



# Call to Holiness

September 2013  
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.*

September 1: **Saint Giles** (*d. 710?*)

Despite the fact that much about St. Giles is shrouded in mystery, we can say that he was one of the most popular saints in the Middle Ages. Likely, he was born in the first half of the seventh century in southeastern France. That is where he built a monastery that became a popular stopping-off point for pilgrims making their way to Compostela in Spain and the Holy Land.



In England, many ancient churches and hospitals were dedicated to Giles. One of the sections of the city of Brussels is named after him. In Germany, Giles was included among the so-called 14 Holy Helpers, a popular group of saints to whom people prayed, especially for recovery from disease and for strength at the hour of death. Also among the 14 were Sts. Christopher, Barbara and Blaise. Interestingly, Giles was the only non-martyr among them. Devotion to the "Holy Helpers" was especially strong in parts of Germany and in Hungary and Sweden. Such devotion made his popularity spread. Giles was soon invoked as the patron of the poor and the disabled.

The pilgrimage center that once drew so many fell into disrepair some centuries after Giles' death.

September 2: **Blessed John Francis Burté and Companions** (*d. 1792; d. 1794*)

These priests were victims of the French Revolution. Though their martyrdom spans a period of several years, they stand together in the Church's memory because they all gave their lives for the same principle. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1791) required all priests to take an oath which amounted to a denial of the faith. Each of these men refused and was executed.

John Francis Burté became a Franciscan at 16 and after ordination taught theology to the young friars. Later he was guardian of the large Conventual friary in Paris until he was arrested and held in the convent of the Carmelites.



Appolinaris of Posat was born in 1739 in Switzerland. He joined the Capuchins and acquired a reputation as an excellent preacher, confessor and instructor of clerics. Sent to the East as a missionary, he was in Paris studying Oriental languages when the French Revolution began. Refusing the oath, he was swiftly arrested and detained in the Carmelite convent.

Severin Girault, a member of the Third Order Regular, was a chaplain for a group of sisters in Paris. Imprisoned with the others, he was the first to die in the slaughter at the convent.

These three plus 182 others—including several bishops and many religious and diocesan priests—were massacred at the Carmelite house in Paris on September 2, 1792. They were beatified in 1926.

John Baptist Triquerie, born in 1737, entered the Conventual Franciscans. He was chaplain and confessor of Poor Clare monasteries in three cities before he was arrested for refusing to take the oath. He and 13 diocesan priests were guillotined in Laval on January 21, 1794. He was beatified in 1955.

### September 3: **Saint Gregory the Great** (540?-604)

Coming events cast their shadows before: Gregory was the prefect of Rome before he was 30. After five years in office he resigned, founded six monasteries on his Sicilian estate and became a Benedictine monk in his own home at Rome.

Ordained a priest, he became one of the pope's seven deacons, and also served six years in the East as papal representative in Constantinople. He was recalled to become abbot, and at the age of 50 was elected pope by the clergy and people of Rome.

He was direct and firm. He removed unworthy priests from office, forbade taking money for many services, emptied the papal treasury to ransom prisoners of the Lombards and to care for persecuted Jews and the victims of plague and famine. He was very concerned about the conversion of England, sending 40 monks from his own monastery. He is known for his reform of the liturgy, for strengthening respect for doctrine. Whether he was largely responsible for the revision of "Gregorian" chant is disputed.

Gregory lived in a time of perpetual strife with invading Lombards and difficult relations with the East. When Rome itself was under attack, he interviewed the Lombard king.

An Anglican historian has written: "It is impossible to conceive what would have been the confusion, the lawlessness, the chaotic state of the Middle Ages without the medieval papacy; and of the medieval papacy, the real father is Gregory the Great."

His book, *Pastoral Care*, on the duties and qualities of a bishop, was read for centuries after his death. He described bishops mainly as physicians whose main duties were preaching and the enforcement of discipline. In his own down-to-earth preaching, Gregory was skilled at applying the daily gospel to the needs of his listeners. Called "the Great," Gregory has been given a place with Augustine (August 28), Ambrose (December 7) and Jerome (September 30) as one of the four key doctors of the Western Church.



### September 4: **Saint Rose of Viterbo** (1233-1251)

Rose achieved sainthood in only 18 years of life. Even as a child Rose had a great desire to pray and to aid the poor. While still very young, she began a life of penance in her parents' house. She was as generous to the poor as she was strict with herself. At the age of 10 she became a Secular Franciscan and soon began preaching in the streets about sin and the sufferings of Jesus.

Viterbo, her native city, was then in revolt against the pope. When Rose took the pope's side against the emperor, she and her family were exiled from the city. When the pope's side won in Viterbo, Rose was allowed to return. Her attempt at age 15 to found a religious community failed, and she returned to a life of prayer and penance in her father's home, where she died in 1251. Rose was canonized in 1457.



## September 5: **Blessed Teresa of Kolkata** (1910-1997)

Mother Teresa of Kolkata, the tiny woman recognized throughout the world for her work among the poorest of the poor, was beatified October 19, 2003. Among those present were hundreds of Missionaries of Charity, the Order she founded in 1950 as a diocesan religious community. Today the congregation also includes contemplative sisters and brothers and an order of priests.

Born to Albanian parents in what is now Skopje, Macedonia (then part of the Ottoman Empire), Gonxha (Agnes) Bojaxhiu was the youngest of the three children who survived. For a time, the family lived comfortably, and her father's construction business thrived. But life changed overnight following his unexpected death.

During her years in public school Agnes participated in a Catholic sodality and showed a strong interest in the foreign missions. At age 18 she entered the Loreto Sisters of Dublin. It was 1928 when she said goodbye to her mother for the final time and made her way to a new land and a new life. The following year she was sent to the Loreto novitiate in Darjeeling, India. There she chose the name Teresa and prepared for a life of service. She was assigned to a high school for girls in Kolkata, where she taught history and geography to the daughters of the wealthy. But she could not escape the realities around her—the poverty, the suffering, the overwhelming numbers of destitute people.

