



Prayers for the Week Ahead

WEEK BEGINNING 20TH APRIL

Monday 20th April



Agnes was born wealthy. A pious child, at age six she began nagging her parents to join a convent. She was admitted to the convent at Montepulciano, Italy at age nine. When her spiritual director was appointed abbess at Procena, she took Agnes with her. Agnes's reputation for holiness attracted other sisters. She became an abbess at age fifteen after receiving special permission from Pope Nicholas IV. Agnes insisted on greater austerities in the abbey; she lived off bread and water, slept on the ground, used a stone for a pillow. In 1298 she returned to Montepulciano to work in a new Dominican convent. She was the prioress of the house for the last seventeen years of her life.

Many stories grew up around Agnes, including that her birth was announced by flying lights surrounding her family's house. As a child, while walking through a field, she was attacked by a large murder of crows; she announced that they were devils, trying to keep her away from the land; years later, it was the site of her convent.

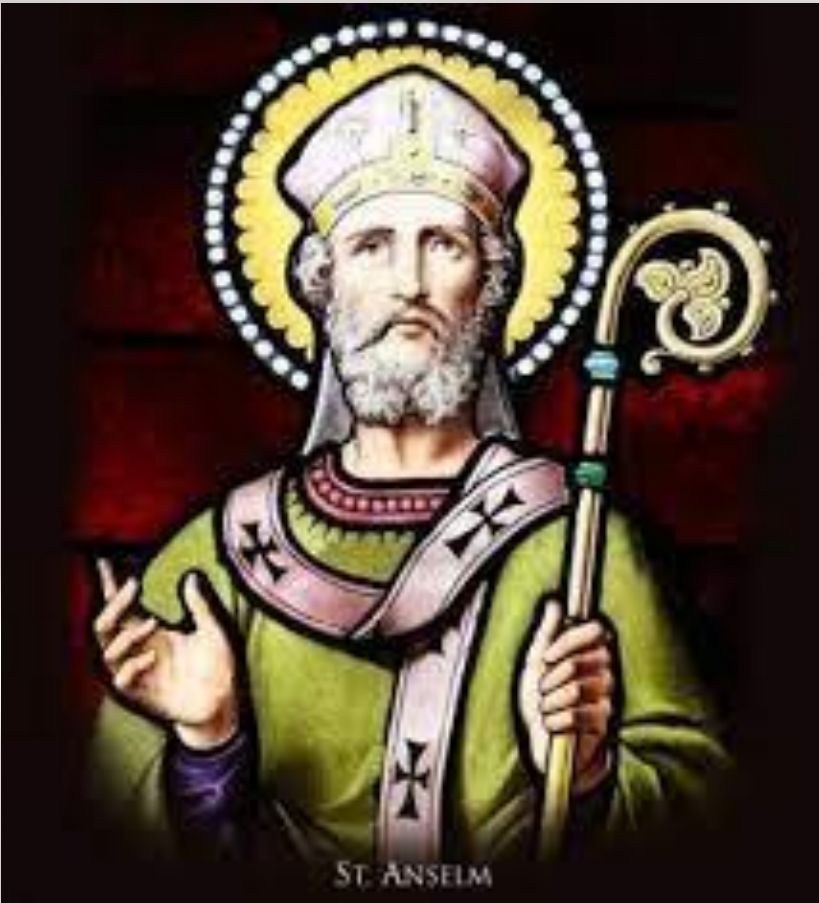
She was known to levitate up to two feet in the air while praying and she received Communion from an angel, and had visions of the Virgin Mary.

She held the infant Jesus in one of these visions; when she woke from her trance she found she was holding the small gold crucifix the Christ child had worn. On the day she was chosen abbess as a teenager, small white crosses showered softly onto her and the congregation. *Our Father ...*

