. When he was released after 27 years, his first act was to go to beg the forgiveness of Maria’s mother.

Devotion to the young martyr grew, miracles were worked, and in less than half a century she was canonized. At her beatification in 1947, her mother (then 82), two sisters and a brother appeared with Pope Pius XII on the balcony of Saint Peter’s. Three years later, at her canonization, a 66-year-old Alessandro Serenelli knelt among the quarter-million people and cried tears of joy.

### July 7: **Blessed Emmanuel Ruiz and Companions** (1804-1860)

Not much is known of the early life of Emmanuel Ruiz, but details of his heroic death in defense of the faith have come down to us.

Born of humble parents in Santander, Spain, he became a Franciscan priest and served as a missionary in Damascus. This was at a time when anti-Christian riots shook Syria and thousands lost their lives in just a short time.

Among these were Emmanuel, superior of the Franciscan convent, seven other friars and three laymen. When a menacing crowd came looking for the men, they refused to renounce their faith and become Muslims. The men were subjected to horrible tortures before their martyrdom.

Emmanuel, his brother Franciscans and the three Maronite laymen were beatified in 1926 by Pope Pius XI.

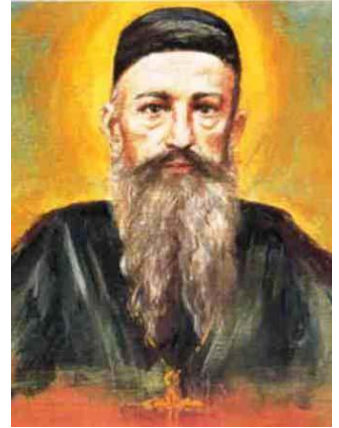


### July 8: **Saint Gregory Grassi and Companions** (*d. 1900*)

Christian missionaries have often gotten caught in the crossfire of wars against their own countries. When the governments of Britain, Germany, Russia and France forced substantial territorial concessions from the Chinese in 1898, anti-foreign sentiment grew very strong among many Chinese people.

Gregory Grassi was born in Italy in 1833, ordained in 1856 and sent to China five years later. Gregory was later ordained Bishop of North Shanxi. With 14 other European missionaries and 14 Chinese religious, he was martyred during the short but bloody Boxer Uprising of 1900.

Twenty-six of these martyrs were arrested on the orders of Yu Hsien, the governor of Shanxi province. They were hacked to death on July 9, 1900. Five of them were Friars Minor; seven were Franciscan Missionaries of Mary — the first martyrs of their congregation. Seven were Chinese seminarians and Secular Franciscans; four martyrs were Chinese laymen and Secular Franciscans. The other three Chinese laymen killed in Shanxi simply worked for the Franciscans and were rounded up with all the others. Three Italian Franciscans were martyred that same week in the province of Hunan. All these martyrs were beatified in 1946 and were among the 120 martyrs canonized in 2000.



### July 9: **Saint Augustine Zhao Rong and Companions** (*17th-20th centuries*)



Christianity arrived in China by way of Syria in the 600s. Depending on China's relations with the outside world, Christianity over the centuries was free to grow or was forced to operate secretly.

The 120 martyrs in this group died between 1648 and 1930. Most of them (87) were born in China and were children, parents, catechists or laborers, ranging from nine years of age to 72. This group includes four Chinese diocesan priests.

The 33 foreign-born martyrs were mostly priests or women religious, especially from the Order of Preachers, the Paris Foreign Mission Society, the Friars Minor, Jesuits, Salesians and Franciscan Missionaries of Mary.

Augustine Zhao Rong was a Chinese soldier who accompanied Bishop John Gabriel Taurin Dufresse (Paris Foreign Mission Society) to his martyrdom in Beijing. Augustine was baptized and not long after was ordained as a diocesan priest. He was martyred in 1815.

Beatified in groups at various times, these 120 martyrs were canonized in Rome on October 1, 2000.

### July 10: **Saint Veronica Giuliani** (*1660-1727*)

Veronica's desire to be like Christ crucified was answered with the stigmata.

Veronica was born in Mercatelli, Italy. It is said that when her mother Benedetta was dying she called her five daughters to her bedside and entrusted each of them to one of the five wounds of Jesus. Veronica was entrusted to the wound below Christ's heart.

