



Saints FOR THE LENTEN SEASON 2020

MARCH 3

St. Katharine Drexel, Virgin



Born to a wealthy Philadelphia banking family, her father and step-mother taught Katharine and her two sisters to love God and help those in need. When they died, Katharine inherited a substantial fortune. At age 30, she joined the Sisters of Mercy but three years later founded her own order, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament (1891), to work among African and Native Americans. She used her inheritance to establish schools and missions throughout the South and on Indian reservations. After suffering a severe heart attack (1935), she spent the next 20 years in prayerful retirement. She was canonized in October 2000. May we imitate her devotion to the Eucharist as the source of unity and justice among all races and peoples.

MARCH 4

St. Casimir



Prince Casimir, the second son of King Casimir IV of Poland, as a young man refused to fight against other Christian nations and to marry emperor Frederick III's daughter. Instead, he chose a life of celibacy and asceticism, of devotion to God and generosity towards the sick and poor. He was directly involved in government affairs and was renowned for his sense of justice and his care for the poor. He died of tuberculosis at age 26 and was buried in Vilna, Lithuania. He is the patron saint of Lithuania and one of the patrons of Poland. Like him, may we find ways to live out our Christian convictions in our everyday lives. St. Casimir is not celebrated this year because March 4th falls on a Sunday.

MARCH 7

Sts. Perpetua & Felicity, Martyrs



During a persecution in North Africa, several catechumens were arrested. Among them were Perpetua, a young noblewoman, her husband, infant son and pregnant slave Felicity. They were baptized while under arrest and, despite Perpetua's father's pleading, they refused to renounce the faith and were condemned. Felicity was to be excused because it was illegal to execute a pregnant woman. But three days before the execution, Felicity gave birth prematurely. After being flogged, the Christians were exposed to wild beasts, and then beheaded. The two women were widely honored and their names appear in the list of martyrs in the First Eucharistic Prayer. May we imitate their courage and dedication to God even when afraid.

MARCH 9

St. Frances of Rome, Religious



Born to a wealthy Roman family, at 13 Frances was married and had six children. The death in infancy of two of her children taught her compassion for others who were grieving and less fortunate. She took food to the poor, visited the sick and cared for the needy in their homes. Other women, mainly widows and young women, soon joined her in a life of prayer and caring for others as Benedictine oblates but without vows. When her husband died (1436), Frances joined their community as its superior until her death. Canonized in 1608, she is a patroness of widows. May we imitate her generous spirit and ability to attract others to help those in need, especially grieving mothers.

MARCH 17

St. Patrick, Bishop



Although legends abound about the life and work of Patrick, Apostle of Ireland, he tells his own story in his *Confession*, written near the end of his life. Kidnapped at 16 by pirates and taken to Ireland as a slave, he worked as a shepherd in the mountains. After six years, Patrick escaped and, after many adventures, returned to Britain and eventually became a priest. When a missionary was needed, Pope Celestine I sent Patrick to evangelize the Irish. Although he was constantly at risk from hostile pagans, by the time of his death, a native clergy was in place and Christianity had reached nearly all of Ireland. Like him, may we dedicate ourselves to God's service and see in our adversity an opportunity for witnessing to Christ.

MARCH 18

St. Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop & Doctor of the Church



Nothing is known about his early life in Jerusalem beyond the fact that he was well educated and that his family probably had connections to the Roman Emperor. Cyril became a biblical scholar and a cleric in the church of Jerusalem. After ordination (345), he became Bishop of Jerusalem (350). He defended the Nicene Creed in the controversies against the Arians following the Nicene Council (325). He is most well-known for his 23 Lenten homilies of instruction for those to be baptized that summarize the beliefs and theological traditions of the Jerusalem community. May we learn from him that "As you have entered on a good and most glorious path, run with reverence the race of godliness." St. Cyril is not celebrated this year because March 18th falls on a Sunday.

MARCH 19

St. Joseph, Spouse of Mary



According to the Gospels, Joseph was a skilled craftsman or carpenter (Greek: *techne*) and a descendant of king David. Matthew's infancy narrative focuses on Joseph's dilemma. Though betrothed to Mary, he is dishonored by her pregnancy with a child that he knew was not his. But being a "just" man who followed the Mosaic law, he decided to send her back to her family, which was the proper social and legal thing to do. But he was told in a dream to take Mary as his wife and thus make her child his own, which he did. His feast has been observed on this day since the 10th century. He was declared patron of the universal Church (1870), and is also the principal patron of Canada.

MARCH 23

St. Turibius of Mogrovejo, Bishop



Born in Spain, "Toribio" was a professor of law in Salamanca and chief judge of the Inquisition in Granada. Appointed as a layman to be Archbishop of Lima, Peru (1580), he protested the irregularity but Pope Pius V dispensed him and he was consecrated as bishop. Once in Lima (1581), appalled by how the European conquerors exploited the country and oppressed the natives, he condemned abuses and also founded numerous schools, hospitals and churches. He learned the native languages and was a much-loved teacher and preacher. Canonized in 1726, he is the patron saint of Peru and of the Latin American bishops. May we imitate his zeal for justice for the oppressed and his love and service for the poor in whom he recognized Christ.

APRIL 2

St. Francis of Paola, Hermit



Born in Italy, he spent his 13th year in a Franciscan friary. But he left to become a hermit. After 17 years, his disciples were so numerous and loved that the townspeople built a church and a small monastery for them. Despite their austere rule, the group increased in popularity and became known as the Minim Friars, from the Latin *minimi*, meaning "the least" in God's household. Francis was renowned as a saint, prophet, miracle worker and peacemaker. Summoned to France to heal King Louis XI (1483), instead Francis prepared him for death and remained there until his own death at age 91.

APRIL 4

St. Isidore, Bishop & Doctor of the Church



Isidore was born of a noble family and was the brother of three saints, one of whom he succeeded as Archbishop of Seville. His brother Leander educated Isidore, who became one of the most learned men of his time. He served as Archbishop of Seville for nearly 40 years and was recognized as the greatest teacher in Spain. He presided over councils, was a progressive educator and a prolific writer. He compiled theological treatises on various subjects, an encyclopedia attempting to include all that was known at the time, a dictionary, and a history of the Goths that remains our only sourcebook for much of Visigothic history. He was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1722.