

Prayers for the Week Ahead

WEEK BEGINNING 31ST AUGUST

Monday 31st August

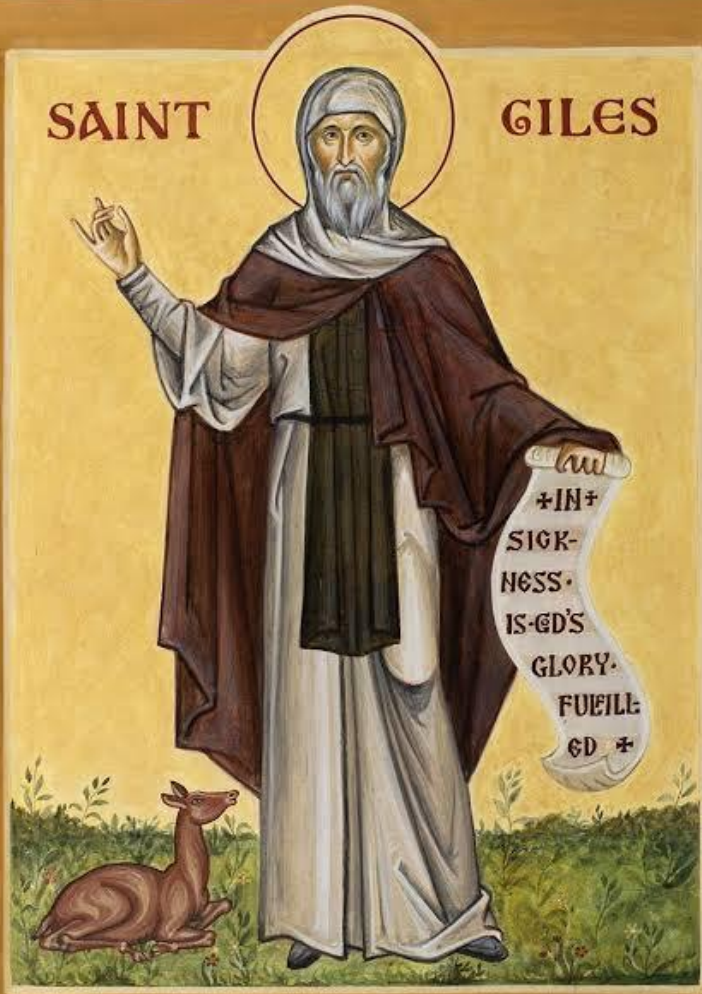


St Aidan

Saint Aidan of Lindisfarne (c. 600–651 AD), known as the "Apostle of Northumbria," was an Irish monk from the monastery of Iona who played a central role in re-establishing Christianity across northern England. Responding to a request from King Oswald of Northumbria in 635 AD, Aidan established his episcopal see and monastery on the tidal island of Lindisfarne, near the royal seat at Bamburgh. Unlike his rigid predecessor whose mission failed, Aidan won over the local population through a pastoral approach rooted in patience, humility, and gentle dialogue. Traveling strictly on foot rather than on horseback, he engaged ordinary people in conversation, distributing any royal gifts he received to the poor or using the funds to ransom enslaved Anglo-Saxons, many of whom he educated and ordained into the priesthood.

In Catholic tradition, Aidan is venerated for his profound apostolic zeal, monastic discipline, and commitment to the study of Sacred Scripture. Though he followed Celtic liturgical traditions—such as the Irish method of calculating Easter—he earned widespread respect across the universal Church, receiving high praise from Saint Bede the Venerable for his holiness and ascetic devotion. Following his death in 651 AD, which inspired a young Saint Cuthbert to pursue a monastic vocation, Aidan's legacy endure as a model of gentle evangelization and compassionate leadership. Today, his feast day is celebrated on August 31, honouring his foundational role in shaping early British church history.