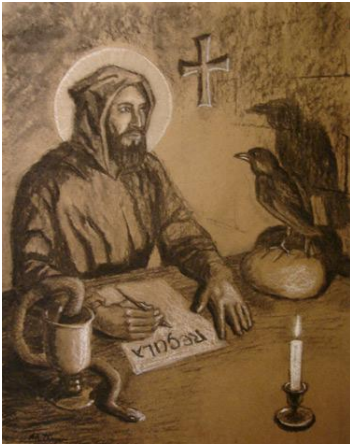
At the age of 17, Veronica joined the Poor Clares directed by the Capuchins. Her father had wanted her to marry, but she convinced him to allow her to become a nun. In her first years in the monastery, she worked in the kitchen, infirmary and sacristy and also served as portress. At the age of 34, she was made novice mistress, a position she held for 22 years. When she was 37, Veronica received the stigmata. Life was not the same after that.



Church authorities in Rome wanted to test Veronica's authenticity and so conducted an investigation. She lost the office of novice mistress temporarily and was not allowed to attend Mass except on Sundays or holy days. Through all of this Veronica did not become bitter, and the investigation eventually restored her as novice mistress.

Though she protested against it, at the age of 56 she was elected abbess, an office she held for 11 years until her death. Veronica was very devoted to the Eucharist and to the Sacred Heart. She offered her sufferings for the missions. Veronica was canonized in 1839.

### July 11: **Saint Benedict** (480?-543)



It is unfortunate that no contemporary biography was written of a man who has exercised the greatest influence on monasticism in the West. Benedict is well recognized in the later *Dialogues* of Saint Gregory, but these are sketches to illustrate miraculous elements of his career.

Benedict was born into a distinguished family in central Italy, studied at Rome and early in life was drawn to the monastic life. At first he became a hermit, leaving a depressing world—pagan armies on the march, the Church torn by schism, people suffering from war, morality at a low ebb.

He soon realized that he could not live a hidden life in a small town any better than in a large city, so he withdrew to a cave high in the mountains for three years. Some monks chose him as their leader for a while, but found his strictness not to their taste. Still, the shift from hermit to community life had begun for him. He had an idea of gathering various families of monks into one "Grand Monastery" to give them the benefit of unity, fraternity, permanent worship in one house. Finally he began to build what was to become one of the most famous monasteries in the world—Monte Cassino, commanding three narrow valleys running toward the mountains north of Naples.

The Rule that gradually developed prescribed a life of liturgical prayer, study, manual labor and living together in community under a common father (abbot). Benedictine asceticism is known for its moderation, and Benedictine charity has always shown concern for the people in the surrounding countryside. In the course of the Middle Ages, all monasticism in the West was gradually brought under the Rule of Saint Benedict.

Today the Benedictine family is represented by two branches: the Benedictine Federation and the Cistercians.

### July 12: **Saints John Jones and John Wall** (c. 1530-1598; 1620-1679)

These two friars were martyred in England in the 16th and 17th centuries for refusing to deny their faith.

John Jones was Welsh. He was ordained a diocesan priest and was twice imprisoned for administering the sacraments before leaving England in 1590. He joined the Franciscans at the age of 60 and returned to England three years later while Queen Elizabeth I was at the height of her power. John ministered to Catholics in the English countryside until his imprisonment in 1596. He was condemned to be hanged, drawn and quartered. John was executed on July 12, 1598.

John Wall was born in England but was educated at the English College of Douai, Belgium. Ordained in Rome in 1648, he entered the Franciscans in Douai several years later. In 1656 he returned to work secretly in England.

In 1678 Titus Oates worked many English people into a frenzy over an alleged papal plot to murder the king and restore Catholicism in that country. In that year Catholics were legally excluded from Parliament, a law which was not repealed until 1829. John Wall was arrested and imprisoned in 1678 and was executed the following year.

John Jones and John Wall were canonized in 1970.