In 1946, while riding a train to Darjeeling to make a retreat, Sister Teresa heard what she later explained as “a call within a call. The message was clear. I was to leave the convent and help the poor while living among them.” She also heard a call to give up her life with the Sisters of Loreto and, instead, to “follow Christ into the slums to serve him among the poorest of the poor.”

After receiving permission to leave Loreto, establish a new religious community and undertake her new work, she took a nursing course for several months. She returned to Kolkata, where she lived in the slums and opened a school for poor children. Dressed in a white sari and sandals (the ordinary dress of an Indian woman) she soon began getting to know her neighbors—especially the poor and sick—and getting to know their needs through visits.

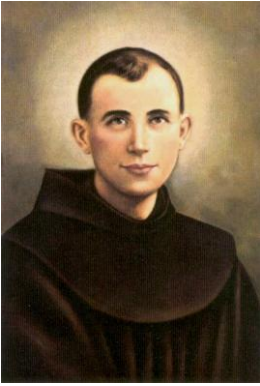
The work was exhausting, but she was not alone for long. Volunteers who came to join her in the work, some of them former students, became the core of the Missionaries of Charity. Other helped by donating food, clothing, supplies, the use of buildings. In 1952 the city of Kolkata gave Mother Teresa a former hostel, which became a home for the dying and the destitute. As the Order expanded, services were also offered to orphans, abandoned children, alcoholics, the aging and street people.

For the next four decades Mother Teresa worked tirelessly on behalf of the poor. Her love knew no bounds. Nor did her energy, as she crisscrossed the globe pleading for support and inviting others to see the face of Jesus in the poorest of the poor. In 1979 she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. On September 5, 1997, God called her home.





September 6: **Blessed Claudio Granzotto (1900-1947)**



Born in Santa Lucia del Piave near Venice, Claudio was the youngest of nine children and was accustomed to hard work in the fields. At the age of nine he lost his father. Six years later he was drafted into the Italian army, where he served more than three years.

His artistic abilities, especially in sculpture, led to studies at Venice's Academy of Fine Arts, which awarded him a diploma with the highest marks in 1929. Even then he was especially interested in religious art. When Claudio entered the Friars Minor four years later, his parish priest wrote, "The Order is receiving not only an artist but a saint." Prayer, charity to the poor and artistic work characterized his life, which was cut short by a brain tumor. He died on the feast of the Assumption and was beatified in 1994.

September 7: **Blessed Frédéric Ozanam (1813-1853)**

A man convinced of the inestimable worth of each human being, Frédéric served the poor of Paris well and drew others into serving the poor of the world. Through the St. Vincent de Paul Society, his work continues to the present day.

Frédéric was the fifth of Jean and Marie Ozanam's 14 children, one of only three to reach adulthood. As a teenager he began having doubts about his religion. Reading and prayer did not seem to help, but long walking discussions with Father Noirot of the Lyons College clarified matters a great deal.

Frédéric wanted to study literature, although his father, a doctor, wanted him to become a lawyer. Frédéric yielded to his father's wishes and in 1831 arrived in Paris to study law at the University of the Sorbonne. When certain professors there mocked Catholic teachings in their lectures, Frédéric defended the Church.

A discussion club which Frédéric organized sparked the turning point in his life. In this club Catholics, atheists and agnostics debated the issues of the day. Once, after Frédéric spoke about Christianity's role in civilization, a club member said: "Let us be frank, Mr. Ozanam; let us also be very particular. What do you do besides talk to prove the faith you claim is in you?"

Frédéric was stung by the question. He soon decided that his words needed a grounding in action. He and a friend began visiting Paris tenements and offering assistance as best they could. Soon a group dedicated to helping individuals in need under the patronage of St. Vincent de Paul formed around Frédéric.

Feeling that the Catholic faith needed an excellent speaker to explain its teachings, Frédéric convinced the Archbishop of Paris to appoint Father Lacordaire, the greatest preacher then in France, to preach a Lenten series in Notre Dame Cathedral. It was well attended and became an annual tradition in Paris.

After Frédéric earned his law degree at the Sorbonne, he taught law at the University of Lyons. He also earned a doctorate in literature. Soon after marrying Amelie Soulacroix on June 23, 1841, he returned to the Sorbonne to teach literature. A well-respected lecturer, Frédéric worked to bring out the



best in each student. Meanwhile, the St. Vincent de Paul Society was growing throughout Europe. Paris alone counted 25 conferences.

In 1846, Frédéric, Amelie and their daughter Marie went to Italy; there he hoped to restore his poor health. They returned the next year. The revolution of 1848 left many Parisians in need of the services of the St. Vincent de Paul conferences. The unemployed numbered 275,000. The government asked Frédéric and his co-workers to supervise the government aid to the poor. Vincentians throughout Europe came to the aid of Paris.

Frédéric then started a newspaper, *The New Era*, dedicated to securing justice for the poor and the working classes. Fellow Catholics were often unhappy with what Frédéric wrote. Referring to the poor man as "the nation's priest," Frédéric said that the hunger and sweat of the poor formed a sacrifice that could redeem the people's humanity

In 1852 poor health again forced Frédéric to return to Italy with his wife and daughter. He died on September 8, 1853. In his sermon at Frédéric's funeral, Lacordaire described his friend as "one of those privileged creatures who came direct from the hand of God in whom God joins tenderness to genius in order to enkindle the world."

Frédéric was beatified in 1997. Since Frédéric wrote an excellent book entitled *Franciscan Poets of the Thirteenth Century* and since Frederick's sense of the dignity of each poor person was so close to the thinking of St. Francis, it seemed appropriate to include him among Franciscan "greats."

#### September 8: **Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary**



The Church has celebrated Mary's birth since at least the sixth century. A September birth was chosen because the Eastern Church begins its Church year with September. The September 8 date helped determine the date for the feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8 (nine months earlier).

