



Prayers for the Week Ahead

WEEK BEGINNING 25TH NOVEMBER



*Monday 25th November
St Catherine of Alexandria*

Catherine was exceptionally bright and beautiful, and reported to be the most beautiful young woman in Alexandria. She publicly denounced the Emperor Maxentius for worshiping idols when she was only eighteen. Smitten by her beauty, Maxentius tried to convert her to idolatry by having Catherine appear before fifty philosophers who were ordered to convince Catherine of her heresy. When Catherine was able to demolish all of the philosophers' arguments and convince them of the Christian religion, Maxentius burned them to death. Maxentius was so dazzled by Catherine's predominance before his philosopher that he ordered Catherine to marry him. Catherine refused and Maxentius had her flogged and imprisoned for several days without food. Fasting was not apparently a problem for Catherine who was fed daily by a dove that flew through her prison window. Maxentius then tried a more sophisticated torture. He had a spiked wheel constructed (the Catherine-wheel) on which Catherine was tied spread-eagle. The wheel was set in motion and as its speed was increased, the spikes began to be hurled off, impaling the onlookers who had come to witness Catherine's torture. When Catherine came out of the ordeal unharmed, Maxentius' wife (whom the Emperor had planned on replacing with Catherine) converted to Christianity along with 200 of the emperor's personal guards, thus provoking Maxentius to finally have Catherine beheaded. When her head was removed, milk flowed from her veins instead of blood. Her body (and head) were then transported by angels to Mount Sinai where her alleged relics are revered at the famous monastery of St. Catherine's.

Eternal Rest...



Unlike other popes who served the Church during its early days, historians know some facts about the early years of Siricius. He was born and raised in Rome to an unknown mother and a father named Tiburtius. Feeling compelled to work for the Church, he joined at a young age. During the papacy of Pope Liberius that lasted from 352 to 366, Siricius began working his way through the hierarchy. He first served as a lector and later became a deacon. When Damasus became pope in 366, Ursinus and a group of his followers claimed that he was the rightful heir to the papal throne. Following the death of the pope, he believed that he was next in line but was surprised when bishops unanimously selected Siricius as the next pope.

Ursinus fought the ruling for more than a year but only served as an antipope. Jerome was a man living in Rome at the same time who believed that he would become the next pope. Though he and Siricius were close friends, Jerome denounced him after his election and fled the city after telling him that they could no longer be friends. During his time as the pope, Siricius looked for ways to honor Pope Saint Paul. He eventually settled on building a new church and placing it directly over his tomb. He arrived in person to dedicate the building and added his name to one of the pillars.

Though historians do not know his cause of death, many believe it was a combination of old age and natural causes as he was likely in his mid-60s. The Church then had him buried in the Basilica of St. Peter.

Though a fire in 1823 did serious damage to the structure, visitors can still see his name on a pillar.

Eternal Rest...



*Wednesday 27th November
St Laverius*

Son of Achille, Laverius was raised in a pagan family. He served as a soldier in the imperial Roman army. Laverius was a convert to Christianity and he began preaching in the streets of Teggiano, Italy. By order of the prefect Agrippa, Laverius was arrested, tortured, put on display for public abuse and ridicule, and ordered to make sacrifice to pagan gods; he refused. He was then thrown to wild animals in the amphitheatre, but instead of attacking him, they knelt in front of him. Laverius was thrown back into this cell, but an angel freed him during the night and ordered him to travel to Grumentum (modern Grumento Nova, Italy). He arrived on 15 August 312 and began immediately to preach and to baptize converts. Agrippa sent soldiers after him. Laverius was captured, flogged, and when he would not stop preaching Christ even while being beaten, he was executed. Martyr.

Eternal Rest...

Thursday 28th November St Catherine Labouré




St. Catherine Labouré was born on May 2, 1806, in a quaint village in Burgundy, France. She was the ninth of eleven children. At the age of nine, her mother died, and in her sorrow, St. Catherine turned to the only other mother she knew. Standing on her tiptoes to see the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary in her home, St. Catherine tearfully said, "Now, dear Blessed Mother, you will be my mother."

