

FOREWORD

IN a small country church where I first attended Mass and received First Reconciliation and Holy Communion, I was fascinated by two rather large statues of our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph. One could easily understand that these were images of holy people. As we grew older, we came to realize that Our Lady, St. Joseph, and thousands of others live with God in heaven. In school, we learned the names and lives of some of the other Saints. Often, we were surprised at the different clothing they wore.

As we learned more and more about the Saints, we began to realize that their pictures and statues gave us a good idea of where and when they lived. We had opportunities to hear and read their stories, and, at the same time, come to know and understand that even though the Saints grew up in different countries and cultures, the way they lived and loved God and neighbor was something we could do.

Today, we have many role models like the astronauts, outstanding builders, artists, wholesome athletes, self-sacrificing public servants, learned researchers, professors, doctors, and judges, and, of course, our parents, brothers, and

sisters. As we all know, adults often ask children the age-old question, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" It is a reasonable question, and we appreciate their interest in us. Sometimes it starts us thinking about our personal futures. The beauty is that no matter what we want to be, we can carry out our plans and dreams and still strive to be Saints.

During his years as Pope, our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, has given us over four hundred additional role models in newly canonized Saints. These holy people not only carried out their choices in life but also, at the same time, lived holy and saintly lives.

This volume gives children and adults alike a number of role models. If we want to follow our chosen way of life while imitating the life of a particular Saint, we might want to recite each day the prayer provided for our chosen Saint. Or, we may be attracted to a number of ways other Saints lived holy lives. In any case, it is important to read and recall their good lives, and pray to one or several Saints each day. This book can easily help us follow the Saint or Saints we really want to imitate.

Father Thomas J. Donaghy

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~ Lived a Life of Joyful Suffering ~

SAINT BERNADETTE

Virgin

April 16

ST. MARIE BERNADETTE SOUBIROUS was born to a poor family at Lourdes, France, in 1844. At fourteen years of age, she witnessed eighteen apparitions of Our Blessed Lady at Lourdes. In the first of these, Bernadette was gathering firewood, and a beautiful Lady, dressed in blue and white, stood before her in a cave, or grotto. She smiled at Bernadette and asked her to say the Rosary with her.

Our Lady asked Bernadette to spread important messages to the world. She wanted people to know that they must do penance for their sins and pray. The Blessed Mother also wanted Bernadette to make known the miraculous healing powers of the waters at Lourdes that Our Lady, by her very presence, made possible. When she asked Bernadette to scrape the earth there, the spring started to flow. The Blessed Virgin also revealed herself to Bernadette as the Immaculate Conception.

Large crowds followed Bernadette to the grotto to pray the Rosary with her. Many people traveled there then and have done so since to be healed by the flowing waters.

In 1866 St. Marie Bernadette Soubirous joined the Sisters of Charity at Nevers, taking her perpetual vows in 1878. Her contemporaries admired her humility and the authentic character of her testimony about the appearance of the Blessed Virgin.

Nevertheless she had to endure many severe trials during her religious life and exhibited heroic patience in sickness. She realized that the healing spring was not for her, and was fond of saying: "The Blessed Virgin used me as a broom to remove dust. When the work is finished, the broom is placed behind the door and left there." She died in 1879 at the age of thirty-five and was canonized in 1933 by Pope Pius XI.

***PRAYER:** Lord God, You showered heavenly gifts on St. Bernadette. Help us to imitate her virtues during our earthly life and enjoy eternal happiness with her in heaven.*



~ Patron of Lawyers ~

SAINT THOMAS MORE

Martyr

June 22

ST. THOMAS MORE was born at London in 1478. After a thorough grounding in religion and the classics, he entered Oxford to study law. Then he embarked on a legal career that took him to Parliament. In 1505, he married his beloved Jane Colt who bore him four children, and when she died at a young age he married a widow, Alice Middleton, to be a mother for his young children.

Thomas's house in Chelsea became a center of intellectual life, which graced the presence of such figures as the leading Renaissance thinker Erasmus. Thomas himself became one of the leading lights of his time, honored for his intellect and scholarship. He composed poetry, history, treatises, devotional literature, and Latin translations.

A wit and a reformer, this learned man numbered Bishops and scholars among his friends, and by 1516 wrote his world-famous book *Utopia*. It describes an ideal community living according to the natural law and practicing a natural

religion, with satiric barbs thrown in at abuses current in his day.

Henry VIII appointed him to a succession of high posts, and finally Lord Chancellor in 1529. However, he resigned in 1532, at the height of his career, when Henry persisted in holding his own opinions regarding marriage and the supremacy of the Pope.

The rest of his life was spent in writing, mostly in defense of the Church. In 1534, with his close friend, St. John Fisher, he refused to render allegiance to the King as the Head of the Church of England and was confined to the Tower. Fifteen months later, and nine days after St. John Fisher's execution, he was convicted of treason.

St. Thomas told the court that he could not go against his conscience and wished his judges that "we may yet hereafter in heaven merrily all meet together to everlasting salvation." And on the scaffold he told the crowd of spectators that he was dying as "the King's good servant—but God's first." He was beheaded on July 6, 1535, and canonized in 1935 by Pope Pius XI.

PRAYER: God, You consummated the form of the true Faith in martyrdom. Through the intercession of St. Thomas, grant that we may confirm by the testimony of our lives the Faith we profess with our tongues.