Scripture does not give an account of Mary's birth. However, the apocryphal *Protoevangelium of James* fills in the gap. This work has no historical value, but it does reflect the development of Christian piety. According to this account, Anna and Joachim are infertile but pray for a child. They receive the promise of a child that will advance God's plan of salvation for the world. Such a story (like many biblical counterparts) stresses the special presence of God in Mary's life from the beginning.

St. Augustine (August 28) connects Mary's birth with Jesus' saving work. He tells the earth to rejoice and shine forth in the light of her birth. "She is the flower of the field from whom bloomed the precious lily of the valley. Through her birth the nature inherited from our first parents is changed." The opening prayer at Mass speaks of the birth of Mary's Son as the dawn of our salvation and asks for an increase of peace.

#### September 9: **Saint Peter Claver (1581-1654)**

A native of Spain, young Jesuit Peter Claver left his homeland forever in 1610 to be a missionary in the colonies of the New World. He sailed into Cartagena (now in Colombia), a rich port city washed by the Caribbean. He was ordained there in 1615.

By this time the slave trade had been established in the Americas for nearly 100 years, and Cartagena was a chief center for it. Ten thousand slaves poured into the port each year after crossing the Atlantic from West Africa under conditions so foul and inhuman that an estimated one-third of the passengers died in transit. Although the practice of slave-trading was condemned by Pope Paul III and later labeled "supreme villainy" by Pius IX, it continued to flourish.

Peter Claver's predecessor, Jesuit Father Alfonso de Sandoval, had devoted himself to the service of the slaves for 40 years before Claver arrived to continue his work, declaring himself "the slave of the Negroes forever."

As soon as a slave ship entered the port, Peter Claver moved into its infested hold to minister to the ill-treated and exhausted passengers. After the slaves were herded out of the ship like chained animals and shut up in nearby yards to be gazed at by the crowds, Claver plunged in among them with medicines, food, bread, brandy, lemons and tobacco. With the help of interpreters he gave basic instructions and assured his brothers and sisters of their human dignity and God's saving love. During the 40 years of his ministry, Claver instructed and baptized an estimated 300,000 slaves.

His apostolate extended beyond his care for slaves. He became a moral force, indeed, the apostle of Cartagena. He preached in the city square, gave missions to sailors and traders as well as country missions, during which he avoided, when possible, the hospitality of the planters and owners and lodged in the slave quarters instead.

After four years of sickness which forced the saint to remain inactive and largely neglected, he died on September 8, 1654. The city magistrates, who had previously frowned at his solicitude for the black outcasts, ordered that he should be buried at public expense and with great pomp.

He was canonized in 1888, and Pope Leo XIII declared him the worldwide patron of missionary work among black slaves.



### September 10: **Saint Thomas of Villanova** (1488-1555)

St. Thomas was from Castile in Spain and received his surname from the town where he was raised. He received a superior education at the University of Alcala and became a popular professor of philosophy there.

After joining the Augustinian friars at Salamanca he was ordained and resumed his teaching—despite a continuing absentmindedness and poor memory. He became prior and then provincial of the friars, sending the first Augustinians to the New World. He was nominated by the emperor to the archbishopric of Granada, but refused. When the see again became vacant he was pressured to accept. The money his cathedral chapter gave him to furnish his house was given to a hospital instead. His explanation to them was that "our Lord will be better served by your money being spent on the poor in the hospital. What does a poor friar like myself want with furniture?"



He wore the same habit that he had received in the novitiate, mending it himself. The canons and domestics were ashamed of him, but they could not convince him to change. Several hundred poor came to Thomas's door each morning and received a meal, wine and money. When criticized because he was at times being taken advantage of, he replied, "If there are people who refuse to work, that is for the governor and the police to deal with. My duty is to assist and relieve those who come to my door." He took in orphans and paid his servants for every deserted child they brought to him. He encouraged the wealthy to imitate his example and be richer in mercy and charity than they were in earthly possessions.

Criticized because he refused to be harsh or swift in correcting sinners, he said, "Let him (the complainer) inquire whether St. Augustine and St. John Chrysostom used anathemas and excommunication to stop the drunkenness and blasphemy which were so common among the people under their care."

As he lay dying, Thomas commanded that all the money he possessed be distributed to the poor. His material goods were to be given to the rector of his college. Mass was being said in his presence when after Communion he breathed his last, reciting the words: "Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."

Thomas of Villanova was already called in his lifetime "the almsgiver" and "the father of the poor." He was canonized in 1658.

#### September 11: **Saint Cyprian** (d. 258)

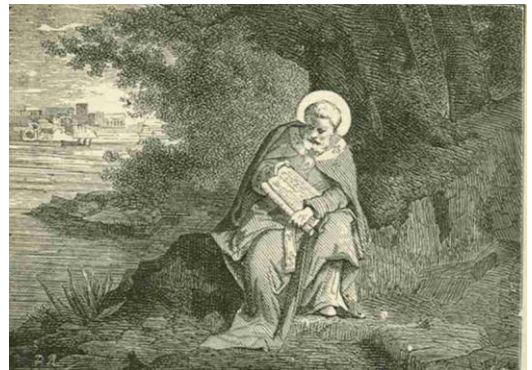
Cyprian is important in the development of Christian thought and practice in the third century, especially in northern Africa.

Highly educated, a famous orator, he became a Christian as an adult. He distributed his goods to the poor, and amazed his fellow citizens by making a vow of chastity before his baptism. Within two years he had been ordained a priest and was chosen, against his will, as Bishop of Carthage (near modern Tunis).

Cyprian complained that the peace the Church had enjoyed had weakened the spirit of many Christians and had opened the door to converts who did not have the true spirit of faith. When the Decian persecution began, many Christians easily abandoned the Church. It was their reinstatement that caused the great controversies of the third century, and helped the Church progress in its understanding of the Sacrament of Penance.