### July 13: **Saint Henry** (972-1024)

As German king and Holy Roman Emperor, Henry was a practical man of affairs. He was energetic in consolidating his rule. He crushed rebellions and feuds. On all sides he had to deal with drawn-out disputes so as to protect his frontiers. This involved him in a number of battles, especially in the south in Italy; he also helped Pope Benedict VIII quell disturbances in Rome. Always his ultimate purpose was to establish a stable peace in Europe.

According to eleventh-century custom, Henry took advantage of his position and appointed as bishops men loyal to him. In his case, however, he avoided the pitfalls of this practice and actually fostered the reform of ecclesiastical and monastic life. He was canonized in 1146.



### July 14: **Saint Kateri Tekakwitha** (1656-1680)

The blood of martyrs is the seed of saints. Nine years after the Jesuits Isaac Jogues and John de Brébeuf (October 19) were tomahawked by Iroquois warriors, a baby girl was born near the place of their martyrdom, Auriesville, New York.

Her mother was a Christian Algonquin, taken captive by the Iroquois and given as wife to the chief of the Mohawk clan, the boldest and fiercest of the Five Nations. When she was four, Kateri lost her parents and little brother in a smallpox epidemic that left her disfigured and half blind. She was adopted by an uncle, who succeeded her father as chief. He hated the coming of the Blackrobes (Jesuit missionaries), but could do nothing to them because a peace treaty with the French required their presence in villages





with Christian captives. She was moved by the words of three Blackrobes who lodged with her uncle, but fear of him kept her from seeking instruction. She refused to marry a Mohawk brave and at 19 finally got the courage to take the step of converting. She was baptized with the name Kateri (Catherine) on Easter Sunday.

Now she would be treated as a slave. Because she would not work on Sunday, she received no food that day. Her life in grace grew rapidly. She told a missionary that she often meditated on the great dignity of being baptized. She was powerfully moved by God's love for human beings and saw the dignity of each of her people.

She was always in danger, for her conversion and holy life created great opposition. On the advice of a priest, she stole away one night and began a 200-mile walking journey to a Christian Indian village at Sault Saint Louis, near Montreal.

For three years she grew in holiness under the direction of a priest and an older Iroquois woman, giving herself totally to God in long hours of prayer, in charity and in strenuous penance. At 23 she took a vow of virginity, an unprecedented act for an Indian woman, whose future depended on being married. She found a place in the woods where she could pray an hour a day—and was accused of meeting a man there!

Her dedication to virginity was instinctive: She did not know about religious life for women until she visited Montreal. Inspired by this, she and two friends wanted to start a community, but the local priest dissuaded her. She humbly accepted an "ordinary" life. She practiced extremely severe fasting as penance for the conversion of her nation. She died the afternoon before Holy Thursday. Witnesses said that her emaciated face changed color and became like that of a healthy child. The lines of suffering, even the pockmarks, disappeared and the touch of a smile came upon her lips. She was beatified in 1980 and canonized in 2012.

#### July 15: **Saint Bonaventure** (1221-1274)



Bonaventure, Franciscan, theologian, doctor of the Church, was both learned and holy. Because of the spirit that filled him and his writings, he was at first called the Devout Doctor; but in more recent centuries he has been known as the Seraphic Doctor after the "Seraphic Father" Francis because of the truly Franciscan spirit he possessed.

Born in Bagnoregio, a town in central Italy, he was cured of a serious illness as a boy through the prayers of Francis of Assisi. Later, he studied the liberal arts in Paris. Inspired by Francis and the example of the friars, especially of his master in theology, Alexander of Hales, he entered the Franciscan Order, and became in turn a teacher of theology in the university. Chosen as minister general of the Order in 1257, he was God's instrument in bringing it back to a deeper love of the way of Saint Francis, both through the life of Francis which he wrote at the behest of the brothers and through other works which defended the Order or explained its ideals and way of life.

#### July 16: **Our Lady of Mount Carmel**

Hermits lived on Mount Carmel near the Fountain of Elijah (northern Israel) in the 12th century. They had a chapel dedicated to Our Lady. By the 13th century they became known as

“Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.” They soon celebrated a special Mass and Office in honor of Mary. In 1726 it became a celebration of the universal Church under the title of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. For centuries the Carmelites have seen themselves as specially related to Mary. Their great saints and theologians have promoted devotion to her and often championed the mystery of her Immaculate Conception.

