



Prayers for the Week Ahead

WEEK BEGINNING 1ST JUNE

Monday 1st June



St. Justin, Martyr

Saint Justin (100-165 AD) is known for his writings defending Christianity. He was an early Christian apologist, and is regarded as the foremost interpreter of the theory of the Logos in the 2nd Century. Most of what is known about the life of Justin Martyr comes from his own writings. He was born at Flavia Neapolis (in Old Testament times Shechem, now Nablus) in Palestine. Justin suffered martyrdom alongside some of his students at Rome under Marcus Aurelius when Rusticus was prefect of the city (between 162 and 168).

Prayer

O God, who through the folly of the Cross wondrously taught Saint Justin the Martyr the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ, grant us, through his intercession, that, having rejected deception and error, we may become steadfast in the faith.

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.

Tuesday 2nd June



Though we know very little about these two martyrs under Diocletian, there is no question that the early church venerated them. Evidence of the respect in which they were held are the basilica Constantine built over their tombs and the presence of their names in the first eucharistic prayer. Pope St. Damasus says that he heard the story of these two martyrs from their executioner who became a Christian after their deaths. Marcellinus, a priest, and Peter, an exorcist, died in the year 304. According to a legendary account of their martyrdom, the two Romans saw their imprisonment as just one more opportunity to evangelise and managed to convert their jailer and his family. The legend also says that they were beheaded in the forest so that other Christians wouldn't have a chance to bury and venerate their bodies. Two women found the bodies, however, and had them properly buried.

Today, let us pray for those who are martyred for the faith, especially those twenty-nine Coptic Christians who refused to renounce their faith at gunpoint and so were killed last week in Egypt. May the Lord welcome these courageous witnesses, these martyrs, in his peace and convert the hearts of the violent ones.

Sts. Marcellinus and Peter

Wednesday 3rd June



Lwanga and his companions were young men between the ages of fourteen and thirty who belonged to King Mwanga's royal court. As followers of the Catholic faith, they died because they rejected the impure desires of the king. Charles Lwanga, Master of the Pages, stood out for his zeal after his conversion to Christianity thanks to the missionary efforts of the White Fathers. The witness of his life and words brought others to the faith. He exercised great moral authority over the pages, some of whom were already Christians while others prepared for baptism, like Kizito, who was only fourteen years old.

The King of Uganda, Mwanga II, was enraged when he discovered that his pages embraced Christianity and so he began a persecution against *"those who pray,"* the name he gave to Christians. He convoked a council and ordered for the Christian pages to be called forth. He ordered them to deny the faith so that they would agree to the practice of sodomy with him. He also ordered that anyone not willing to renounce the faith should step forward. Charles Lwanga was the first to step forward, then the others followed him.

Charles Lwanga and his companions were beatified by Benedict XV in 1920. In 1934, Charles Lwanga was declared patron of Catholic Action and of African youth. On October 18, 1964, Paul VI canonized Charles Lwanga and his companions, selecting June 3 as the date for their feast day.

St Charles Lwanga and Companions, Martyrs

St Charles, pray for us.

Thursday 4th June



Francis (Francesco) Caracciolo was born in Villa Santa Maria in the Abruzzo region, in the Kingdom of Naples. He belonged to the Pisquizio branch of the Caracciolo family and received in baptism the name of Ascanio. From a young age, he had a reputation for gentleness and uprightness. When he was 22, he was attacked by one of the several skin maladies collectively described as "leprosy" in those days. So serious was this attack that he was considered hopeless. With death so near, he made a vow that if he regained his health, he would spend the rest of his life in the service of God and his fellow men. He recovered so quickly after this vow, that his cure was considered miraculous. Eager to fulfil his promise to God, he went to Naples to study for the priesthood. As a priest Francis spent many hours in the confessional. Here he was enriched with the gifts of prophecy and the reading of hearts. He also begged in the streets for the poor and gave away most of his possessions to the needy. But it was his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament for which Francis Caracciolo is most noted and remembered. Such was his love for the Holy Eucharist, that he would spend almost the entire night in adoration. The little sleep he allowed himself was often spent on one of the altar steps. In 1608, Caracciolo moved to Agnone to found a religious house in honour of the *Santissima Annunziata*, but he died before the completion of his dream. After the death his remains were transported from, where he moved to found was died, to Naples, without having any visible signs of embalmment.

St Francis Caracciolo

St Francis, pray for us.

Friday 5th June



St. Boniface

St. Boniface, Bishop and Martyr St. Boniface, the famous English monk and missionary to Germany, died on this date in A.D. 754. So, to commemorate his death, here's a prayer commonly attributed to him.

Eternal God, the refuge and help of all your children, we praise you for all you have given us, for all you have done for us, for all that you are to us. In our weakness, you are strength, in our darkness, you are light, in our sorrow, you are comfort and peace. We cannot number your blessings, we cannot declare your love: For all your blessings we bless you. May we live as in your presence, and love the things that you love, and serve you in our daily lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Saturday 6th June



St Norbert

St Norbert was born about 1080 in the Rhineland and was ordained in 1115. He lived a life of penance and apostolate, and encouraged other clergy to do the same. This aroused hostility, and he left Germany and went to France, where he established a community of Canons who followed the rule of St. Augustine - living in community, celebrating the Divine Office and preaching to the people. From this came the Premonstratensian Order. He was elected Bishop of Magdeburg in 1126. He died in 1134.

PRAYER:

Father, you made the bishop Norbert an outstanding minister of your Church, renowned for his preaching and pastoral zeal. Always grant to your Church faithful shepherds to lead your people to eternal salvation. 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