Novatus, a priest who had opposed Cyprian's election, set himself up in Cyprian's absence (he had fled to a hiding place from which to direct the Church—bringing criticism on himself) and received back all apostates without imposing any canonical penance. Ultimately he was condemned. Cyprian held a middle course, holding that those who had actually sacrificed to idols could receive Communion only at death, whereas those who had only bought certificates saying they had sacrificed could be admitted after a more or less lengthy period of penance. Even this was relaxed during a new persecution.

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A friend of Pope Cornelius, Cyprian opposed the following pope, Stephen. He and the other African bishops would not recognize the validity of baptism conferred by heretics and schismatics. This was not the universal view of the Church, but Cyprian was not intimidated even by Stephen's threat of excommunication.

He was exiled by the emperor and then recalled for trial. He refused to leave the city, insisting that his people should have the witness of his martyrdom.

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### September 12: **Most Holy Name of the Blessed Virgin Mary**



This feast is a counterpart to the Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus (January 3); both have the possibility of uniting people easily divided on other matters.

The feast of the Most Holy Name of Mary began in Spain in 1513 and in 1671 was extended to all of Spain and the Kingdom of Naples. In 1683, John Sobieski, king of Poland, brought an army to the outskirts of Vienna to stop the advance of Muslim armies loyal to Mohammed IV in Constantinople. After Sobieski entrusted himself to the Blessed Virgin Mary, he and his soldiers thoroughly defeated the Muslims. Pope Innocent XI extended this feast to the entire Church.

### September 13: **Saint John Chrysostom** (*d. 407*)

The ambiguity and intrigue surrounding John, the great preacher (his name means "golden-mouthed") from Antioch, are characteristic of the life of any great man in a capital city. Brought to Constantinople after a dozen years of priestly service in Syria, John found himself the reluctant victim of an imperial ruse to make him bishop in the greatest city of the empire. Ascetic, unimposing but dignified, and troubled by stomach ailments from his desert days as a monk, John became a bishop under the cloud of imperial politics.

If his body was weak, his tongue was powerful. The content of his sermons, his exegesis of Scripture, were never without a point. Sometimes the point stung the high and mighty. Some sermons lasted up to two hours.

His lifestyle at the imperial court was not appreciated by many courtiers. He offered a modest table to episcopal sycophants hanging around for imperial and ecclesiastical favors. John deplored the court protocol that accorded him precedence before the highest state officials. He would not be a kept man.

His zeal led him to decisive action. Bishops who bribed their way into office were deposed. Many of his sermons called for concrete



steps to share wealth with the poor. The rich did not appreciate hearing from John that private property existed because of Adam's fall from grace any more than married men liked to hear that they were bound to marital fidelity just as much as their wives were. When it came to justice and charity, John acknowledged no double standards.

Aloof, energetic, outspoken, especially when he became excited in the pulpit, John was a sure target for criticism and personal trouble. He was accused of gorging himself secretly on rich wines and fine foods. His faithfulness as spiritual director to the rich widow, Olympia, provoked much gossip attempting to prove him a hypocrite where wealth and chastity were concerned. His actions taken against unworthy bishops in Asia Minor were viewed by other ecclesiastics as a greedy, uncanonical extension of his authority.

Theophilus, archbishop of Alexandria, and Empress Eudoxia were determined to discredit John. Theophilus feared the growth in importance of the Bishop of Constantinople and took occasion to charge John with fostering heresy. Theophilus and other angered bishops were supported by Eudoxia. The empress resented his sermons contrasting gospel values with the excesses of imperial court life. Whether intended or not, sermons mentioning the lurid Jezebel (1 Kings 9:1—21:23) and impious Herodias (Mark 6:17-29) were associated with the empress, who finally did manage to have John exiled. He died in exile in 407.

#### September 14: **Exaltation of the Holy Cross**



Early in the fourth century St. Helena, mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, went to Jerusalem in search of the holy places of Christ's life. She razed the second-century Temple of Aphrodite, which tradition held was built over the Savior's tomb, and her son built the Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher over the tomb. During the excavation, workers found three crosses. Legend has it that the one on which Jesus died was identified when its touch healed a dying woman.

The cross immediately became an object of veneration. At a Good Friday celebration in Jerusalem toward the end of the fourth century, according to an eyewitness, the wood was taken out of its silver container and placed on a table together with the inscription Pilate ordered placed above Jesus' head: Then "all the people pass through one by one; all of them bow down, touching the cross and the inscription, first with their foreheads, then with their eyes; and, after kissing the cross, they move on."

To this day the Eastern Churches, Catholic and Orthodox alike, celebrate the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on the September anniversary of the basilica's dedication. The feast entered the Western calendar in the seventh century after Emperor Heraclius recovered the cross from the Persians, who

had carried it off in 614, 15 years earlier. According to the story, the emperor intended to carry the cross back into Jerusalem himself, but was unable to move forward until he took off his imperial garb and became a barefoot pilgrim.

## September 15: **Our Lady of Sorrows**



For a while there were two feasts in honor of the Sorrowful Mother: one going back to the 15th century, the other to the 17th century. For a while both were celebrated by the universal Church: one on the Friday before Palm Sunday, the other in September.

The principal biblical references to Mary's sorrows are in Luke 2:35 and John 19:26-27. The Lucan passage is Simeon's prediction about a sword piercing Mary's soul; the Johannine passage relates Jesus' words to Mary and to the beloved disciple.

Many early Church writers interpret the sword as Mary's sorrows, especially as she saw Jesus die on the cross. Thus, the two passages are brought together as prediction and fulfillment.

St. Ambrose (December 7) in particular sees Mary as a sorrowful yet powerful figure at the cross. Mary stood fearlessly at the cross while others fled. Mary looked on her Son's wounds with pity, but saw in them the salvation of the world. As Jesus hung on the cross, Mary did not fear to be killed but offered herself to her persecutors.

