



*Prayers for the Week Ahead*

WEEK BEGINNING 3<sup>RD</sup> MARCH

# Monday 2nd March



## St Agnes of Prague

OFFICIAL

Agnes was born a princess. She was the youngest daughter of King Ottokar I and Queen Constance of Bohemia.

Agnes was educated by Cistercian nuns at Trebnitz, Germany. Though she early perceived a call to religious life, Agnes was for years promised into a series of arranged marriages for political reasons. At age three she was promised to a prince named Boleslaus. When he died prior to the marriage, she was betrothed to Prince Henry, son of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. When Henry chose to marry another, young Agnes was betrothed to Emperor Frederick himself. With the help and intervention of Pope Gregory IX, though affronted, Frederick released Agnes from her marriage obligations, acknowledging that he had lost her to the king of heaven.

She built a Franciscan hospital on land donated by her brother, King Wenceslaus I. She then established the *Confraternity of the Crusaders of the Red Star* to staff it and its related clinics. She later built a Franciscan friary, and in 1234, Poor Clare convent of Saint Saviour in Prague with the aid of five nuns sent by Saint Clare of Assisi herself. Agnes entered the convent of Saint Saviour herself on Pentecost Sunday 1234, eventually became its abbess, and spent 50 years in the cloister.

Though they never met, she and Saint Clare of Assisi kept up an extensive correspondence for two decades, and some of the letters have survived to today.

*Our Father ...*

# Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March



St Katharine of Drexel

Every Holy Moment is a historic event.

Every time we choose to love God, and collaborate with Him to love our neighbour, we change the course of human history, because our Holy Moments reverberate powerfully in the lives of people in other places and other times.

Saint Katharine Drexel learned this lesson from the Pope himself. When she asked Pope Leo XIII to send more missionaries to Wyoming to set up schools for Native Americans, the Pope responded, "Why don't you become a missionary?" It was a wake up call. The Pope was telling Katharine, "Do your part." Not just with her money, but with all she had: her very self. If she did, she would create change beyond her wildest imaginings. And that is what happened.

Katharine became a nun and founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. She established more than 60 schools and missions, primarily for African Americans and Native Americans living in a society riddled with racism and segregation. She even founded Xavier University in New Orleans, the first Catholic university in the United States for African Americans. It is also the first Catholic university founded by a saint, and today is home to about 3,500 students each year.

Saint Katharine Drexel changed education in America for countless minorities, and her works will continue to bear fruit for the rest of human history.

Everything God created in the universe and beyond is connected. And in ways we will perhaps never understand, we are all connected. Our unholy moments have unholy ripple effects on the world. And our Holy Moments reverberate around the world in ways we cannot imagine.

Saint Katharine Drexel set off a butterfly effect of Holy Moments. So can you.

# Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March



Casimir, born of kings and in line to be a king himself, was filled with exceptional values and learning by a great teacher, John Dlugosz. Even his critics could not say that his conscientious objection indicated softness. As a teenager, Casimir lived a highly disciplined, even severe life, sleeping on the ground, spending a great part of the night in prayer and dedicating himself to lifelong celibacy.

When nobles in Hungary became dissatisfied with their king, they prevailed upon Casimir's father, the king of Poland, to send his son to take over the country. Casimir obeyed his father, as many young men over the centuries have obeyed their governments. The army he was supposed to lead was clearly outnumbered by the "enemy"; some of his troops were deserting because they were not paid. At the advice of his officers, Casimir decided to return home.

His father was irked at the failure of his plans, and confined his 15-year-old son for three months. The lad made up his mind never again to become involved in the wars of his day, and no amount of persuasion could change his mind. He returned to prayer and study, maintaining his decision to remain celibate even under pressure to marry the emperor's daughter.

He reigned briefly as king of Poland during his father's absence. He died of lung trouble at 25 while visiting Lithuania, of which he was also Grand Duke. He was buried in Vilnius, Lithuania.

