

## FEASTS OF THE WEEK 15TH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

### Monday 11th July – Feast: Saint Benedict, Abbot, one of the designated Patrons of Europe.



Benedict is rightly given the title of Founder and Patriarch of Western Monasticism. He was born c.480 at Nursia in central Italy. Rejecting the corruption of the world around him, Benedict left home so as to embrace a hermit's life of prayer and penance. He took up residence in a cave on the mountain of Subiaco, near Rome. He was tutored by St Romanus, a Solitary who lived nearby. Benedict's reputation for sanctity soon spread and he gathered many disciples. His followers were called upon to adopt the prescriptions of a rule whilst living in community. In 529 Benedict left Subiaco and moved to Monte Cassino where he was to establish the great monastery. The Rule of Saint Benedict would form the foundation for all monastic life across western Europe in the centuries which followed. The spirit of the Rule sponsors the conquest of all selfishness through the exercise of poverty, chastity and obedience. Even beyond the confines of the monastery, the principles of the evangelical virtues should be appropriately embraced by all the faithful. Benedict's own sister, Saint Scholastica, embraced the teachings of her brother and herself presided over a community of nuns near Monte Cassino. Benedict died on March 21st 543 as he stood before the Altar having just received Holy Communion. As we celebrate the feast, there will be a particular thanksgiving at St Mary of the Angels in recognition of its Benedictine heritage. Let us pray for all our Benedictine communities of monks and nuns across the country.

### Tuesday 12th July – Memoria of St John Jones, Priest and Martyr.

John Jones (also known as Buckley) was the son of a Catholic gentleman in the Parish of Clynog Fawr, Caernarvonshire. We know little of his early life. We know that as a young man he entered the Franciscan Friary at Greenwich, but this was suppressed and dissolved in 1559. John moved to the continent and was professed at Pontoise in France. He subsequently returned to England as a Secular Priest of the Mission specifically in order to labour amongst the prisoners in Marshalsea Prison. In this undertaking he was identified as a priest and incarcerated at Wisbeach Castle in 1587. He managed to escape this captivity and journeyed abroad once again, this time to Rome, staying at the Ara Coeli Franciscan House. He joined the Roman Province of the Reformed Franciscan Order of Strict Observance. He longed to return to the English and Welsh Mission and was eventually granted permission to do so, receiving a personal blessing and commendation from Pope Clement VIII. He returned to England either at the end of 1592 or at the beginning of 1593. He settled in London but was soon visiting various locations beyond the city. During this time, his fellow Franciscans elected him as their Provincial Vicar. He was arrested in 1596 having been betrayed by an infamous spy (Topcliffe). John Jones was eventually charged on the 3rd July 1598, along with Robert Barnes and Jane Wiseman who had both been helping him in his missionary labours. John made clear that he was not guilty of any crime against his Queen (Elizabeth I) or his country, however, the Judge Clinch made it clear that to be a Catholic Priest in England itself constituted an act of treason. John declared: "If this be a crime, I must own myself guilty, for I am a priest, and came over into England to gain as many souls as I could for Christ." He had suffered a great deal of torture during his confinement, including regular scourging. He was sentenced to death and was taken to Thomas' Waterings (now the Old Kent Road) on the 12th July 1598 where he was hanged, drawn and quartered. Fr Henry Garnet (himself later martyred and canonised) wrote an account of Jones' execution only three days after the event.



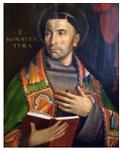
### Thursday 14th July – Memoria of St Camillus de Lellis.



St Camillus was born in 1550 at Bocchianico in the Abruzzi, within what was then the Kingdom of Naples. He grew to become a soldier, joining the Venetian Army to combat the Turks. He was an exceptionally big man for his era, or any era, being some 6 feet 6 inches tall. He led a wayward life, having a hasty temper and becoming an inveterate gambler. Due to gambling debts, Camillus was forced to work as a labourer. In this occupation he found himself working on a building belonging to the Capuchin Franciscans. The Guardian of the Friary engaged Camillus in many conversations, exhorting him to change his ways. Camillus was moved to ask for admittance into the Capuchins and twice advanced through the novitiate, but having to withdraw on both occasions because of a severe and incurable ulcer on one of his legs. He eventually moved to Rome and entered the San Giacomo Hospital for Incurables where he received personal treatment but also rendered significant service to those in greatest need. Camillus attended to the most menial and basic needs of his fellow patients. At the age of thirty-two he initiated his formation for the priesthood. Following his ordination, Camillus went on to lay the foundations for what would become the Congregation of Regular Clerics. This work began in 1585. He faced much opposition but eventually gained approbation from the Holy See. Camillus received much guidance and support from one who would himself become a Canonized Saint, Philip Neri. Members of the Congregation would offer nursing care to those afflicted by the plague, working in homes, hospitals and prisons. Between 1595 and 1601, members of the Congregation served on the battlefields of Hungary and Croatia in the ongoing conflict with the Turks. This provision constituted the first recorded example of a military ambulance unit.