At the age of 23, she joined the Daughters of Charity, a religious order of Sisters that St. Vincent de Paul founded. It was here that our Blessed Mother appeared to St. Catherine in 1830 and told her to have the Miraculous Medal made. During the next 46 years, St. Catherine was aware of the countless miracles God was working through the Medal, yet she chose to remain anonymous. After his much-publicized conversion to Catholicism—which was sparked by the Miraculous Medal—Alphonse Ratisbonne asked if he could meet the Sister who had seen our Blessed Mother. Nobody knew which sister it was. That was the way St. Catherine preferred it. She wanted nothing more than to humbly perform her daily duties and devote herself to the care of the sick and elderly (due to the great care she gave them, she is called the patroness of seniors).

Right before her death, St. Catherine told her superior that she was the Sister of the Miraculous Medal; up until that point, the only person she spoke to about the apparitions was her confessor. On December 31, 1876, St. Catherine left this earth for heaven, and after her passing, her superior broke the silence about the Sister who had seen and touched the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Her body was exhumed 57 years later. Miraculously, it was in perfect condition. Even death respected the Sister whose hands rested on the knees of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was declared a saint because of the heroic virtues she lived while doing her commonplace duties. A "Saint of Ordinary People," St. Catherine holds the secret of sanctity for us all. St. Catherine was canonized by Pope Pius XII on July 27, 1947.

Eternal Rest...



*Friday 29th November
Holy Martyrs Paramonus
and Philumenus*

The Holy Martyr Paramonus and the 370 Martyrs with him suffered for their faith in Christ in the year 250 during the rule of the emperor Decius (249-251). The governor of the Eastern regions, Aquianus, had locked up in prison 370 Christians, urging them to abjure Christ and instead offer sacrifice to idols. They subjected the captives to beatings, hoping by tortures and the threat of death to persuade them to renounce Christ and worship the pagan gods. One of the local inhabitants, Paramonus by name, openly denounced the cruel governor and confessed his faith in the One True God, the Lord Jesus Christ. They beheaded Saint Paramonus after fierce tortures together with the other 370 martyrs.

The Holy Martyr Philumenus suffered for Christ in the year 274, during the persecution against Christians by the emperor Aurelian (270-275). Saint Philumenus was by occupation a bread merchant in Ancyra. Envious persons reported to the governor Felix that Philumenus was confessing the Christian faith, and he thus came before a judge. Saint Philumenus did not renounce Christ. For this they hammered nails into his hands, feet, and head, and they forced him to walk. The holy martyr bravely endured the torments and he died from loss of blood, giving up his soul to God.

Eternal Rest...

A stained glass window depicting Saint Andrew. He is shown from the chest up, with a long, flowing white beard and hair. He wears a red outer garment over a blue inner garment. He holds a large wooden cross in his right hand. The background features decorative elements like a yellow leafy branch and white scrollwork.

Saturday 30th November

Saint Andrew

Saint Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, Greece and Russia and was Christ's first disciple.

St. Andrew, also known as Andrew the Apostle, was a Christian Apostle and the older brother to St. Peter. According to the New Testament, Andrew was born in the village of Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee during the early first century. Much like his younger brother, Simon Peter, Andrew was also a fisherman. Andrew's very name means strong, and he was known for having good social skills.

A Prayer to St Andrew

O Glorious St. Andrew,
you were the first to recognize and follow the Son of God.
With your friend, St. John,
you remained with Jesus,
for your entire life,
and now throughout eternity.

Just as you led your brother, St Peter,
to Christ and many others after him,
draw us also to Him.

Teach us how to lead them,
solely out of love for Jesus
and dedication to His service.

Help us to learn the lesson of the Cross
and carry our daily crosses without complaint,
so that they may carry us to God the Almighty Father. Amen.