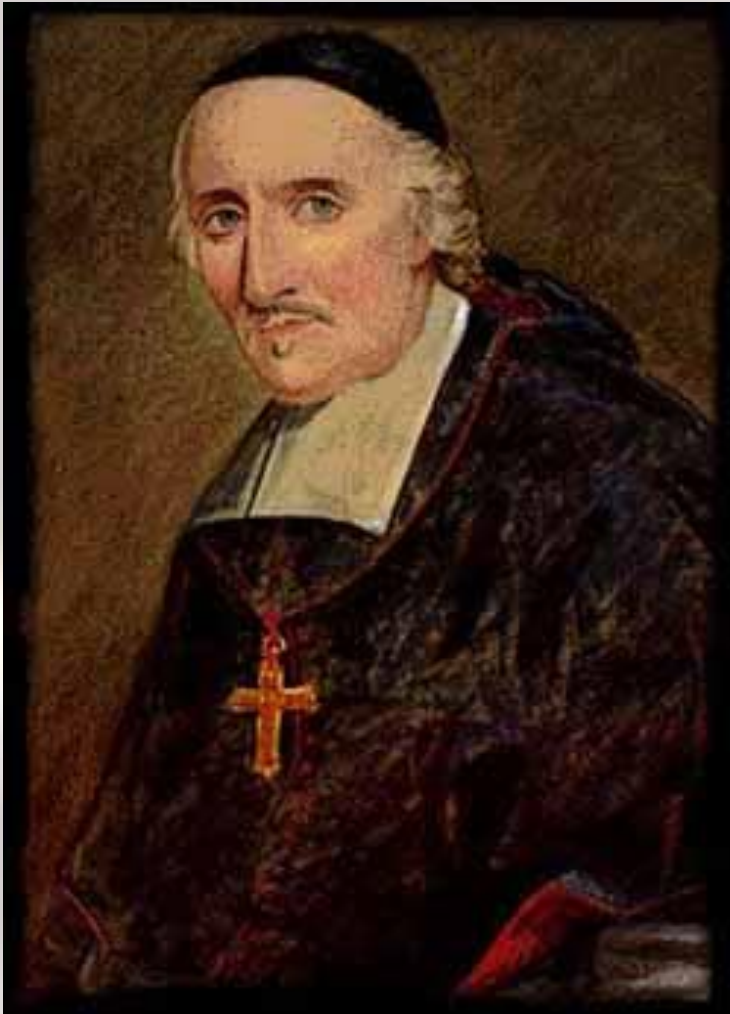




*Prayers for the Week Ahead*

WEEK BEGINNING 6<sup>TH</sup> MAY

# Monday 6<sup>th</sup> May



Saint Francois de Laval, the first Bishop of Quebec. Born in France in 1623, Francois, despite family trials, became a priest and was sent to Canada. Living his vocation to the fullest, he accomplished many great apostolic works in Quebec City, Trois-Rivieres and Montreal. With an insatiable desire to win more hearts for God, he also developed a great relationship with First Nations peoples.

It is said that his life was lived like the disciples of Emmaus, constantly seeking Jesus and looking to understand the purpose of his life by turning to the Gospel. Having joined "The Good Friends" while back in France, he was touched to encounter Jesus, specifically in the Eucharist and devoted his life to sharing this practice and spreading the good news of the Gospel. On May 6<sup>th</sup> we celebrate the Blessed's feast day.

