

Prayers for the Week Ahead

WEEK BEGINNING 26TH OCTOBER

Monday 26th October

St Alfred the Great



St Alfred the Great (c. 849-899) was King of Wessex and later King of the Anglo-Saxons. He is remembered for defending England against Viking invasions and for his deep Christian faith. After becoming king in 871, he led his people through difficult times and worked to bring peace and stability to his kingdom. He also promoted education, founded schools, and translated important books into English so that ordinary people could learn and grow in knowledge. Because of his commitment to learning, justice, and faith, he is honoured as a saint on 26th October.

St Alfred reminds us that being successful is not just about achieving things for ourselves. Although he was a king, he used his position to help others by protecting his people and improving education.

At school, we are all given different talents and abilities. Some people are good at sport, others at music, art, science, or helping friends. St Alfred encourages us to use our gifts wisely and think about how they can make a positive difference to those around us.

Today, take a moment to ask yourself:

- How can I use my talents to help others?
- Am I making the most of my opportunities to learn?
- How can I show kindness and leadership in my school community?

Tuesday 27th October

St Emilina of Boulancourt



Emilina joined the Cistercian Abbey of Boulancourt at Longeville, France when she was still very young. She was noted for her deep prayer life, fasts, and austere, sometimes severe self-imposed penances such as wearing a pointed chain under her habit, walking barefooted throughout the year and fasting from food and liquids three days a week.

Word of her devotion soon spread, and pilgrims came to consult her about holiness and prayer. She had the gift of prophesy, and sometimes prophesied about visitors before they arrived. She never sought honour or glory for herself from her gifts, but dealt with visitors humbly and patiently, always concerned with their conversion and relationship with God

Hail Mary...

Wednesday 28th October St Jude Thaddaeus



Jude was the son of Cleophas, who died a martyr, and Mary who stood at the foot of the Cross, and who annointed Christ's body after death. He was the brother of Saint James the Lesser an nephew of Mary and Joseph so Jude was a blood relative of Jesus Christ, and it he reported to look a lot like him. Jude may have been a fisherman and he was an apostle.

Jude wrote the canonical Epistle named for him and he preached in Syria, Mesopotamia, and Persia with Saint Simon. He was a healer and exorcist and he could exorcise pagan idols, which caused the demons to flee and the statues to crumble.

His patronage of lost or impossible causes traditionally derives from confusion by many early Christians between Jude and the traitor Judas Iscariot as they did not understand the difference between the names. They never prayed for Jude's help, and devotion to him became something of a lost cause.

Hail Mary...

Thursday 29th October

St Gaetano Errico



Gaetano was the second of nine children born to Pasquale, a pasta factory manager, and Marie Marseglia Errico, who worked weaving plush. He was a good child, pious, always ready to help his father at work, or his mother with his younger siblings. He felt a call to the priesthood at age fourteen. He was turned away by the Capuchins and Redemptorists due to his youth. He studied at a diocesan seminary in Naples, Italy from age sixteen, walking the five miles to class each day, and was ordained on 23 September 1815 in Naples.

He was a school teacher for twenty years. He became Parish priest at the church of Saint Cosmas and Damian. Gaetona was known for his devotion to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and ministry to the sick, his self-imposed austerties and penances. He made yearly retreats to the Redemptorist house in Pagani, Italy.

During his retreat in 1818, Saint Alphonsus Maria de Liguori appeared to him in a vision, and told him that God wanted Gaetano to build a new church, and to found a new religious congregation. While Gaetano initially received strong support from the local people, it faded in the face of fund-raising and work, and it wasn't until 9 December 1830 that he dedicated and blessed the church Our Lady of Sorrows at Secondigliano; it has since become one of Italy's most popular pilgrimage sites.

Nearby he built a small house for himself and a lay-brother who took care of the church; this was the beginning of the Missionaries of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. The Missionaries received local approval on 14 March 1836, approval by the Congregation of Bishops on 30 June 1838, royal approval on 13 May 1840, and papal approval by Blessed Pope Pius IX on 7 August 1846. Gaetano served as first Superior General.

His beatification miracle occurred in southern Italy in January 1952 and involved a man with a perforated stomach wall. Just before emergency surgery, his wife slipped a relic of Father Gaetano under his pillow, and together they prayed for his intercession. His health began to improve immediately, and he was soon healed without medical intervention.

Hail Mary....

Friday 30th October

Blessed Benvenuta Bojani



Benvenuta was the youngest of seven daughters. She refused to play any childhood games that smacked of worldliness or vanity; by age twelve she was voluntarily wearing hair shirts and a rope belt. As she grew, the rope began to cut into her and it had to be removed, but was too embedded to be untied. She prayed over it, and it fell to her feet.

She began a Dominican tertiary as a very young woman. She lived her entire life at home, practicing extreme austerities. Confined to her bed for five years with a serious illness, she had to be carried to daily Mass. During a Mass on the eve of the feast of Saint Dominic de Guzman, the saint appeared to her, and later in the liturgy, she was miraculously healed.

Benvenuta was a visionary who had visits from both angels and demons and it was believed she could banish the demons by mentioning the name of Our Lady. However, hard life or not, sickness or not, visions and demonic oppression or not, she was known to be always cheerful and confident in God.

Lord, you gave Blessed Benvenuta the gifts of penance, prayer and humility. Through self-denial and contemplation on heavenly things may we too live in the Spirit and find rest and glory in you, the one God. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever, Amen