

November 26: St. Leonard of Port Maurice (1676-1751)

Leonard, called "the great missionary of the 18th century" by St. Alphonsus Liguori, was another Franciscan who tried to go to the foreign missions (China), failed at that and succeeded tremendously in some other work.

Leonard's father was a ship captain whose family lived in Port Maurice on the north-western coast of Italy. At 13, Leonard went to Rome to live with his uncle Agostino and study at the Roman College. Leonard was a good student and was destined for a career in medicine. In 1697, however, he joined the Friars Minor, a decision that his uncle opposed bitterly.

After ordination Leonard contracted tuberculosis and was sent to his hometown to rest or perhaps to die. He made a vow that if he recovered he would dedicate his life to the missions and to the conversion of sinners. He soon was able to begin his 40-year career of preaching retreats, Lenten sermons and parish missions throughout Italy. His missions lasted 15 to 18 days, and he often stayed an additional week to hear confessions. He said: "I believe that in those days the real and greatest fruit of the mission is gathered. As much good is done in these days as during the mission."

As a means of keeping alive the religious fervour awakened in a mission, Leonard promoted the Stations of the Cross, a devotion which had made little progress in Italy up to this time. He also preached regularly on the Holy Name of Jesus.

Since he realized that he needed time simply to pray alone, Leonard regularly made use of the *ritiros* (houses of recollection) that he helped establish throughout Italy.

Leonard was canonized in 1867; in 1923 he was named patron of those who preach parish missions.

NOVEMBER 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 for the fire of the Holy Spirit to burn in the hearts of all parishioners so that they may have the courage and desire for ever greater acts of love and service in the church and in the world.
- Let us pray that the Lord may help each of us to grow in a spirit of gratitude for all He has done for us, so that we are able to say, with Our Lady, "My soul glorifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour."
- Let us pray for all those soon to be received into the church, and all those on the journey in Faith programme, that their faith will bear much fruit in their lives and that they will grow ever closer to Jesus Christ in hope and joy.

Some tweets by Pope Francis

- God does not love you because you behave well. He loves you, plain and simple. His love is unconditional; it does not depend on you.
- Contemplation, which leads us to an attitude of care, is not a question of looking at nature from the outside, as if we were not immersed in it. But we are inside nature, we are part of nature.
- Wealth can force us to build walls. Jesus, instead, invites His disciples to transform goods and riches into relationships, because people are worth more than things, they are more valuable than any riches we possess.

November 12: St. Josaphat (1580?-1623)

In 1964, newspaper photos of Pope Paul VI embracing Athenagoras I, the Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople, marked a significant step toward the healing of a division in Christendom that has spanned more than nine centuries.

In 1595, when today's saint was a boy, the Orthodox bishop of Brest-Litovsk in present-day Belarus and five other bishops representing millions of Ruthenians, sought reunion with Rome. John Kunsevich (Josaphat became his name in religious life) was to dedicate his life and die for the same cause. Born in what is now Ukraine, he went to work in Wilno). He became a Basilian monk, then a priest, and soon was well known as a preacher and as an ascetic.

He became bishop of Vitebsk (now in Belarus) at a relatively young age, and faced a difficult situation. Most monks, fearing interference in liturgy and customs, did not want union with Rome. By synods, catechetical instruction, reform of the clergy and personal example, however, Josaphat was successful in winning the greater part of the Orthodox in that area to the union.

But the next year a dissident hierarchy was set up, and his opposite number spread the accusation that Josaphat had "gone Latin" and that all his people would have to do the same. He was not enthusiastically supported by the Latin bishops of Poland.

Despite warnings, he went to Vitebsk, still a hotbed of trouble. Attempts were made to foment trouble and drive him from the diocese: A priest was sent to shout insults to him from his own courtyard. When Josaphat had him removed and shut up in his house, the opposition rang the town hall bell, and a mob assembled. The priest was released, but members of the mob broke into the bishop's home. He was struck with a halberd, then shot and his body thrown into the river. It was later recovered and is now buried in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. He was the first saint of the Eastern Church to be canonized by Rome.

His death brought a movement toward Catholicism and unity, but the controversy continued, and the dissidents, too, had their martyr.

PSALM 23 - FOR SEAFARERS

The Lord is my pilot,
I shall not drift.
He lights me across the dark waters;
He steers me in deep channels.
He keeps my log.
He guides me by the star of holiness
For his name's sake.
Yes, though I sail through the tempest
Or thunders of life,
I shall fear no danger,
For You are with me;
You prepare a harbour before me
in the homeland of eternity;
You anoint the waves with oil,
My ship rides calmly.
Surely, starlight and sunlight
shall follow me
All the days of my voyaging,
And I shall rest in the port
of the Lord forever.

A Splash of Colour

O God, save me from being
A dull, grey person,
And let the colours of your creation
Pattern my life with your beauty.
Kathy Keay

Here I am, Lord, body, heart and soul. Grant that, with your love, I may be big enough to reach the world, and small enough to be at one with you. *(Mother Teresa of Calcutta)*

Your Son suffered and died for us so that we may have life – unite my sufferings with Him so that I too may help to bring all men to know your love. *(Prayer for those suffering illness)*