## September 16: **Saints Cornelius and Cyprian** (d. 253) (d. 258)

**Cornelius** There was no pope for 14 months after the martyrdom of St. Fabian (January 20) because of the intensity of the persecution of the Church. During the interval, the Church was governed by a college of priests. St. Cyprian, a friend of Cornelius, writes that Cornelius was elected pope "by the judgment of God and of Christ, by the testimony of most of the clergy, by the vote of the people, with the consent of aged priests and of good men."

The greatest problem of Cornelius's two-year term as pope had to do with the Sacrament of Penance and centered on the readmission of Christians who had denied their faith during the time of persecution. Two extremes were finally both condemned. Cyprian, primate of North Africa, appealed to the pope to confirm his stand that the relapsed could be reconciled only by the decision of the bishop.

In Rome, however, Cornelius met with the opposite view. After his election, a priest named Novatian (one of those who had governed the Church) had himself consecrated a rival bishop of Rome—one of the first antipopes. He denied that the Church had any power to reconcile not only the apostates, but also those guilty of murder, adultery, fornication or second marriage! Cornelius had the support of most of the Church (especially of Cyprian of Africa) in condemning Novatianism, though the sect persisted for several





centuries. Cornelius held a synod at Rome in 251 and ordered the "relapsed" to be restored to the Church with the usual "medicines of repentance."

The friendship of Cornelius and Cyprian was strained for a time when one of Cyprian's rivals made accusations about him. But the problem was cleared up.

A document from Cornelius shows the extent of organization in the Church of Rome in the mid-third century: 46 priests, seven deacons, seven subdeacons. It is estimated that the number of Christians totaled about 50,000.

Cornelius died as a result of the hardships of his exile in what is now Civitavecchia (near Rome).



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September 17: **Saint Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621)**

When Robert Bellarmine was ordained in 1570, the study of Church history and the fathers of the Church was in a sad state of neglect. A promising scholar from his youth in Tuscany, he devoted his energy to these two subjects, as well as to Scripture, in order to systematize Church doctrine against the attacks of the Protestant Reformers. He was the first Jesuit to become a professor at Louvain.

His most famous work is his three-volume *Disputations on the Controversies of the Christian Faith*. Particularly noteworthy are the sections on the temporal power of the pope and the role of the laity. He incurred the anger of monarchists in England and France by showing the divine-right-of-kings theory untenable. He developed the theory of the indirect power of the pope in temporal affairs; although he was defending the pope against the Scottish philosopher Barclay, he also incurred the ire of Pope Sixtus V.



Bellarmino was made a cardinal by Pope Clement VIII on the grounds that "he had not his equal for learning." While he occupied apartments in the Vatican, Bellarmine relaxed none of his former austerities. He limited his household expenses to what was barely essential, eating only the food available to the poor. He was known to have ransomed a soldier who had deserted from the army and he used the hangings of his rooms to clothe poor people, remarking, "The walls won't catch cold."

Among many activities, he became theologian to Pope Clement VIII, preparing two catechisms which have had great influence in the Church.

The last major controversy of Bellarmine's life came in 1616 when he had to admonish his friend Galileo, whom he admired. Bellarmine delivered the admonition on behalf of the Holy Office, which had decided that the heliocentric theory of Copernicus (the sun as stationary) was contrary to Scripture. The admonition amounted to a caution against putting forward—other than as a hypothesis—theories not yet fully proved. This shows that saints are not infallible.

Bellarmino died on September 17, 1621. The process for his canonization was begun in 1627 but was delayed until 1930 for political reasons, stemming from his writings. In 1930, Pope Pius XI canonized him and the next year declared him a doctor of the Church.

September 18: **Saint Joseph of Cupertino (1603-1663)**

Joseph is most famous for levitating at prayer.

Already as a child, Joseph showed a fondness for prayer. After a short career with the Capuchins, he joined the Conventuals. Following a brief assignment caring for the friary mule, Joseph began his studies for the priesthood. Though studies were very difficult for him, Joseph gained a great deal of knowledge from prayer. He was ordained in 1628.

Joseph's tendency to levitate during prayer was sometimes a cross; some people came to see this much as they might have gone to a circus sideshow. Joseph's gift led him to be humble, patient and obedient, even though at times he was greatly tempted and felt forsaken by God. He fasted and wore iron chains for much



of his life.

The friars transferred Joseph several times for his own good and for the good of the rest of the community. He was reported to and investigated by the Inquisition; the examiners exonerated him. Joseph was canonized in 1767. In the investigation preceding the canonization, 70 incidents of levitation are recorded.

#### September 19: **Saint Januarius** (*d. 305?*)

Little is known about the life of Januarius. He is believed to have been martyred in the Emperor Diocletian's persecution of 305. Legend has it that after Januarius was thrown to the bears in the amphitheater of Pozzuoli, he was beheaded, and his blood ultimately brought to Naples.



#### September 20: **Saints Andrew Kim Taegon, Paul Chong Hasang and Companions** (1821-1846)



This first native Korean priest was the son of Korean converts. His father, Ignatius Kim, was martyred during the persecution of 1839 and was beatified in 1925. After Baptism at the age of 15, Andrew traveled 1,300 miles to the seminary in Macao, China. After six years he managed to return to his country through Manchuria. That same year he crossed the Yellow Sea to Shanghai and was ordained a priest. Back home again, he was assigned to arrange for more missionaries to enter by a water route that would elude the border patrol. He was arrested, tortured and finally beheaded at the Han River near Seoul, the capital. Paul Chong Hasang was a lay apostle and married man, aged 45.

Christianity came to Korea during the Japanese invasion in 1592 when some Koreans were baptized, probably by Christian Japanese soldiers. Evangelization was difficult because Korea refused all contact with the outside world except for bringing taxes to Beijing annually. On one of these occasions, around 1777, Christian literature obtained from Jesuits in China led educated Korean Christians to study. A home Church began. When a Chinese priest managed to enter secretly a dozen years later, he found 4,000 Catholics, none of whom had ever seen a priest. Seven years later there were 10,000 Catholics. Religious freedom came in 1883.