## Reflection

For many years, Poland and Lithuania faded into the gray prison on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

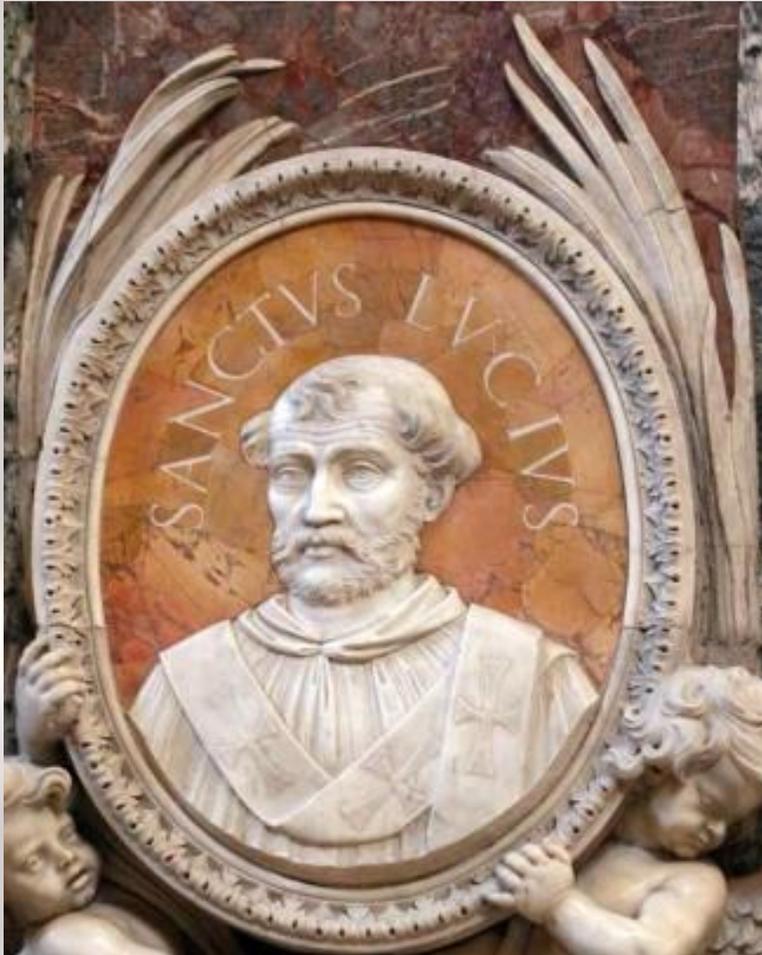
Despite repression, the Poles and Lithuanians remained firm in the faith which has become synonymous with their name. Their youthful patron reminds us: Peace is not won by war; sometimes a comfortable peace is not even won by virtue, but Christ's peace can penetrate every government repression of religion.

# Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March

OFFICIAL

Lucius reigned from 253-254. He died at Rome on 5 March, 254. After the death of St. Cornelius, who died in exile in the summer of 253, Lucius was chosen to fill his place, and was consecrated Bishop of Rome. Nothing is known of the early life of this pope before his elevation. According to the "Liber Pontificalis", he was Roman born, and his father's name was Porphyrius. Where the author obtained this information is not known. The persecution of the Church under the Emperor Gallus, during which Cornelius had been banished, still went on. Lucius also was sent into exile soon after his consecration, but in a short time, presumably when Valerian was made emperor, he was allowed to return to his flock. The Felician Catalogue, whose information is found in the "Liber Pontificalis", informs us of the banishment and the miraculous return of Lucius: "Hic exul fuit et postea nutu Dei incolumis ad ecclesiam reversus est." St. Cyprian, who wrote a (lost) letter of congratulation to Lucius on his elevation to the Roman See and on his banishment, sent a second letter of congratulation to him and his companions in exile, as well as to the whole Roman Church.

*Our Father...*



## Pope St Lucius I

# Friday 6th March

OFFICIAL



St Colette of Corbie was the daughter of a Carpenter. Her parents were nearly 60 at her birth. She became an orphan at the age of 17 and was left in the care of a Benedictine abbot. Colette's guardian wanted her to marry, but Colette was drawn to religious life. St Colette of Corbie had visions in which she saw Saint Francis of Assisi, ordering her to restore the Rule of Saint Clare to its original seriousness. Colette was struck blind for three days and mute for three more days when she hesitated. These to her were signs that she should take action.

St Colette of Corbie tried to follow her mission by explaining it but had no success. Realizing she needed more sovereignty behind her words, she walked to Nice, France being barefoot and clothed in a habit of patches, to meet Peter de Luna. He professed her a Poor Clare and was so impressed that he made her superioress of all convents of Minoresses that she might reform or found.

St Colette of Corbie travelled from convent to convent, meeting opposition, slander, abuse, and was also accused of sorcery. Eventually, she made some development, especially in Savoy. St Colette of Corbie was known for her deep devotion to Christ's Passion with an appreciation and care for animals. She fasted every Friday, meditating on the Passion.

Our Father...

## St Collette of Corbie