



Prayers for week ahead

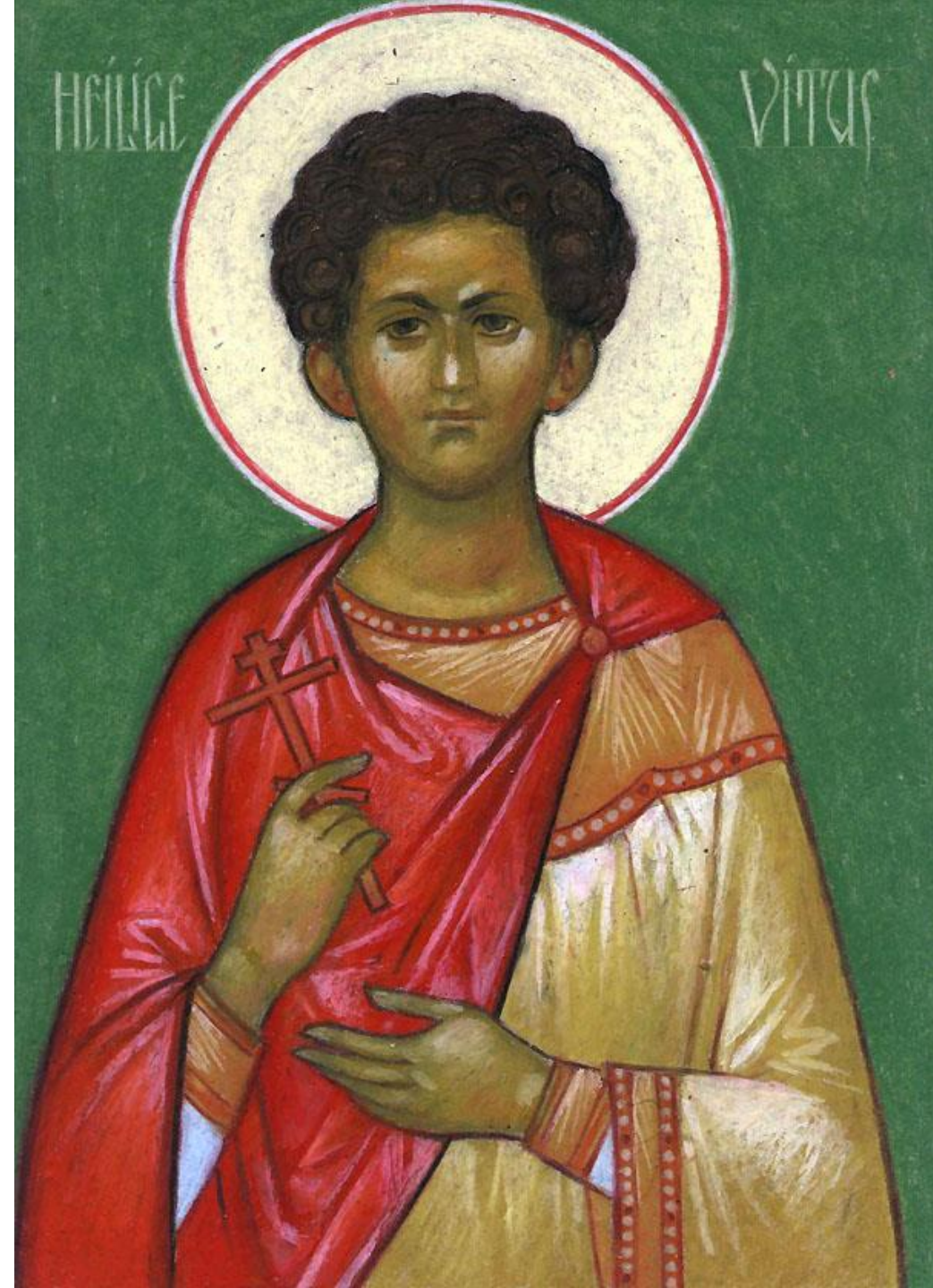
WEEKS BEGINNING 15TH JUNE

Monday 15th June

St Vitus

Vitus (/ˈvaɪtəs/), whose name is sometimes rendered Guy or Guido, was a Christian martyr from Sicily. The dates of his actual life are unknown. He has long been tied to the Sicilian martyrs Modestus and Crescentia but in the earliest sources it is clear that these were originally different traditions that later became combined. The figures of Modestus and Crescentia are probably fictitious.