When Pope John Paul II visited Korea in 1984 he canonized, besides Andrew and Paul, 98 Koreans and three French missionaries who had been martyred between 1839 and 1867. Among them were bishops and priests, but for the most part they were lay persons: 47 women, 45 men.

Among the martyrs in 1839 was Columba Kim, an unmarried woman of 26. She was put in prison, pierced with hot tools and seared with burning coals. She and her sister Agnes were disrobed and kept for two days in a cell with condemned criminals, but were not molested. After Columba complained about the indignity, no more women were subjected to it. The two were beheaded. A boy of 13, Peter Ryou, had his flesh so badly torn that he could pull off pieces and throw them at the judges. He was killed by strangulation. Protase Chong, a 41-year-old noble, apostatized under torture and was freed. Later he came back, confessed his faith and was tortured to death.

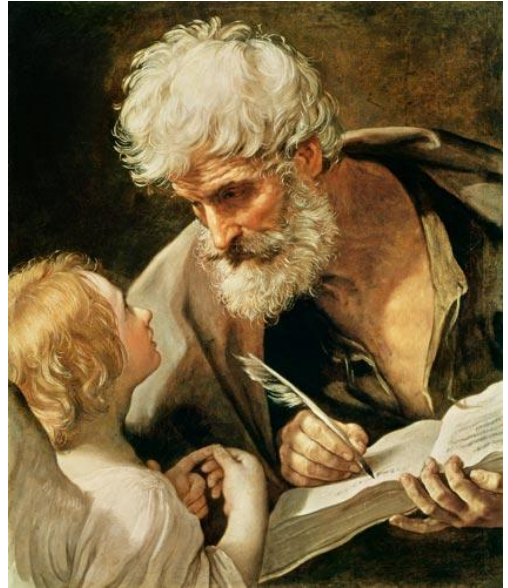
Today, there are almost 5.1 million Catholics in Korea.

## September 21: **Saint Matthew**

Matthew was a Jew who worked for the occupying Roman forces, collecting taxes from other Jews. The Romans were not scrupulous about what the "tax farmers" got for themselves. Hence the latter, known as "publicans," were generally hated as traitors by their fellow Jews. The Pharisees lumped them with "sinners" (see Matthew 9:11-13). So it was shocking to them to hear Jesus call such a man to be one of his intimate followers.

Matthew got Jesus in further trouble by having a sort of going-away party at his house. The Gospel tells us that "many" tax collectors and "those known as sinners" came to the dinner. The Pharisees were still more badly shocked. What business did the supposedly great teacher have associating with such immoral people? Jesus' answer was, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the meaning of the words, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' I did not come to call the righteous but sinners" (Matthew 9:12b-13). Jesus is not setting aside ritual and worship; he is saying that loving others is even more important.

No other particular incidents about Matthew are found in the New Testament.



## September 22: **Saints Lorenzo Ruiz and Companions** (1600?-1637)



Lawrence (Lorenzo) was born in Manila of a Chinese father and a Filipino mother, both Christians. Thus he learned Chinese and Tagalog from them and Spanish from the Dominicans whom he served as altar boy and sacristan. He became a professional calligrapher, transcribing documents in beautiful penmanship. He was a full member of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary under Dominican auspices. He married and had two sons and a daughter.

His life took an abrupt turn when he was accused of murder. Nothing further is known except the statement of two Dominicans that "he was sought by the authorities on account of a homicide to which he was present or which was attributed to him."

At that time three Dominican priests, Antonio Gonzalez, Guillermo Courtet and Miguel de Aozaraza, were about to sail to Japan in spite of a violent persecution there. With them was a Japanese priest, Vicente Shiwozuka de la Cruz, and a layman

named Lazaro, a leper. Lorenzo, having taken asylum with them, was allowed to accompany them. But only when they were at sea did he learn that they were going to Japan.

They landed at Okinawa. Lorenzo could have gone on to Formosa, but, he reported, "I decided to stay with the Fathers, because the Spaniards would hang me there." In Japan they were soon found



out, arrested and taken to Nagasaki. The site of wholesale bloodshed when the atomic bomb was dropped had known tragedy before. The 50,000 Catholics who once lived there were dispersed or killed by persecution.

They were subjected to an unspeakable kind of torture: After huge quantities of water were forced down their throats, they were made to lie down. Long boards were placed on their stomachs and guards then stepped on the ends of the boards, forcing the water to spurt violently from mouth, nose and ears.

The superior, Antonio, died after some days. Both the Japanese priest and Lazaro broke under torture, which included the insertion of bamboo needles under their fingernails. But both were brought back to courage by their companions.

In Lorenzo's moment of crisis, he asked the interpreter, "I would like to know if, by apostatizing, they will spare my life." The interpreter was noncommittal, but Lorenzo, in the ensuing hours, felt his faith grow strong. He became bold, even audacious, with his interrogators.

The five were put to death by being hanged upside down in pits. Boards fitted with semicircular holes were fitted around their waists and stones put on top to increase the pressure. They were tightly bound, to slow circulation and prevent a speedy death. They were allowed to hang for three days. By that time Lorenzo and Lazaro were dead. The three Dominican priests, still alive, were beheaded.

In 1987, Blessed John Paul II canonized these six and 10 others, Asians and Europeans, men and women, who spread the faith in the Philippines, Formosa and Japan. Lorenzo Ruiz is the first canonized Filipino martyr.

