

A row of lit candles in dark holders, with a white text box overlaid on the right side. The candles are lit, and the flames are visible. The background is dark, and the text box is white with a decorative border of small white dots.

Prayers for the Week Ahead

WEEK BEGINNING 27TH APRIL

Monday 27th April St Zita of Lucca

OFFICIAL

Zita was born to a very poor but pious family. At age twelve she became a domestic servant for the wealthy Fainelli family in Lucca, Italy, a position she kept all her life; she looked at it as a way to serve God. She often gave her own food, and sometimes that of her master, to those poorer than herself, which caused her to get in frequent trouble with her employers and the other servants in the house who resented her. However, she did such a fine job she was eventually placed in charge of the house, and entrusted with its keys. Zita attended daily Mass before beginning her duties, and would go to a nearby monastery to pray in private. Her reputation was such that Dante in the Inferno referred to the city of Lucca as “Santa Zita”.

Dear Lord, we thank You for giving us Your servant, St. Zita, as an example of virtue. Help us to imitate the holiness she showed in offering her hard work to You throughout her many years as a domestic servant.



Tuesday 28th April

OFFICIAL

Louis's life is inseparable from his efforts to promote genuine devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus and mother of the Church. *Totus tuus* ("completely yours") was Louis's personal motto; Pope John Paul II chose it as his episcopal motto.

Born in the Breton village of Montfort, close to Rennes, France, as an adult Louis identified himself by the place of his baptism instead of his family name, Grignon. After being educated by the Jesuits and the Sulpicians, he was ordained a diocesan priest in 1700.

Soon he began preaching parish missions throughout western France. His years of ministering to the poor prompted him to travel and live very simply, sometimes getting him into trouble with Church authorities. In his preaching, which attracted thousands of people back to the faith, Father Louis recommended frequent, even daily, Holy Communion—not the custom then!—and imitation of the Virgin Mary's ongoing acceptance of God's will for her life.

Louis founded the Missionaries of the Company of Mary, for priests and brothers, and the Daughters of Wisdom, who cared especially for the sick. His book *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin* has become a classic explanation of Marian devotion. Louis died in Saint-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, where a basilica has been erected in his honour. He was canonized in 1947, and his liturgical feast is celebrated on April 28.

Reflection:

Like Mary, Louis experienced challenges in his efforts to follow Jesus. Opposed at times in his preaching and in his other ministries, Louis knew with Saint Paul, "Neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who causes the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:7). Any attempt to succeed by worldly standards runs the risk of betraying the Good News of Jesus. Mary is "the first and most perfect disciple," as the late Sulpician Father Raymond Brown described her.



St Louis de Montfort

Wednesday 29th
April



- Saint Catherine was born in Sienna and died in Rome. She promoted peace in Italy and is one of the two patron saints of Italy. At the age of six, Catherine had a vision of Jesus Christ. She continued to receive many visions throughout her life. At age 12, Catherine cut off her hair and was obligated to serve her family, living in small quarters in the basement. At the age of 16, she entered the Third Order of Saint Dominic and later became a Dominican nun.
- She wrote a book called *Dialogue*, which taught that if you love your neighbours it is loving God. She also devoted her life to improving the Catholic church, helping the ill, poor, and spiritually underprivileged. Catherine persuaded the pope to return from Avignon, France and back into Rome. She also tried to start a new Crusade to the holy land, Jerusalem. She died of “holy anorexia”, as she ate very little in the name of God. She became a saint in 1461, and was later made a Doctor of the Church in 1970 by Pope Paul VI and a patron of Europe in 1999.

- **Prayer for the Gifts of Saint Catherine of Siena**

God of Wisdom you made our sister Catherine burn with divine love in contemplating the Lord's passion and in serving your Church. With the help of her prayers may your people, united in the mystery of Christ, rejoice forever in the revelation of his glory, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

St Catherine of
Sienna

Thursday 30th April

OFFICIAL



St Pius V, Pope

During his papacy (1566-1572), Pius V was faced with the almost overwhelming responsibility of getting a shattered and scattered Church back on its feet. The family of God had been shaken by corruption, by the Reformation, by the constant threat of Turkish invasion, and by the bloody bickering of the young nation-states. In 1545, a previous pope convened the Council of Trent in an attempt to deal with all these pressing problems. Off and on over 18 years, the Fathers of the Church discussed, condemned, affirmed, and decided upon a course of action. The Council closed in 1563.

Pius V was elected in 1566 and charged with the task of implementing the sweeping reforms called for by the Council. He ordered the founding of seminaries for the proper training of priests. He published a new missal, a new breviary, a new catechism, and established the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine classes for the young. Pius zealously enforced legislation against abuses in the Church. He patiently served the sick and the poor by building hospitals, providing food for the hungry, and giving money customarily used for the papal banquets to poor Roman converts.

Our Father...

Friday 1st May

OFFICIAL

St. Joseph has two feast days on the liturgical calendar. The first is March 19—Joseph, the Husband of Mary. The second is May 1—Joseph, the Worker.



“Saint Joseph is a man of great spirit. He is great in faith, not because he speaks his own words, but above all because he listens to the words of the Living God. He listens in silence. And his heart ceaselessly perseveres in the readiness to accept the Truth contained in the word of the Living God,” Pope John Paul II had once said.

There is very little about the life of Joseph in Scripture but still, we know that he was the chaste husband of Mary, the foster father of Jesus, a carpenter and a man who was not wealthy. We also know that he came from the royal lineage of King David.

We can see from his actions in scripture that Joseph was a compassionate man, and obedient to the will of God. He also loved Mary and Jesus and wanted to protect and provide for them.

Since Joseph does not appear in Jesus' public life, at his death, or resurrection, many historians believe Joseph had probably died before Jesus entered public ministry.

Joseph is the patron of many things, including the universal Church, fathers, the dying and social justice.

Hail Mary...

St Joseph the Worker

Friday 2nd May



St. Athanasius

OFFICIAL

St. Athanasius, also known as Athanasius the Great and Athanasius the Confessor, was a bishop and doctor of the church. He is called the "Father of Orthodoxy," the "Pillar of the Church" and "Champion of Christ's Divinity." Athanasius became one of the most dedicated opponents of the heresy of Arianism. Much of his life was a testimony to the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Prayer:

Father,
you raised up Saint Athanasius
to be an outstanding defender
of the truth of Christ's divinity.
By his teaching and protection
may we grow in your knowledge and love.
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.