Saint Teresa of Avila (October 15) called Carmel “the Order of the Virgin.” Saint John of the Cross (December 14) credited Mary with saving him from drowning as a child, leading him to Carmel and helping him escape from prison. Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus (October 1) believed that Mary cured her from illness. On her First Communion, she dedicated her life to Mary. During the last days of her life she frequently spoke of Mary.

There is a tradition (which may not be historical) that Mary appeared to Saint Simon Stock, a leader of the Carmelites, and gave him a scapular, telling him to promote devotion to it. The scapular is a modified version of Mary’s own garment. It symbolizes her special protection and calls the wearers to consecrate themselves to her in a special way. The scapular reminds us of the gospel call to prayer and penance—a call that Mary models in a splendid way.



#### July 17: **Saint Francis Solano** (1549-1610)

Francis came from a leading family in Andalusia, Spain. Perhaps it was his popularity as a student that enabled Francis in his teens to stop two duelists. He entered the Friars Minor in 1570, and after ordination enthusiastically sacrificed himself for others. His care for the sick during an epidemic drew so much admiration that he became embarrassed and asked to be sent to the African missions. Instead he was sent to South America in 1589.

While working in what is now Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay, Francis quickly learned the local languages and was well received by the indigenous peoples. His visits to the sick often included playing a song on his violin.

Around 1601 he was called to Lima, Peru, where he tried to recall the Spanish colonists to their baptismal integrity. Francis also worked to defend the indigenous peoples from oppression. He died in Lima and was canonized in 1726.



#### July 18: **Blessed Angeline of Marsciano** (1374-1435)

Blessed Angeline founded the first community of Franciscan women other than Poor Clares to receive papal approval.

Angeline was born to the Duke of Marsciano (near Orvieto). She was 12 when her mother died. Three years later the young woman made a vow of perpetual chastity. That same year, however, she yielded to her father’s decision that she marry the Duke of Civitella. Her husband agreed to respect her previous vow.

When he died two years later, Angeline joined the Secular Franciscans and with several other women dedicated herself to caring for the sick, the poor, widows and orphans. When many other young women were attracted to Angeline's community, some people accused her of condemning the married vocation. Legend has it that when she came before the King of Naples to answer these charges, she had burning coals hidden in the folds of her cloak. When she proclaimed her innocence and showed the king that these coals had not harmed her, he dropped the case.



Angeline and her companions later went to Foligno, where her community of Third Order sisters received papal approval in 1397. She soon established 15 similar communities of women in other Italian cities.

Angeline died on July 14, 1435, and was beatified in 1825.

### July 19: **Servant of God Francis Garcés and Companions** (c. 1781)



Government interference in the missions and land grabbing sparked the Indian uprising which cost these friars their lives.

A contemporary of the American Revolution and of Blessed Junipero Serra, Francisco Garcés was born in 1738 in Spain, where he joined the Franciscans. After ordination in 1763, he was sent to Mexico. Five years later he was assigned to San Xavier del Bac near Tucson, one of several missions the Jesuits had founded in Arizona and New Mexico before being expelled in 1767 from all territories controlled by the Catholic king of Spain. In Arizona, Francisco worked among the Papago, Yuma,

Pima and Apache Native Americans. His missionary travels took him to the Grand Canyon and to California.

Friar Francisco Palou, a contemporary, writes that Father Garcés was greatly loved by the indigenous peoples, among whom he lived unharmed for a long time. They regularly gave him food and referred to him as "*Viva Jesus*," which was the greeting he taught them to use.

For the sake of their indigenous converts, the Spanish missionaries wanted to organize settlements away from the Spanish soldiers and colonists. But the commandant in Mexico insisted that two new missions on the Colorado River, Misión San Pedro y San Pablo and Misión La Purísima Concepción, be mixed settlements.