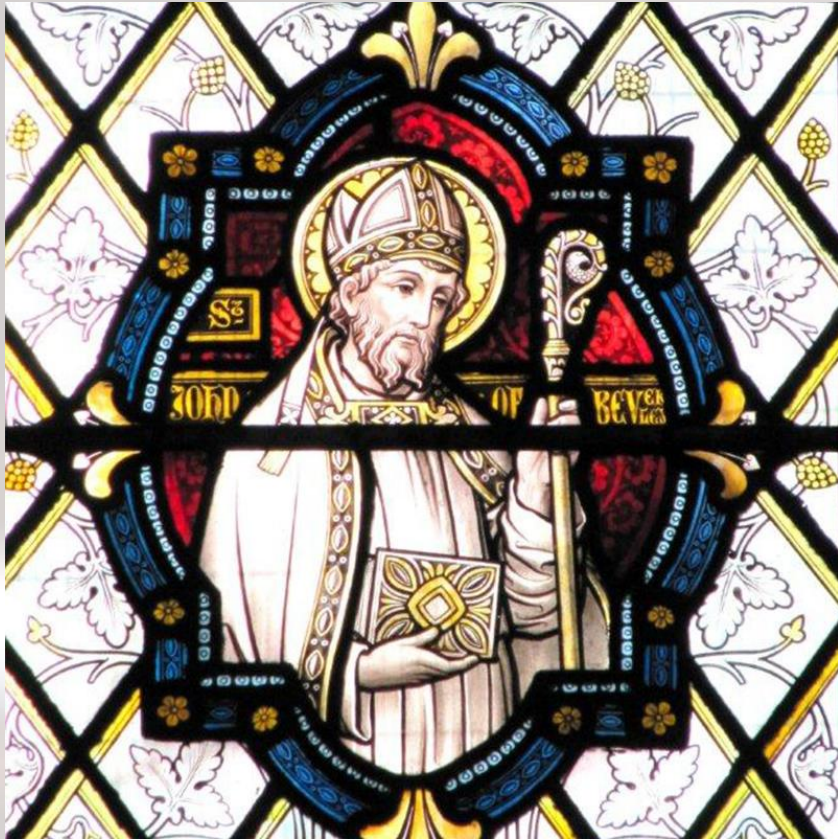
### **St Francois de Laval's reflection:**

To be filled with the spirit of God. That it animate our words and our hearts. To be prudent to put order in things, by enlightening understanding, or bending the will; all that does not aim to that end are lost.

The devil roams like a roaring lion, so be vigilant against his attempts with care, kindness and love. To have nothing in our lives and morals that may be contrary to what we say, and may cause us to lose the hearts for God we want to gain.

# St Francois de Laval

# Tuesday 7th May



## St John of Beverley

Remarkably, we know quite a lot about John through the writing of the Venerable Bede. Bede (672-735) wrote the first history book of the English people just 10 years after John's death. He knew John well, having been ordained by him. John himself was a member of the Whitby community under Abbess Hilda, one of the pioneers in establishing Christianity in the north of England, known then as Northumbria.

John went on to become the Bishop of Hexham (687-705) and Bishop of York (705-714).

It was during his time in York that he decided to establish a monastery. According to Bede he found a secluded site 'in the wood of the men of Deira' (the old name for East Yorkshire). Archaeology supports the view that the monastery was probably on the site of the present Minster church in Beverley. John retired to the monastery in 714. He died in 721 and was buried there in 'the Chapel of St Peter.'

John was canonised in 1037, and his feast is celebrated annually on 7 May. His translation is also celebrated on 25 October in the Catholic Church. Many miracles of healing are ascribed to John, whose pupils were numerous and devoted to him, and the popularity of his cult was a major factor in the prosperity of Beverley during the Middle Ages. He was celebrated for his scholarship as well as for his virtues. Around 1066, Folcard was commissioned to write a Life of John. An account of John's miracles was written by William Ketel in the 11th or 12th century which contains the first mention of King Æthelstan's visit to Beverley.

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May



While St. Michael's Feast Day is September 29, the feast of the Apparition of Saint Michael on May 8 commemorates the 6th century appearance of the archangel on Mount Gargano near Manfredonia in southern Italy. A church was built in his honour at the site. Medals or holy cards with 'relics' of Michael are probably rock chips from the cave where he appeared or pieces of cloth that have touched it.