According to his hagiography, he died during the Diocletianic Persecution in AD 303. In the Middle Ages, he was counted as one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers. In Germany, his feast was celebrated with dancing before his statue. This dancing became popular and the name "Saint Vitus Dance" was given to the neurological disorder Sydenham's chorea. It also led to Vitus being considered the patron saint of dancers and of entertainers in general. He is also said to protect against lightning strikes, animal attacks and oversleeping. His feast day is celebrated on 15 June. In places where the Julian calendar is used, this date coincides, in the 20th and 21st centuries, with 28 June on the Gregorian calendar.



Tuesday 16th June



John Francis Regis was the son of a wealthy merchant father and a mother descended from nobility. As a boy he was sensitive, devout, and eager to please his parents and teachers. Educated by Jesuits from the age of 14, he entered the Society of Jesus in December of 1616.

As he followed the traditional Jesuit path of teaching and extensive studies, John also became known as a skilled catechist. He was eager to enter the priesthood, and offered his first Mass in 1631. John spent much of the rest of that year caring for victims of a plague outbreak in the city of Toulouse. St. John Francis Regis died at age 43, in late December of 1640. Though suffering from a lung ailment, he insisted on preaching a parish mission and hearing confessions. A penitent found him unconscious in the confessional, though he revived long enough to receive the last rites before dying.

O God, whose priest, Saint John Francis Regis, a friend of the poor, the sick, and the wayward, eagerly desired to evangelize the peoples of North America; grant, we ask, that we who serve You in his place may be filled with his same spirit of zeal. Amen.

St John Francis Regis



Wednesday 17th June St Botulph of Ikanhoe

Botulph was the brother of Saint Adolph of Utrecht. They were educated at the monastery of Cnobersburg (Burgh Castle), Suffolk under the direction of its founder, Saint Fursey. When Mercian forces under King Penda invaded the region, the boys were sent to study at the monastery at Bosanham, Sussex. He became a Benedictine monk at Farmoutiere-en-Brie, Gaul (modern northeastern France), and was sent back to the British Isles in 647 to establish the Benedictine Order there.

With the support of Saint Syre, Saint Aubierge, and their brother, King Anna of East Anglia, Botulph founded the monastery of Ikanhoe in East Anglia, declining the offer of a part of the royal estate, and settling for a wild, barren site that was removed from people, reported to be haunted by demons, and which would require endless work to sustain the monks. For many years it was believed that the area that grew up around it came to be called Botulph's Town, contracted to Botulphston, and later contracted to Boston in Lincolnshire, but recent research has shown that the original site is another location. The Saxon Chronicle indicates that by 654 Botulph had attracted enough brother monks and hermits that work began on the monastery. Through hard work and faith, the monastery grew in population; the monks built several structures, turned large areas of marsh and scrub into productive farming and grazing lands, and dispelled the people's fears of demons.

Botulph served as spiritual director for Saint Ceolfrith, and worked as a travelling missionary through rough, bandit-plagued areas of East Anglia, Kent and Sussex. His legacy continued for centuries in the strength of the Benedictine movement in the Isles, and in the dozens of churches named for him, many of them built at city gates to serve as safe-haven for travellers in times when robbers roamed the roads, and many in port or river towns.

Thursday 18th June

Blessed Osanna Andreasi

Osanna was the daughter of Italian nobles Nicolaus and Agnes. She was reported to have had a vision of angels, paradise, and the Trinity at age five. Feeling called to religious life, she rejected a marriage arranged by her father, and became a Dominican tertiary at 17; she waited 37 years to complete her vows so she could care for her brothers and sisters after the death of her parents. Osanna was a mystic who would fall into ecstasies whenever she spoke of God. She was a visionary who saw images of Christ bearing his cross. Osanna had the pain of the stigmata along with red marks, but no bleeding. She helped the poor and sick, served as spiritual director for many, spent much of her family's considerable fortune to help the unfortunate. Osanna spoke out against decadence, and criticized the aristocracy for a lack of morality. She was a friend of Blessed Columba of Rieti and a record of her spiritual conversations with Girolamo de Monte Oliveto has survived.



Friday 19th June St Romuald

St. Romuald was born at Ravenna about the year 956. In spite of an infinite desire for virtue and sanctity, his early life was wasted in the service of the world and its pleasures. Then one day, obliged by his father, Sergius, to be present at a duel fought by him, he beheld him slay his adversary. The crime made such an impression upon him that he determined to expiate it for forty days, as though it were entirely his own. For this purpose he retired to a Benedictine monastery of St. Apollinare, near Ravenna, where he became Abbot.

Today, let us meditate on the words of St. Romuald: "Realise above all that you are in God's presence, and stand there with the attitude of one who stands before the emperor. Empty yourself completely and sit waiting, content with the grace of God, like the chick who tastes nothing and eats nothing but what his mother brings him."