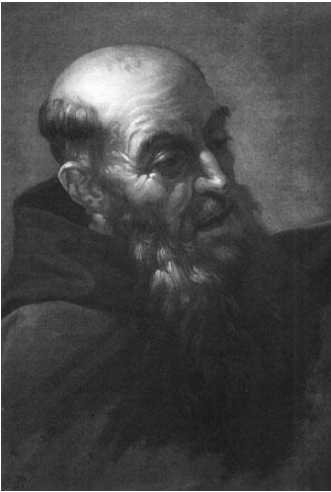
A revolt among the Yumas against the Spanish left Friars Juan Diaz and Matias Moreno dead at Misión San Pedro y San Pablo. Friars Francisco Garcés and Juan Barreneche were killed at Misión La Purísima Concepción (the site of Fort Yuma).

### July 20: **Saint Apollinaris** (1st century)

According to tradition, Saint Peter sent Apollinaris to Ravenna, Italy, as its first bishop. His preaching of the Good News was so successful that the pagans there beat him and drove him from the city. He returned, however, and was exiled a second time. After preaching in the area surrounding Ravenna, he entered the city again. After being cruelly tortured, he was put on a ship heading to Greece. Pagans there caused him to be expelled to Italy, where he went to Ravenna for a fourth time. He died from wounds received during a savage beating at Classis, a suburb of Ravenna. A beautiful basilica honoring him was built there in the sixth century.



## July 21: **Saint Lawrence of Brindisi** (1559-1619)



At first glance perhaps the most remarkable quality of Lawrence of Brindisi is his outstanding gift of languages. In addition to a thorough knowledge of his native Italian, he had complete reading and speaking ability in Latin, Hebrew, Greek, German, Bohemian, Spanish and French.

He was born on July 22, 1559, and died exactly 60 years later on his birthday in 1619. His parents William and Elizabeth Russo gave him the name of Julius Caesar, *Caesare* in Italian. After the early death of his parents, he was educated by his uncle at the College of Saint Mark in Venice.

When he was just 16 he entered the Capuchin Franciscan Order in Venice and received the name of Lawrence. He completed his studies of philosophy and theology at the University of Padua and was ordained a priest at 23.

With his facility for languages he was able to study the Bible in its original texts. At the request of Pope Clement VIII, he spent much time preaching to the Jews in Italy. So excellent was his knowledge of Hebrew, the rabbis felt sure he was a Jew who had become a Christian.

In 1596 the Capuchins completed a 15-volume edition of his writings. Eleven of these 15 contain his sermons, each of which relies chiefly on scriptural quotations to illustrate his teaching.

Lawrence's sensitivity to the needs of people—a character trait perhaps unexpected in such a talented scholar—began to surface. He was elected major superior of the Capuchin Franciscan province of Tuscany at the age of 31. He had the combination of brilliance, human compassion and administrative skill needed to carry out his duties. In rapid succession he was promoted by his fellow Capuchins and was elected minister general of the Capuchins in 1602. In this position he was responsible for great growth and geographical expansion of the Order.

Lawrence was appointed papal emissary and peacemaker, a job which took him to a number of foreign countries. An effort to achieve peace in his native kingdom of Naples took him on a journey to Lisbon to visit the king of Spain. Serious illness in Lisbon took his life in 1619.

## July 22: **Saint Mary Magdalene**

Except for the mother of Jesus, few women are more honored in the Bible than Mary Magdalene. Yet she could well be the patron of the slandered, since there has been a persistent legend in the Church that she is the unnamed sinful woman who anointed the feet of Jesus in Luke 7:36-50.

Most Scripture scholars today point out that there is no scriptural basis for confusing the two women. Mary Magdalene, that is, “of Magdala,” was the one from whom Christ cast out “seven demons” (Luke 8:2)—an indication, at the worst, of extreme demonic possession or, possibly, severe illness.

Father Wilfrid J. Harrington, O.P., writing in the *New Catholic Commentary*, says that “seven demons” “does not mean that Mary had lived an immoral life—a conclusion reached only by means of



a mistaken identification with the anonymous woman of Luke 7:36.” Father Edward Mally, S.J., writing in the *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, agrees that she “is not...the same as the sinner of Luke 7:37, despite the later Western romantic tradition about her.”

Mary Magdalene was one of the many “who were assisting them [Jesus and the Twelve] out of their means.” She was one of those who stood by the cross of Jesus with his mother. And, of all the “official” witnesses that might have been chosen for the first awareness of the Resurrection, she was the one to whom that privilege was given. She is known as the "Apostle to the Apostles."