### **Prayer**

**Saint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do you, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls, Amen.**

Feast of the Apparition of  
St Michael at Gargano

# Thursday 9th May



Forty Days after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Acts of the Apostles records Jesus' ascension into heaven. The ascension is an important Christian feast attesting and celebrating the reality of the God-Man Jesus Christ's returning to the Father, to return again in the future parousia. The Ascension is the final component of the paschal mystery, which consists also of Jesus' Passion, Crucifixion, Death, Burial, Descent Among the Dead, and Resurrection. Along with the resurrection, the ascension functioned as a proof of Jesus' claim that he was the Messiah. The Ascension is also the event whereby humanity was taken into heaven. Finally, the ascension was also the "final blow" so-to-speak against Satan's power, and thus the lion (Jesus) conquering the dragon (Satan) is a symbol of the ascension. Early Christian art and iconography portrayed the ascension frequently, showing its importance to the early Church.

## **Prayer:**

Let us pray

[on this day of Ascension

as we watch and wait for Jesus' return] Father in heaven,

our minds were prepared

for the coming of your kingdom

when you took Christ beyond our sight

so that we might seek him in glory.

May we follow where he has led

and find our hope in his glory,

for he is Lord forever. Amen

## *The Ascension of the Lord*

# Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May



*St. John of Avila*

The Apostle of Andalusia and the spiritual advisor of St. Teresa, St. Francis Borgia, St. John of the Cross, St. Peter of Alcantara, and others. He was born on January 6, 1499, at Almodovar del Campo, Spain. After studying law at the University of Salamanca, he left the university to be a hermit. He then went to Alcala, where he was ordained. John drew great crowds with his fiery denunciations of evil and his many sermons. A brief imprisonment by the Inquisition in Seville made him even more popular. His missionary efforts were centred on Andalusia, and his letters and other writings have become Spanish classics. John was canonised in 1970.

### **Prayer:**

Almighty and eternal God, who gave your holy Church blessed John of Avila as Doctor, grant that what he taught when moved by the divine Spirit may always stay firm in our hearts; and, as by your gift we embrace him as our patron, may we also have him as our defender to entreat your mercy. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

# Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May

Ignatius was the son of a poor farmer in Laconi, Italy. He was born on December 17, 1701. When he was about seventeen, he became very ill. He promised to be a Franciscan if he would get better.



**SANT'IGNAZIO DA LÀCONI**

*Capuccino*

Làconi 1701 - Cagliari 1781

Brother Ignatius spent fifteen years working in the weaving shed. Then, for forty years, he was part of the team who went out from house to house. They requested food and donations to support the friars. Ignatius visited families and received their gift. But the people soon realized that they received a gift in return. Brother Ignatius consoled the sick and cheered up the lonely. He made peace between enemies, converted people hardened by sin and advised those in trouble. They began to wait for his visits.

There were some difficult days, too. Yet people noticed he used to skip one house. The owner was a rich moneylender. He made the poor pay back much more than they could afford. This man felt humiliated because Ignatius never visited his home to ask for donations. He complained to Brother Ignatius' superior. The superior knew nothing about the moneylender so he sent Ignatius to his home. He returned with a large sack of food. It was then that God worked a miracle. When the sack was emptied, blood dripped out. "This is the blood of the poor," Ignatius explained softly. "That is why I never ask for anything at that house." The friars began to pray that the moneylender would repent.

Brother Ignatius died at the age of eighty, on May 11, 1781. He was proclaimed a saint by Pope Pius XII in 1951.

### **Prayer:**

Lord God, you led Saint Ignatius along the way of humility, innocence, and fraternal charity to the heights of sanctity. Help us to imitate his virtues and to practice charity on earth with word and deed. Amen

## St. Ignatius of Laconi

# Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May



St. Pancras

We have no reliable historical information about this martyr. Legend tells us he was born at the end of the third century and brought up by an uncle in Rome after the death of his parents. Both he and his uncle became Christians. Pancras was beheaded in 304 during Diocletian's persecution. He was only 14 years old.

Pancras is especially venerated in England because Augustine of Canterbury dedicated his first church to Pancras and his relics were presented as a gift to the king of Northumberland. A district in London is named St. Pancras after him.

### **Prayer:**

Saint Pancras, you gave away your young life rather than offer worship to a false god. May your example inspire, and your intercession strengthen, all young people to put love of God above all else. Amen.