St Agnes of Montepulciano

Tuesday 21st April

OFFICIAL



St Anselm of Canterbury

Anselm was an Italian, Frenchman, and Englishman; a monk, prior, abbot, archbishop, philosopher, theologian, and spiritual writer; today he is a saint, a Doctor of the Church, and commonly referred to as the father of Scholasticism. Anselm was born into a noble family in the town of Aosta, located in the Italian Alps. As a youth, his devout mother set a pious example which he readily followed. When Anselm was fifteen, he wanted to enter the monastic life but his father would not give consent, so the abbot refused his entrance. His mother had since passed so she could not intervene. Disillusioned, Anselm's faith wavered for the next several years. Coming to his senses, he pursued studies in France and eventually arrived at the Benedictine Abbey of Bec around the age of twenty-six. Anselm quickly became close with and a devoted student of the prior, Lanfranc. When Anselm's father died, Anselm was in a quandary about what to do. Should he return home to receive the inheritance of his father's estate and put it to good use? Or should he abandon it and become a monk? Lanfranc directed him to a holy bishop for spiritual advice and Anselm decided on religious life. He returned to the Abbey of Bec and became a monk at the age of twenty-seven.

Saint Anselm, you had a profound, intimate, and personal love of God that arose from your fervent life of prayer. From that prayer, faith was enkindled within you. From that faith, understanding poured forth from your intellect to inspire others and teach them the way to God. Please pray for me, that I may always turn to God through prayer so that my interior life of prayer will be the foundation of all I do and all I am. Saint Anselm, pray for me.

Wednesday 22nd April



St Leonides of Alexandria

OFFICIAL

St. Leonides of Alexandria was a Christian martyr of the 3rd century AD. According to the Christian historian Eusebius, his son was the early Church father Origen. In the same passage Eusebius tells us that Leonides was martyred during the persecution of the Roman emperor Septimus Severus in the year 202 AD.

He was a Christian philosopher, and excellently versed both in the physical and sacred sciences. He had seven sons, the eldest of whom was Origen, whom he brought up with abundance of care, returning God thanks for having blessed him with a son of such an excellent disposition for learning, and a very great zeal for piety. These qualifications endeared him greatly to his father, who, after his son was baptized, would come to his bedside while he was asleep, and would kiss them respectfully on the forehead, as being the temple of the Holy Ghost. When the persecution raged at Alexandria, under Lætus, governor of Egypt, in the tenth year of Severus, Leonides was cast into prison. Condemned to death by the Egyptian prefect Lactus, he was beheaded, and his property seized. The feast of St. Leonides is celebrated on April 22. He is a patron of large families.

Our Father...

Thursday 23rd April



St George

It is uncertain when Saint George was born and historians continue to debate to this day. However, his death date is estimated to be April 23, 303 A.D.

George was born to a Gerontios and Polychronia, a Roman officer and a Greek native of Lydda. Both were Christians from noble families of the Anici and George, Georgios in the original Greek, was raised to follow their faith.

When George was old enough, he was welcomed into Diocletian's army. On February 24, 303 A.D., Diocletian, who hated Christians, announced that every Christian the army passed would be arrested and every other soldier should offer a sacrifice to the Roman gods.

George refused to abide by the order and told Diocletian, who was angry but greatly valued his friendship with George's father.

In an effort to save George, Diocletian attempted to convert him to believe in the Roman gods and made several other offers that George refused.

Finally, after exhausting all other options, Diocletian ordered George's execution. On April 23, 303 A.D., George was decapitated before Nicomedia's outer wall. His body was sent to Lydda for burial, and other Christians went to honor George as a martyr.

Our Father ...

Friday 24th April



St Fidelis of Sigmaringen

OFFICIAL

Born in 1577, Mark Rey became a lawyer who constantly upheld the causes of the poor and oppressed people. Nicknamed “the poor man’s lawyer,” Rey soon grew disgusted with the corruption and injustice he saw among his colleagues. He left his law career to become a priest, joining his brother George as a member of the Capuchin Order. Fidelis was his religious name. His wealth was divided between needy seminarians and the poor.

As a follower of Saint Francis of Assisi, Fidelis continued his devotion to the weak and needy. During a severe epidemic in a city where he was guardian of a friary, Fidelis cared for and cured many sick soldiers.

Reflection

Fidelis’ constant prayer was that he be kept completely faithful to God and not give in to any lukewarmness or apathy. He was often heard to exclaim, “Woe to me if I should prove myself but a halfhearted soldier in the service of my thorn-crowned Captain.” His prayer against apathy, and his concern for the poor and weak make him a saint whose example is valuable today. The modern Church is calling us to follow the example of “the poor man’s lawyer” by sharing ourselves and our talents with those less fortunate and by working for justice in the world.