### July 23: **Saint Bridget** (1303?-1373)

From age seven on, Bridget had visions of Christ crucified. Her visions formed the basis for her activity—always with the emphasis on charity rather than spiritual favors. She lived her married life in the court of the Swedish king Magnus II. Mother of eight children (the second eldest was Saint Catherine of Sweden), she lived the strict life of a penitent after her husband’s death.

Bridget constantly strove to exert her good influence over Magnus; while never fully reforming, he did give her land and buildings to found a monastery for men and women. This group eventually expanded into an Order known as the Bridgetines (still in existence).

In 1350, a year of jubilee, Bridget braved a plague-stricken Europe to make a pilgrimage to Rome. Although she never returned to Sweden, her years in Rome were far from happy, being hounded by debts and by opposition to her work against Church abuses.

A final pilgrimage to the Holy Land, marred by shipwreck and the death of her son, Charles, eventually led to her death in 1373. In 1999, she, Saints Catherine of Siena (April 29) and Teresa Benedicts of the Cross (Edith Stein, August 9) were named co-patronesses of Europe.

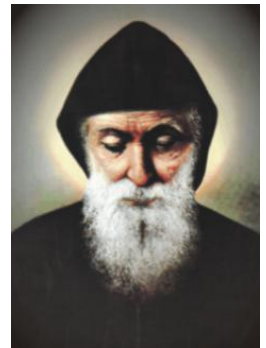
### July 24: **Saint Sharbel Makhluf** (1828-1898)

Although this saint never traveled far from the Lebanese village of Beka-Kafra, where he was born, his influence has spread widely.

Joseph Zaroun Makluf was raised by an uncle because his father, a mule driver, died when Joseph was only three. At the age of 23, Joseph joined the Monastery of Saint Maron at Annaya, Lebanon, and took the name Sharbel in honor of a second-century martyr. He professed his final vows in 1853 and was ordained six years later.

Following the example of the fifth-century Saint Maron, Sharbel lived as a hermit from 1875 until his death. His reputation for holiness prompted people to seek him to receive a blessing and to be remembered in his prayers. He followed a strict fast and was very devoted to the Blessed Sacrament. When his superiors occasionally asked him to administer the sacraments to nearby villages, Sharbel did so gladly.

He died in the late afternoon on Christmas Eve. Christians and non-Christians soon made his tomb a place of pilgrimage and of cures. Pope Paul VI beatified him in 1965 and canonized him 12 years later.



## July 25: **Saint James**



This James is the brother of John the Evangelist. The two were called by Jesus as they worked with their father in a fishing boat on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus had already called another pair of brothers from a similar occupation: Peter and Andrew. “He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him” (Mark 1:19-20).

James was one of the favored three who had the privilege of witnessing the Transfiguration, the raising to life of the daughter of Jairus and the agony in Gethsemani.

Two incidents in the Gospels describe the temperament of this man and his brother. Saint Matthew tells that their mother came (Mark says it was the brothers themselves) to ask that they have the seats of honor (one on the right, one on the left of Jesus) in the kingdom. “Jesus said in reply, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?’ They said to him, ‘We can!’” (Matthew 20:22). Jesus then told them they would indeed drink the cup and share his baptism of pain and death, but that sitting at his right hand or left was not his to give—it “is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father” (Matthew 20:23b). It remained to be seen how long it would take to realize the implications of their confident “We can!”

The other disciples became indignant at the ambition of James and John. Then Jesus taught them all the lesson of humble service: The purpose of authority is to serve. They are not to impose their will on others, or lord it over them. This is the position of Jesus himself. He was the servant of all; the service imposed on him was the supreme sacrifice of his own life.

On another occasion, James and John gave evidence that the nickname Jesus gave them—“sons of thunder”—was an apt one. The Samaritans would not welcome Jesus because he was on his way to hated Jerusalem. “When the disciples James and John saw this they asked, ‘Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?’ Jesus turned and rebuked them...” (Luke 9:54-55).

James was apparently the first of the apostles to be martyred. “About that time King Herod laid hands upon some members of the church to harm them. He had James, the brother of John, killed by the sword, and when he saw that this was pleasing to the Jews he proceeded to arrest Peter also” (Acts 12:1-3a).