The Congregation went on to establish two large hospitals, one in Rome and the other in Naples. Care for galley-slaves was a particular strand of service, many being saved from their desperate situation. Many members of the Congregation died as a direct result of caring for plague victims. Camillus lived to see his Congregation establish fifteen houses and eight hospitals. Despite suffering increasing illness and affliction, Camillus spared no personal effort in caring for the sick up to the end of his own life. Camillus died on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1614 and was canonized in 1746 by Pope Benedict XIV. Saint Camillus is a Co-Patron of the Sick and Patron of Nurses.

### **Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July – Memoria of St Bonaventure, Bishop and Doctor of the Church.**



Whilst the great Dominican Theologian St Thomas Aquinas is referred to as ‘The Angelic Doctor’, the great Franciscan Theologian is known as ‘The Seraphic Doctor’. St Thomas would be more inclined to the Aristotelian rational method and Bonaventure was more Augustinian in the patterns of his thinking, with a stress on the importance of the affective insight of the mind.

Bonaventure was born at Bagnoreggio, near Orvieto in Tuscany, in 1221. He was the son of a physician whose family belonged to the lower strata of nobility. Originally named John, he became known as Bonaventure as a consequence of an exclamation uttered by St Francis of Assisi. John’s Mother asked Francis to pray for her son’s deliverance from a dangerous illness. When John was seen to be saved, Francis cried out ‘Good Fortune’ – ‘Buona Ventura’.

At the age of twenty-two, Bonaventure entered the Franciscan Order. Following his first vows and in recognition of his intellectual gifts, he was sent to the University of Paris to study under the celebrated Alexander of Hales, an English Franciscan. Following the death of this great teacher, Bonaventure continued his studies under the direction of John of Rochelle. It was in Paris that Bonaventure forged his great friendship with St Thomas Aquinas. These two received their Doctorates together, Bonaventure ceding to Thomas the honour of having the conferral first.

At the age of thirty-six, Bonaventure was chosen as Minister General of the Franciscan Order. It can properly be claimed that Bonaventure was the ‘Second Founder’. The Franciscan Order had grown rapidly but St Francis had not established a clear structure of organisation. It was Bonaventure who restored peace to the Order which had suffered much division following the death of St Francis of Assisi. It was Bonaventure who wrote the first ‘Life of St Francis’. In contradiction to Francis, Bonaventure insisted on the importance of study for members of the Order. In 1265 he was chosen to become Archbishop of York. When the Papal messengers arrived with news of his nomination Bonaventure was washing the dishes at the Friary of Mugello near Florence. He told the messengers to wait until he had finished the task. After receiving the news, Bonaventure begged Pope Clement IV not to be forced to accept the dignity of the office. Although he managed to avoid appointment to York, a later Pope (Gregory X) named Bonaventure as a close adviser, making him one of the six Cardinal Bishops of Rome (Bishop of Albano, one of the six titular suffragan dioceses of Rome).

Bonaventure relinquished his role as Minister General of the Franciscan Order before he died. Bonaventure died on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1274 while undertaking a significant role at the Second Council of Lyons which was striving to effect reunion with the separated churches of the East – Thomas Aquinas had died while making his way to the same Council.

Bonaventure was primarily responsible for effecting an accord with the representatives of Constantinople and he preached at the Solemn Mass which was celebrated to mark the great reconciliation. Bonaventure died before the news arrived that Constantinople repudiated the agreement that had been so hard won. His achievements were many and elevated but his contemporary colleagues were clear in emphasising his personal qualities of gentle courtesy, compassion and accessibility. He was canonized by Pope Sixtus IV in 1482 and declared a Doctor of the Church in 1588.

### **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> July – Memoria of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.**

Today marks the patronal feast of the Order of Carmelites. Their name is derived from Mount Carmel as identified in the Sacred Scriptures. It is claimed that a Chapel was dedicated in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary upon the slopes of Mount Carmel even before her Assumption. Today’s feast also marks the day in 1251 on which the Carmelites claim St Simon Stock, the English Father General of the Carmelites, received a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary whilst he was in Cambridge. Mary is said to have revealed to him the brown ‘scapular’ that was to be worn over the shoulders as a sign of devotion and penance.



Simon Stock went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land when a young man and was greatly impressed by the hermitical Carmelites he encountered there. He embraced their rule and eventually had to return to Europe as a result of Islamic persecutions. He settled back in Aylesford, Kent. The years from 1245 to 1255 were critical for the Order of Carmelites for it was during this period that the Order migrated from its hermitical origins. The Carmelites became Mendicant Friars alongside the Franciscans and Dominicans. Simon Stock died in Bordeaux. His relics were brought from Bordeaux to Aylesford in 1951. Although never formally canonized, in 1564 the Holy See gave approval for the Carmelites to celebrate his feast at their altars which equates to recognition.