Tuesday 1st
September

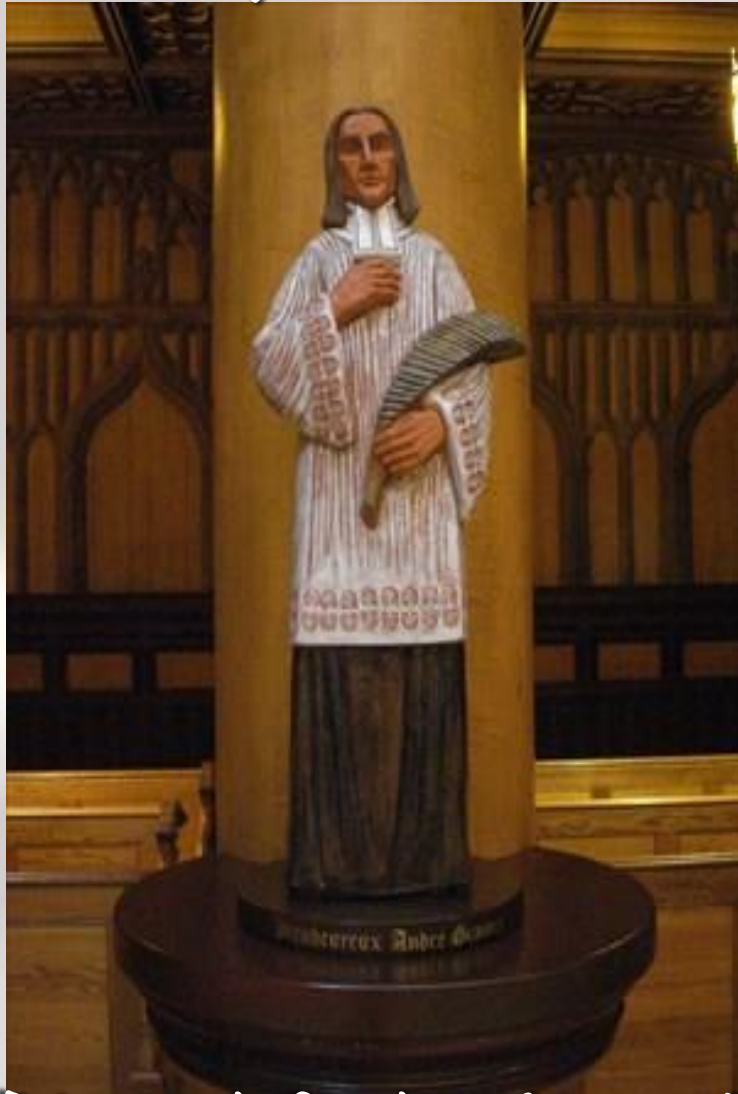


St. Giles

Saint Giles (c. 650–710 AD), known as one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers, was a 7th-century hermit and abbot whose life became one of the most popular medieval devotionals across Europe. Born into a wealthy noble family in Athens, Greece, Giles chose a life of solitude and prayer, eventually traveling to southern France to live as a hermit in the dense forests near Nîmes. According to tradition, he lived in absolute poverty, sustained only by the milk of a red hind (a female deer) that became his companion. When a royal hunting party pursued the deer into Giles's cave, the king shot an arrow into the brush, accidentally striking the saint as he protected the animal. Moved by Giles's holiness and refusal of compensation, the king funded the construction of Saint-Gilles-du-Gard monastery, where Giles reluctantly became the first abbot.

In Catholic tradition, Saint Giles is deeply venerated as a patron saint of beggars, the disabled, spur-of-the-moment penitents, and those suffering from severe depression or fear. His abbey became one of the major pilgrimage destinations in medieval Europe, situated along the vital trade and pilgrimage routes leading to Rome and Santiago de Compostela. Honoured particularly for his intercession on behalf of the vulnerable and his gentle guardianship of God's creatures, his sanctuary grew famous for miraculous healings of both body and mind. Celebrated liturgically on September 1, Saint Giles remains an enduring symbol of quiet asceticism, compassionate intercession, and the spiritual sanctuary found in monastic solitude.

Wednesday 2nd September



André Grasset was born in Montreal on April 3, 1758. His father was French, from Montpellier, and had arrived in Canada in 1749, when appointed secretary of the new governor general of New France. After the Treaty of Paris, on February 10, 1763, Mr Grasset decides to sell his property and to return to France.

André finishes his classical studies, before going on to preparing for priesthood. His bishop recognizes his qualities and piety and appoints him as canon of the Cathedral. Two years later, in 1783, he is ordained priest.

When the French Revolution begins, in 1789, André is 31 years old. On September 2, 1792, together with other 92 priests and 3 bishops he is asked to answer the question: "Have you signed the Constitution civile du clergé?" By answering "no, my conscience forbids me to do so", he is thrown down in the garden where guards, with bayonets, swords and spikes, kill him. The pope Pius XI beatified him, together with the other Martyrs of September, on October 17, 1926. André Grasset is the first Canadian to be beatified.