This James, sometimes called James the Greater, is not to be confused with James the Lesser (May 3) or with the author of the Letter of James and the leader of the Jerusalem community.

## July 26: **Saints Joachim and Anne**

In the Scriptures, Matthew and Luke furnish a legal family history of Jesus, tracing ancestry to show that Jesus is the culmination of great promises. Not only is his mother’s family neglected, we also know nothing factual about them except that they existed. Even the names *Joachim* and *Anne* come from a legendary source written more than a century after Jesus died.

The heroism and holiness of these people, however, is inferred from the whole family atmosphere around Mary in the Scriptures. Whether we rely on the legends about Mary’s childhood or

make guesses from the information in the Bible, we see in her a fulfillment of many generations of prayerful persons, herself steeped in the religious traditions of her people.

The strong character of Mary in making decisions, her continuous practice of prayer, her devotion to the laws of her faith, her steadiness at moments of crisis, and her devotion to her relatives—all indicate a close-knit, loving family that looked forward to the next generation even while retaining the best of the past.

Joachim and Anne—whether these are their real names or not—represent that entire quiet series of generations who faithfully perform their duties, practice their faith and establish an atmosphere for the coming of the Messiah, but remain obscure.



### July 27: **Blessed Antonio Lucci** (1682-1752)

Antonio studied with and was a friend of Saint Francesco Antonio Fasani, who after Antonio Lucci's death testified at the diocesan hearings regarding the holiness of Lucci.

Born in Agnone in southern Italy, a city famous for manufacturing bells and copper crafts, he was given the name Angelo at Baptism. He attended the local school run by the Conventual Franciscans and joined them at the age of 16. Antonio completed his studies for the priesthood in Assisi, where he was ordained in 1705. Further studies led to a doctorate in theology and appointments as a teacher in Agnone, Ravello and Naples. He also served as guardian in Naples.

Elected minister provincial in 1718, the following year he was appointed professor at Saint Bonaventure College in Rome, a position he held until Pope Benedict XIII chose him as bishop of Bovino (near Foggia) in 1729. The pope explained, "I have chosen as bishop of Bovino an eminent theologian and a great saint."

His 23 years as bishop were marked by visits to local parishes and a renewal of gospel living among the people of his diocese. He dedicated his episcopal income to works of education and charity. At the urging of the Conventual minister general, Bishop Lucci wrote a major book about the saints and blessed in the first 200 years of the Conventual Franciscans.

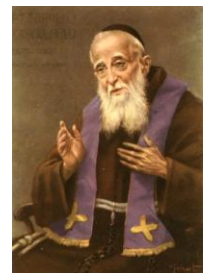
He was beatified in 1989, three years after his friend Francesco Antonio Fasani was canonized.

### July 28: **Saint Leopold Mandic** (1887-1942)

Western Christians who are working for greater dialogue with Orthodox Christians may be reaping the fruits of Father Leopold's prayers.

A native of Croatia, Leopold joined the Capuchin Franciscans and was ordained several years later in spite of several health problems. He could not speak loudly enough to preach publicly. For many years he also suffered from severe arthritis, poor eyesight and a stomach ailment.

Leopold taught patrology, the study of the Church Fathers, to the clerics of his province for several years, but he is best known for his work in the confessional,



where he sometimes spent 13-15 hours a day. Several bishops sought out his spiritual advice.

Leopold's dream was to go to the Orthodox Christians and work for the reunion of Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy. His health never permitted it. Leopold often renewed his vow to go to the Eastern Christians; the cause of unity was constantly in his prayers.

At a time when Pope Pius XII said that the greatest sin of our time is "to have lost all sense of sin," Leopold had a profound sense of sin and an even firmer sense of God's grace awaiting human cooperation.

Leopold, who lived most of his life in Padua, died on July 30, 1942, and was canonized in 1982.

### July 29: **Saint Martha**

Martha, Mary and their brother Lazarus were evidently close friends of Jesus. He came to their home simply as a welcomed guest, rather than as one celebrating the conversion of a sinner like Zacchaeus or one unceremoniously received by a suspicious Pharisee. The sisters feel free to call on Jesus at their brother's death, even though a return to Judea at that time seems almost certain death.