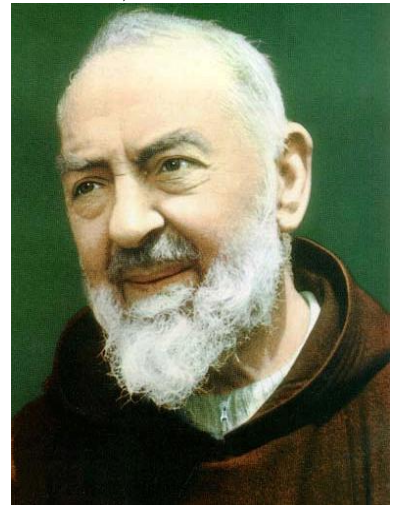
#### September 23: **Saint Padre Pio da Pietrelcina** (1887-1968)

In one of the largest such ceremonies in history, Blessed John Paul II canonized Padre Pio of Pietrelcina on June 16, 2002. It was the 45th canonization ceremony in Pope John Paul's pontificate. More than 300,000 people braved blistering heat as they filled St. Peter's Square and nearby streets. They heard the Holy Father praise the new saint for his prayer and charity. "This is the most concrete synthesis of Padre Pio's teaching," said the pope. He also stressed Padre Pio's witness to the power of suffering. If accepted with love, the Holy Father stressed, such suffering can lead to "a privileged path of sanctity."

Many people have turned to the Italian Capuchin Franciscan to intercede with God on their behalf; among them was the future Pope John Paul II. In 1962, when he was still an archbishop in Poland, he wrote to Padre Pio and asked him to pray for a Polish woman with throat cancer. Within two weeks, she had been cured of her life-threatening disease.

Born Francesco Forgione, Padre Pio grew up in a family of farmers in southern Italy. Twice (1898-1903 and 1910-17) his father worked in Jamaica, New York, to provide the family income.

At the age of 15, Francesco joined the Capuchins and took the name of Pio. He was ordained in 1910 and was drafted during World War I. After he was discovered to have tuberculosis, he was discharged. In 1917 he was assigned to the friary in San Giovanni Rotondo, 75 miles from the city of Bari on the Adriatic.





On September 20, 1918, as he was making his thanksgiving after Mass, Padre Pio had a vision of Jesus. When the vision ended, he had the stigmata in his hands, feet and side.

Life became more complicated after that. Medical doctors, Church authorities and curiosity seekers came to see Padre Pio. In 1924 and again in 1931, the authenticity of the stigmata was questioned; Padre Pio was not permitted to celebrate Mass publicly or to hear confessions. He did not complain of these decisions, which were soon reversed. However, he wrote no letters after 1924. His only other writing, a pamphlet on the agony of Jesus, was done before 1924.

Padre Pio rarely left the friary after he received the stigmata, but busloads of people soon began coming to see him. Each morning after a 5 a.m. Mass in a crowded church, he heard confessions until noon. He took a mid-morning break to bless the sick and all who came to see him. Every afternoon he also heard confessions. In time his confessional ministry would take 10 hours a day; penitents had to take a number so that the situation could be handled. Many of them have said that Padre Pio knew details of their lives that they had never mentioned.

Padre Pio saw Jesus in all the sick and suffering. At his urging, a fine hospital was built on nearby Mount Gargano. The idea arose in 1940; a committee began to collect money. Ground was broken in 1946. Building the hospital was a technical wonder because of the difficulty of getting water there and of hauling up the building supplies. This "House for the Alleviation of Suffering" has 350 beds.

A number of people have reported cures they believe were received through the intercession of Padre Pio. Those who assisted at his Masses came away edified; several curiosity seekers were deeply moved. Like St. Francis, Padre Pio sometimes had his habit torn or cut by souvenir hunters.

One of Padre Pio's sufferings was that unscrupulous people several times circulated prophecies that they claimed originated from him. He never made prophecies about world events and never gave an opinion on matters that he felt belonged to Church authorities to decide. He died on September 23, 1968, and was beatified in 1999.

#### September 24: **Saint Pacifico of San Severino** (1653-1721)



Pacifico was born into a distinguished family in San Severino in the Marche of Ancona in central Italy. After joining the Friars Minor, he was ordained. He taught philosophy for two years and then began a successful preaching career.

Pacifico was an ascetic man. He fasted perpetually, eating no more than bread, soup or water. His "hair shirt" was made of iron. Poverty and obedience were two virtues for which his confreres especially remembered him.

At the age of 35, Pacifico contracted an illness that eventually left him deaf, blind and crippled. He offered his sufferings for the conversion of sinners, and he cured many of the sick who came to him. Pacifico also served as the superior of the friary in San Severino. He was canonized in 1839.

#### September 25: **Saint Elzear and Blessed Delphina** (1286-1323) (1283-1358)

This is the only Franciscan couple to be canonized or beatified formally.

Elzear came from a noble family in southern France. After he married Delphina, she informed him that she had made a vow of perpetual virginity; that same night he did the same. For a time Elzear, Count of Ariano, was a counselor to Duke Charles of Calabria in southern Italy. Elzear ruled his own territories in the kingdom of Naples and in southern France with justice.

Elzear and Delphina joined the Secular Franciscans and dedicated themselves to the corporal works of mercy. Twelve poor people dined with them every day. A statue of Elzear shows him curing several people suffering from leprosy.

Their piety extended to the running of their household. Everyone there was expected to attend Mass daily, go to confession weekly and be ready to forgive injuries.

After Elzear's death, Delphina continued her works of charity for 35 more years. She is especially remembered for raising the moral level of the king of Sicily's court.

Elzear and Delphina are buried in Apt, France. He was canonized in 1369, and she was beatified in 1694.



#### September 26: **Saints Cosmas and Damian** (*d. 303?*)

Nothing is known of their lives except that they suffered martyrdom in Syria during the persecution of the Emperor Diocletian.

A church erected on the site of their burial place was enlarged by the emperor Justinian. Devotion to the two saints spread rapidly in both East and West. A famous basilica was erected in their honor in Constantinople. Their names were placed in the canon of the Mass (Eucharistic Prayer I), probably in the sixth century.

Legend says that they were twin brothers born in Arabia, who became skilled doctors. They were among those who are venerated in the East as the "moneyless ones" because they did not charge a fee for their services. It was impossible that such prominent persons would escape unnoticed in time of persecution: They were arrested and beheaded.

Nine centuries later, Francis of Assisi (October 4) rebuilt the dilapidated San Damiano chapel outside Assisi.