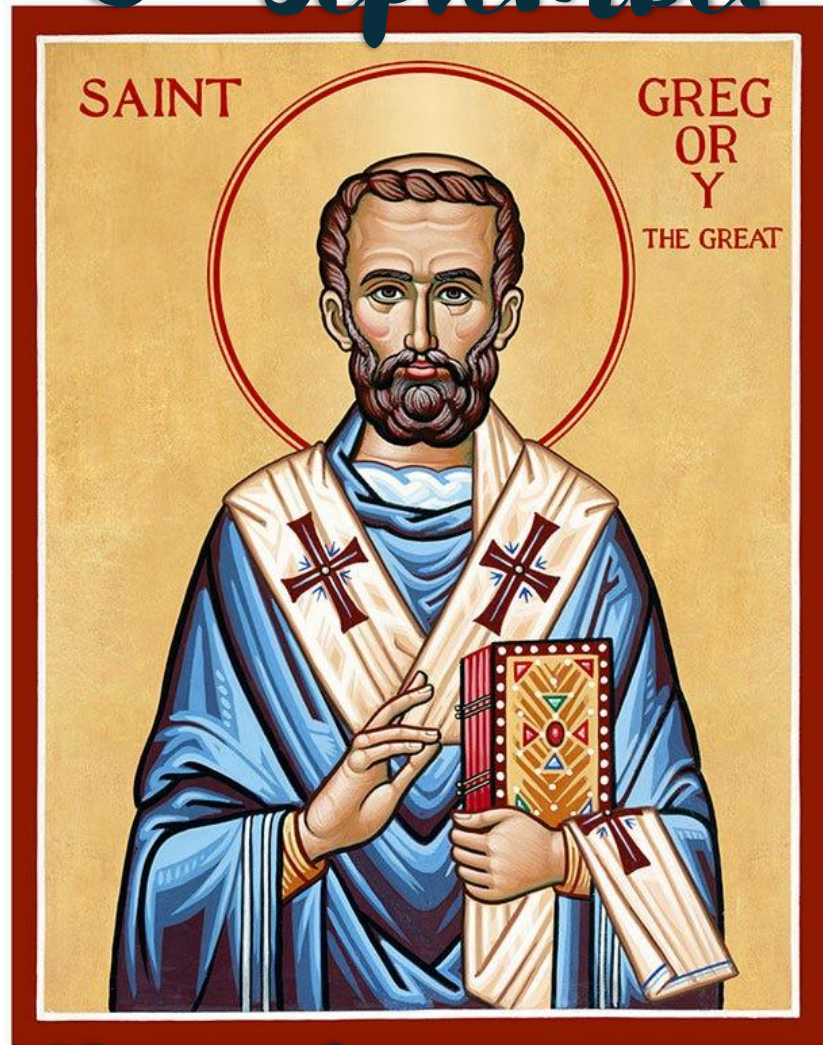
Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Hail Mary, full of grace.

Blessed Andre Grasset, pray for us.

Blessed André Grasset

Thursday 3rd September



Pope St Gregory

Gregory was the prefect of Rome before he was 30. After five years in office he resigned, founded six monasteries on his Sicilian estate, and became a Benedictine monk in his own home at Rome.

Ordained a priest, Gregory became one of the pope's seven deacons, and also served six years in the East as papal representative in Constantinople. He was recalled to become abbot, but at the age of 50 was elected pope by the clergy and people of Rome. Gregory lived in a time of perpetual strife with invading Lombards and difficult relations with the East. When Rome itself was under attack, he interviewed the Lombard king.

His book, *Pastoral Care*, on the duties and qualities of a bishop, was read for centuries after his death. He described bishops mainly as physicians whose main duties were preaching and the enforcement of discipline. In his own down-to-earth preaching, Gregory was skilled at applying the daily Gospel to the needs of his listeners. Called "the Great," Gregory has been given a place with Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome, as one of the four key doctors of the Western Church.

Reflection

Gregory was content to be a monk, but he willingly served the Church in other ways when asked. He sacrificed his own preferences in many ways, especially when he was called to be Bishop of Rome. Once he was called to public service, Gregory gave his considerable energies completely to this work. Gregory's description of bishops as physicians fits in well with Pope Francis' description of the Church as a "field hospital."

Friday 4th September



St Rosalia

Saint Rosalia is also known as La Santuzza (the little saint). She was born to the Sicilian nobility, the daughter of Sinibald, Lord of Roses, and Quisquina.

Rosalia was a descendant of Charlemagne and was raised around the royal Sicilian court. From her youth, Rosalia knew she was called to dedicate her life to God. When grown, she moved to a cave near her parent's home, and lived in it the rest of her life. Tradition says that she was led to the cave by two angels. On the cave wall she wrote "I, Rosalia, daughter of Sinibald, Lord of Roses, and Quisquina, have taken the resolution to live in this cave for the love of my Lord, Jesus Christ." Rosalia remained apart from the world, dedicated to prayer and works of penance for the sake of Jesus, and died alone. In 1625, during a period of plague, she appeared in a vision to a hunter near her cave. Her relics were discovered, brought to Palermo, and paraded through the street. Three days later the plague ended, intercession to Rosalia was credited with saving the city, and she was proclaimed its patroness. The traditional celebration of Rosalia lasted for days, involved fireworks and parades, and her feast day was made a holy day of obligation by Pope Pius XI in 1927.

St. Rosalia, confessor and virgin, we pray to God for our families and friends. Through your powerful prayers, may we obtain health, life, and eternal salvation. O glorious virgin and confessor, St. Rosalia, I promise henceforth to remember and follow your