

## **June 4: St. Francis Caracciolo (1563-1608)**

A medical crisis that proved to be a false alarm changed the life of this 16th-century saint. At age 22 Francis developed a troublesome skin disease resembling leprosy—one of the most dreaded diseases of the day. He vowed that if he recovered he would devote his life to God. The skin condition cleared up completely. Convinced his recovery was miraculous, Francis kept his promise to God.

He studied for the priesthood in Naples. There he befriended a man who wanted to establish a new religious community that would focus on both the active and the contemplative life. Francis helped draw up Rules for the new Order of the Minor Clerks Regular. Members of the Order agreed among themselves never to seek leadership within the group, though Francis was elected many times to serve in such positions.

Even in his capacity as superior of the Order, he insisted on sharing simple tasks: sweeping rooms, making beds, washing dishes. As a priest Francis spent many hours in the confessional. He also begged in the streets for the poor and gave away most of his possessions to the needy.

Francis died in 1608. He is the patron saint of Naples.

The buzzword in the modern business world is empowerment. In firms everywhere, hands-on management is being phased out and employees are gaining responsibility. Francis came at it from the other direction: In spite of his high position in his order, he put his hand to the most ordinary tasks. We who exercise authority in our families and elsewhere might welcome opportunities to pitch in with tasks that lack status or glamour.

JUNE 2020

## **Prayer from Taizé**

The exchange with God becomes real for us in prayer: by his Holy Spirit, God comes to dwell within us. By his word and by the sacraments, Christ gives himself to us. In return, we can surrender everything to him.

## **Prayers of Intercession for our parish**

- Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will embolden us all to invite people to Alpha, as it starts this week.
- Let us pray that the Holy Spirit will come down on our parish community, as He did on the disciples in Samaria.
- Let us pray that we may be given wisdom and discernment as we try to work out the best path for the Parish, during this time of crisis and afterwards.

## **Some tweets by Pope Francis**

- Let us go out to meet Christ the Lord for he is coming! Do not be afraid of the future or allow yourselves to be intimidated. Rather know that the Lord is waiting for you there in order to prepare and celebrate the banquet of his kingdom.
- The secret to a happy heart is the security we find when we are anchored, rooted in Jesus: in his life, in his words, in his death and resurrection.
- A missionary Church knows that its best message is its readiness to be transformed by the word of life, making service its hallmark.
- .The Gospel is full of questions that attempt to unsettle, to stir and to invite the disciples to set out, to discover the truth that is capable of giving and generating life.

### **June 3: Blessed John XXIII (1881-1963)**

Although few people had as great an impact on the 20th century as Pope John XXIII, he avoided the limelight as much as possible. Indeed, one writer has noted that his “ordinariness” seems one of his most remarkable qualities.

The firstborn son of a farming family in Sotto il Monte, near Bergamo in northern Italy, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was always proud of his down-to-earth roots. In Bergamo’s diocesan seminary, he joined the Secular Franciscan Order. After his ordination in 1904, Angelo returned to Rome for canon law studies. He worked as his bishop’s secretary, Church history teacher in the seminary and as publisher of the diocesan paper.

His service as a stretcher-bearer for the Italian army during World War I gave him a firsthand knowledge of war. In 1921 he was made national director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. In 1925 he became a papal diplomat, serving first in Bulgaria, then in Turkey and finally in France (1944-53). With the help of Germany’s ambassador to Turkey, Archbishop Roncalli helped save an estimated 24,000 Jewish people.

Named a cardinal and appointed patriarch of Venice in 1953, he was finally a residential bishop. A month short of entering his 78th year, he was elected pope, taking the name John, his father’s name and the two patrons of Rome’s cathedral, St. John Lateran. He took his work very seriously but not himself. His wit soon became proverbial, and he began meeting with political and religious leaders from around the world. His most famous encyclicals were *Mother and Teacher* (1961) and *Peace on Earth* (1963). Pope John XXIII enlarged the membership in the College of Cardinals and made it more international. At his address at the opening of the Second Vatican Council, he criticized the “prophets of doom” who “in these modern times see nothing but prevarication and ruin.” Pope John XXIII set a tone for the Council when he said, “The Church has always opposed... errors. Nowadays, however, the Spouse of Christ prefers to make use of the medicine of mercy rather than that of severity.”

He died on June 3, 1963. Pope John Paul II beatified him in 2000.

*At this time of crisis for so many around the world, here are some reflections that may help us to see beyond suffering to the light that Jesus offers to all who believe in him.*

God of desert and darkness,  
who sent your Son, the Beloved,  
to proclaim your dawning kingdom in deed and word;  
sow your word in our barren hearts,  
grant us power to cast out evil  
and to cleave to the way of his passion:  
through him who gave his life as a ransom for many,  
Jesus, the Christ and Lord.  
Amen.

*Roly Reim*

Almighty and everlasting God,  
Behold we approach the sacrament  
of thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.  
As sick, we come to the Physician of Life:  
As unclean, to the Fountain of Mercy:  
As blind, to the light of eternal splendour:  
As needy, to the Lord of Heaven and Earth:  
As naked, to the King of Glory.

*St Thomas Aquinas*

### **A Celtic Prayer**

Be a bright flame before me  
be a guiding star above me,  
be a smooth path below me,  
be a kindly shepherd behind me,  
today, tonight, and for ever.