#### September 27: **Saint Vincent de Paul** (*1580?-1660*)

The deathbed confession of a dying servant opened Vincent's eyes to the crying spiritual needs of the peasantry of France. This seems to have been a crucial moment in the life of the man from a small farm in Gascony, France, who had become a priest with little more ambition than to have a comfortable life.



It was the Countess de Gondi (whose servant he had helped) who persuaded her husband to endow and support a group of able and zealous missionaries who would work among poor tenant farmers and country people in general. Vincent was too humble to accept leadership at first, but after working for some time in Paris among imprisoned galley-slaves, he returned to be the leader of what is now known as the Congregation of the Mission, or the Vincentians. These priests, with vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and stability, were to devote themselves entirely to the people in smaller towns and villages.

Later, Vincent established confraternities of charity for the spiritual and physical relief of the poor and sick of each parish. From these, with the help of St. Louise de Marillac, came the Daughters of Charity, "whose convent is the sickroom, whose chapel is the parish church, whose cloister is the streets of the city." He organized the rich women of Paris to collect funds for his missionary projects, founded several hospitals, collected relief funds for the victims of war and ransomed over 1,200 galley slaves from North Africa. He was zealous in conducting retreats for clergy at a time when there was great laxity, abuse and ignorance among them. He was a pioneer in clerical training and was instrumental in establishing seminaries.

Most remarkably, Vincent was by temperament a very irascible person—even his friends admitted it. He said that except for the grace of God he would have been "hard and repulsive, rough and cross." But he became a tender and affectionate man, very sensitive to the needs of others.

Pope Leo XIII made him the patron of all charitable societies. Outstanding among these, of course, is the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, founded in 1833 by his admirer Blessed Frédéric Ozanam (September 7).



#### September 28: **Saint Wenceslaus** (907?-929)



If saints have been falsely characterized as "other worldly," the life of Wenceslaus stands as an example to the contrary: He stood for Christian values in the midst of the political intrigues which characterized 10th-century Bohemia.

He was born in 907 near Prague, son of the Duke of Bohemia. His saintly grandmother, Ludmilla, raised him and sought to promote him as ruler of Bohemia in place of his mother, who favored the anti-Christian factions. Ludmilla was eventually murdered, but rival Christian forces enabled Wenceslaus to assume leadership of the government.

His rule was marked by efforts toward unification within Bohemia, support of the Church and peace-making negotiations with Germany, a policy which caused him trouble with the anti-Christian opposition. His brother Boleslav joined in the plotting, and in



September of 929 invited Wenceslaus to Alt Bunglou for the celebration of the feast of Sts. Cosmas and Damian (September 26). On the way to Mass, Boleslav attacked his brother, and in the struggle, Wenceslaus was killed by supporters of Boleslav.

Although his death resulted primarily from political upheaval, Wenceslaus was hailed as a martyr for the faith, and his tomb became a pilgrimage shrine. He is hailed as the patron of the Bohemian people and of former Czechoslovakia.

### September 29: **Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael**

Angels—messengers from God—appear frequently in Scripture, but only Michael, Gabriel and Raphael are named.

Michael appears in Daniel's vision as "the great prince" who defends Israel against its enemies; in the Book of Revelation, he leads God's armies to final victory over the forces of evil. Devotion to Michael is the oldest angelic devotion, rising in the East in the fourth century. The Church in the West began to observe a feast honoring Michael and the angels in the fifth century.



Gabriel also makes an appearance in Daniel's visions, announcing Michael's role in God's plan. His best-known appearance is an encounter with a young Jewish girl named Mary, who consents to bear the Messiah.

Raphael's activity is confined to the Old Testament story of Tobit. There he appears to guide Tobit's son Tobiah through a series of fantastic adventures which lead to a threefold happy ending: Tobiah's marriage to Sarah, the healing of Tobit's blindness and the restoration of the family fortune.

The memorials of Gabriel (March 24) and Raphael (October 24) were added to the Roman calendar in 1921. The 1970 revision of the calendar joined their feasts to Michael's.

### September 30: **Saint Jerome (345-420)**

Most of the saints are remembered for some outstanding virtue or devotion which they practiced, but Jerome is frequently remembered for his bad temper! It is true that he had a very bad temper and could use a vitriolic pen, but his love for God and his Son Jesus Christ was extraordinarily intense; anyone who taught error was an enemy of God and truth, and St. Jerome went after him or her with his mighty and sometimes sarcastic pen.

He was above all a Scripture scholar, translating most of the Old Testament from the Hebrew. He also wrote commentaries which are a great source of scriptural inspiration for us today. He was an avid student, a thorough scholar, a prodigious letter-writer and a consultant to monk, bishop and pope. St. Augustine (August 28) said of him, "What Jerome is ignorant of, no mortal has ever known."





St. Jerome is particularly important for having made a translation of the Bible which came to be called the Vulgate. It is not the most critical edition of the Bible, but its acceptance by the Church was fortunate. As a modern scholar says, "No man before Jerome or among his contemporaries and very few men for many centuries afterwards were so well qualified to do the work." The Council of Trent called for a new and corrected edition of the Vulgate, and declared it the authentic text to be used in the Church.

In order to be able to do such work, Jerome prepared himself well. He was a master of Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Chaldaic. He began his studies at his birthplace, Stridon in Dalmatia (in the former Yugoslavia). After his preliminary education he went to Rome, the center of learning at that time, and thence to Trier, Germany, where the scholar was very much in evidence. He spent several years in each place, always trying to find the very best teachers. He once served as private secretary of Pope Damasus (December 11).

After these preparatory studies he traveled extensively in Palestine, marking each spot of Christ's life with an outpouring of devotion. Mystic that he was, he spent five years in the desert of Chalcis so that he might give himself up to prayer, penance and study. Finally he settled in Bethlehem, where he lived in the cave believed to have been the birthplace of Christ. On September 30 in the year 420, Jerome died in Bethlehem. The remains of his body now lie buried in the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome.

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