



*Prayers for the Week Ahead*

WEEK BEGINNING 26<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST

# Monday 26<sup>th</sup> August



## Saints Liberatus, Boniface and Companions

We celebrate today the memory of a group of seven monks of North Africa who were martyred during the Christian persecutions of the late 5th Century. They had each chosen to live monastic life under the inspiration of Saint Augustine's early communities and chose, as well, to meet death together rather than deny their faith. They are the Liberatus, Boniface and Companions. In 484, some 34 years after the death of Saint Augustine, the Vandal king, Hunneric, issued a decree ordering the closure of all Christian monasteries and the consignment of all monks and nuns to the Moors.

The seven members of the monastery of Gafsa, Tunisia, founded under Augustinian inspiration, were taken prisoners. They were the Abbot Liberatus, Deacon Boniface, Subdeacons Servus and Rusticus and the lay monks Rogatus, Septimus and Maximus. They were taken to Carthage where efforts were made, in vain, to have them renounce the faith. The youngest, Maximus who was only 15 years old was particularly pressured to abandon his confreres and his Christian way of life, but refused, preferring to accept the same fate as the rest. They were then ordered to be burned alive. When it proved impossible to set the wood of their funeral pyre afire, they were clubbed to death.

### **Reflection**

Saint Peter wrote: Let it not be as a murderer or a thief, a malefactor or a coveter of other men's goods that any of you suffer; but if it is for the name of Christian, let him be not ashamed, but glorify God in that name.

# Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> August



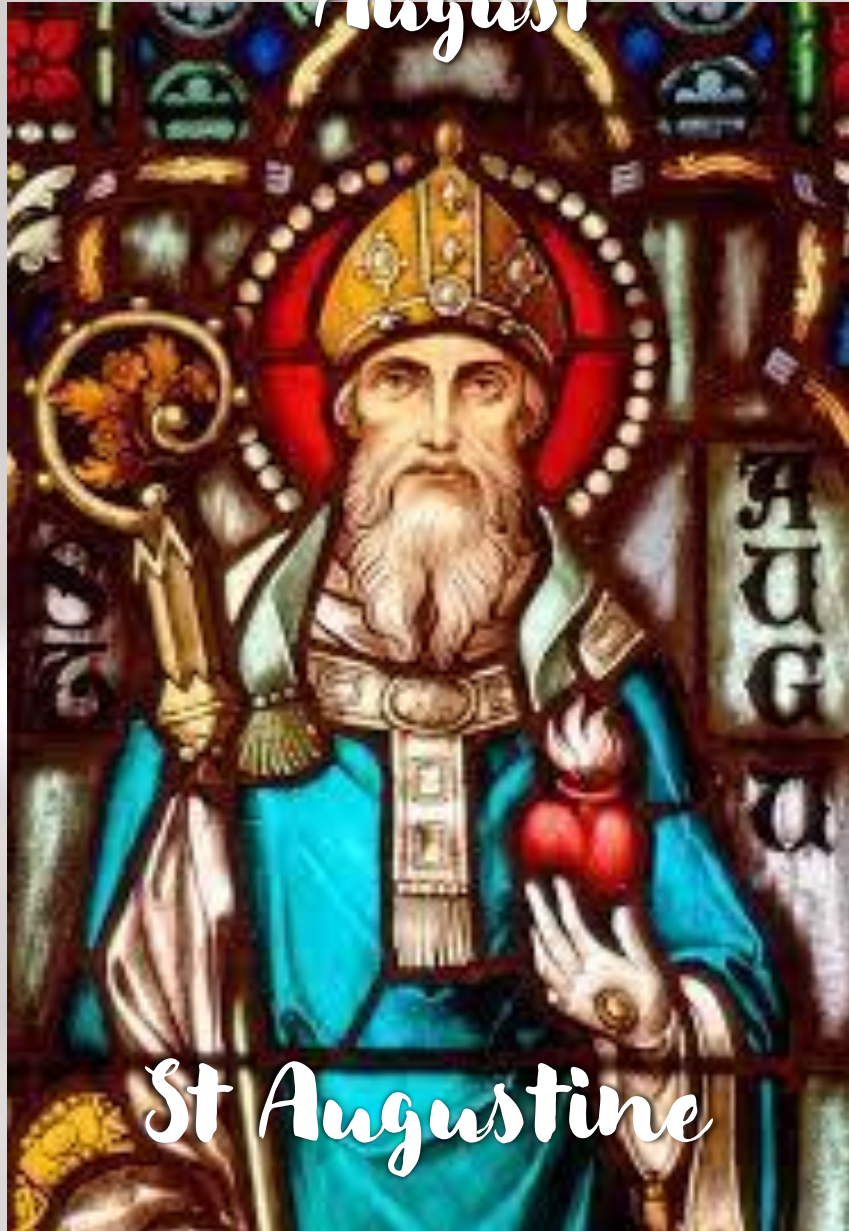
## St Monica

The circumstances of St. Monica's life could have made her a nagging wife, a bitter daughter-in-law, and a despairing parent, yet she did not give way to any of these temptations. Although she was a Christian, her parents gave her in marriage to a pagan, Patricius, who lived in her hometown of Tagaste in North Africa. Monica's prayers and example finally won her husband and mother-in-law to Christianity. Her husband died in 371, one year after his baptism. Monica had at least three children who survived infancy. The oldest, Augustine, is the most famous. At the time of his father's death, Augustine was 17 and a rhetoric student in Carthage. Monica was distressed to learn that her son had accepted the Manichean heresy—"all flesh is evil"—and was living an immoral life. For a while, she refused to let him eat or sleep in her house. Then one night she had a vision that assured her Augustine would return to the faith. From that time on, she stayed close to her son, praying and fasting for him. In fact she often stayed much closer than Augustine wanted. At Easter 387, St. Ambrose baptized Augustine and several of his friends. Soon after, his party left for Africa. Although no one else was aware of it, Monica knew her life was near the end. She told Augustine, "Son, nothing in this world now affords me delight. I do not know what there is now left for me to do or why I am still here, all my hopes in this world being now fulfilled." She became ill shortly after and suffered severely for nine days before her death.

### Reflection

Today, with Google searches, online shopping, text messages, tweets, and instant credit, we have little patience for things that take time. Likewise, we want instant answers to our prayers. Monica is a model of patience. Her long years of prayer, coupled with a strong, well-disciplined character, finally led to the conversion of her hot-tempered husband, her cantankerous mother-in-law and her brilliant but wayward son, Augustine.

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>  
August



This famous son of St. Monica was born in Africa and spent many years of his life in wicked living and in false beliefs. Though he was one of the most intelligent men who ever lived and though he had been brought up a Christian, his sins of impurity and his pride darkened his mind so much, that he could not see or understand the Divine Truth anymore. Through the prayers of his holy mother and the marvellous preaching of St. Ambrose, Augustine finally became convinced that Christianity was the one true religion. He was baptised, became a priest, a bishop and a famous Catholic writer. He became very devout and charitable, too. On the wall of his room he had the following sentence written in large letters: "Here we do not speak evil of anyone." St. Augustine overcame strong heresies, practiced great poverty and supported the poor, preached very often and prayed with great fervour right up until his death. "Too late have I loved You!" he once cried to God, but with his holy life he certainly made up for the sins he committed before his conversion.

### **Prayer to St Augustine**

Glorious Saint Augustine I boldly ask for your intercession confident in your boundless wisdom and compassion. May this devotion lead me to a life dedicated to the fulfilling the will of God that I may one day be deemed worthy of sharing His Kingdom with you and all the saints for all eternity. Amen.

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> August



The Beheading of St  
John the Baptist

The beheading of John the Baptist, also known as the decollation of Saint John the Baptist or the beheading of the Forerunner, is a biblical event commemorated as a holy day by various Christian churches. According to the New Testament, Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee under the Roman Empire, had imprisoned John the Baptist because he had publicly reproved Herod for divorcing his first wife and unlawfully taking his sister-in-law (his brother's wife) as his second wife Herodias. He then ordered him to be killed by beheading.

### **Prayer to St John the Baptist**

O Martyr invincible, who, for the honour of God and the salvation of souls with firmness and constancy you condemned the impiety of Herod even at the cost of your own life, and you rebuked him openly for his wicked and dissolute life; by your prayers obtain for us a heart, brave and generous, in order that we may overcome all human respect and openly profess our faith in loyal obedience to the teachings of Jesus Christ, our divine Master.

Amen.

Friday, 30th August



St. Margaret Clitherow was born in Middleton, England, in 1555, of protestant parents. Possessed of good looks and full of wit and merriment, she was a charming personality. In 1571, she married John Clitherow, a well-to-do grazier and butcher (to whom she bore two children), and a few years later entered the Catholic Church. Her zeal led her to harbour fugitive priests, for which she was arrested and imprisoned by hostile authorities. Recourse was had to every means in an attempt to make her deny her Faith, but the holy woman stood firm. Finally, she was condemned to be pressed to death on March 25, 1586.

### **Prayer to St. Margaret**

St. Margaret Clitherow, you were a loving wife and mother to your husband and your children. Though you faced many tribulations because of your new Catholic Faith, you carried out the duties of your vocation faithfully.

Dear Lord, we thank You for giving us St. Margaret Clitherow as an example of holiness. Help us to imitate the love of You she showed in living out her vocation as a wife and mother.

St. Margaret Clitherow