No doubt Martha was an active sort of person. On one occasion (see Luke 10:38-42) she prepares the meal for Jesus and possibly his fellow guests and forthrightly states the obvious: All hands should pitch in to help with the dinner.

Yet, as biblical scholar Father John McKenzie points out, she need not be rated as an "unrecollected activist" The evangelist is emphasizing what our Lord said on several occasions about the primacy of the spiritual: "...[D]o not worry about your life, what you will eat [or drink], or about your body, what you will wear.... But seek first the kingdom [of God] and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:25b, 33a); "One does not live by bread alone" (Luke 4:4b); "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness..." (Matthew 5:6a).

Martha's great glory is her simple and strong statement of faith in Jesus after her brother's death. "Jesus told her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world'" (John 11:25-27).

### July 30: **Saint Peter Chrysologus (406-450?)**

A man who vigorously pursues a goal may produce results far beyond his expectations and his intentions. Thus it was with Peter of the Golden Words, as he was called, who as a young man became bishop of Ravenna, the capital of the empire in the West.

At the time there were abuses and vestiges of paganism evident in his diocese, and these he was determined to battle and overcome. His principal weapon was the short sermon, and many of them have come down to us. They do not contain great originality of thought. They are, however, full of moral applications, sound in doctrine and historically significant in that they reveal Christian life in fifth-century Ravenna. So authentic were the contents of his





sermons that, some 13 centuries later, he was declared a doctor of the Church by Pope Benedict XIII. He who had earnestly sought to teach and motivate his own flock was recognized as a teacher of the universal Church.

In addition to his zeal in the exercise of his office, Peter Chrysologus was distinguished by a fierce loyalty to the Church, not only in its teaching, but in its authority as well. He looked upon learning not as a mere opportunity but as an obligation for all, both as a development of God-given faculties and as a solid support for the worship of God.

Some time before his death, Saint Peter returned to Imola, his birthplace, where he died around A.D. 450.

### July 31: **Saint Ignatius of Loyola** (1491-1556)



The founder of the Jesuits was on his way to military fame and fortune when a cannon ball shattered his leg. Because there were no books of romance on hand during his convalescence, Ignatius whiled away the time reading a life of Christ and lives of the saints. His conscience was deeply touched, and a long, painful turning to Christ began. Having seen the Mother of God in a vision, he made a pilgrimage to her shrine at Montserrat (near Barcelona). He remained for almost a year at nearby Manresa, sometimes with the Dominicans, sometimes in a pauper's hospice, often in a cave in the hills praying. After a period of great peace of mind, he went through a harrowing trial of scruples. There was no comfort in anything—prayer, fasting, sacraments, penance. At length, his peace of mind returned.

It was during this year of conversion that Ignatius began to write down material that later became his greatest work, the

#### *Spiritual Exercises.*

He finally achieved his purpose of going to the Holy Land, but could not remain, as he planned, because of the hostility of the Turks. He spent the next 11 years in various European universities, studying with great difficulty, beginning almost as a child. Like many others, his orthodoxy was questioned; Ignatius was twice jailed for brief periods.

In 1534, at the age of 43, he and six others (one of whom was Saint Francis Xavier, December 2) vowed to live in poverty and chastity and to go to the Holy Land. If this became impossible, they vowed to offer themselves to the apostolic service of the pope. The latter became the only choice. Four years later Ignatius made the association permanent. The new Society of Jesus was approved by Paul III, and Ignatius was elected to serve as the first general.

When companions were sent on various missions by the pope, Ignatius remained in Rome, consolidating the new venture, but still finding time to found homes for orphans, catechumens and penitents. He founded the Roman College, intended to be the model of all other colleges of the Society.

Ignatius was a true mystic. He centered his spiritual life on the essential foundations of Christianity—the Trinity, Christ, the Eucharist. His spirituality is expressed in the Jesuit motto, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*—"for the greater glory of God." In his concept, obedience was to be the prominent virtue, to assure the effectiveness and mobility of his men. All activity was to be guided by a true love of the Church and unconditional obedience to the Holy Father, for which reason all professed members took a fourth vow to go wherever the pope should send them for the salvation of souls.

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