

September 24: Blessed Herman the Cripple (1013-1054)

Hermann was a son of the Count of Altshausen. He was disabled due to a paralytic disease from early childhood. He was born with a cleft palate and cerebral palsy and is said to have had *spina bifida*. As a result, he had great difficulty moving and could hardly speak. At seven, he was placed in a Benedictine monastery by his parents who could no longer look after him.

He grew up in the Abbey of Reichenau, an island on Lake Constance in Germany. He learned from the monks and by developing a keen interest in both theology and the world around him. At twenty, Hermann entered their order as a Benedictine monk, becoming literate in several languages, including Arabic, Greek and Latin.

He wrote about history, mathematics, astronomy, and Christianity. He wrote a treatise on the science of music, several works on mathematics, and astronomical treatises including instructions for the construction of an astrolabe (which caused him to sometimes be credited as its inventor). As a historian, he wrote a detailed chronicle from the birth of Christ to his own present day, ordering them after the reckoning of the Christian era. It was later extended by his pupil Berthold of Reichenau.

He was renowned as a religious poet and musical composer. Among his surviving works are *officia* for St. Afra and St. Wolfgang. When he went blind in later life, he began writing hymns. He was famous enough that he appears to have been credited with compositions by later writers; among the works traditionally attributed to him are the *Salve Regina* ("Hail Queen of Heaven"), *Veni Sancte Spiritus* ("Come Holy Spirit"), and *Alma Redemptoris Mater* ("Nourishing Mother of the Redeemer").

Herman died on Reichenau aged 41. He was beatified in 1863.

SEPTEMBER 2021

Prayer from Taizé

Christ Jesus, you came for us to have life in fullness. You raise us up, you make us free, and in our freedom you remain mysteriously present. So even if what we can do is limited, even if we sense your presence very little, we can welcome life courageously and create something new.

Prayers of Intercession for our parish

- Let us pray for our Alpha graduates and for our new Acorn groups, that the seeds sown bear fruit for our community in bringing yet more people to Christ in hope and joy.
- Let us pray that we may set aside more time to spend before the Blessed Sacrament allowing Jesus to draw us and others deeper into the life He shares with the Father.

Some tweets by Pope Francis

- Loving contemplation, typical of the most intimate prayer, does not need many words. A gaze is enough. It is enough to be convinced that our life is surrounded by an immense and faithful love that nothing can ever separate us from.
- Let us open our hearts to the gift of the Holy Spirit, which makes us feel all the beauty and truth of God's love in the dead and risen Christ. And it spurs us to go out, to witness to this Love that always precedes us with his mercy.
- It is the time for pouring out love upon the world, yet not embracing worldliness. It is more the time for testifying to mercy, than for inculcating rules and regulations. It is the time of the Paraclete! It is the time for freedom of heart, in the Paraclete!
- May the Holy Spirit teach us to view the world with God's eyes, and to treat our brothers and sisters with the gentleness of His heart.

September 18: St. Joseph of Cupertino (1603-1663)

Joseph is most famous for levitating at prayer.

Already as a child, Joseph showed a fondness for prayer. After a short career with the Capuchins, he joined the Conventuals. Following a brief assignment caring for the friary mule, Joseph began his studies for the priesthood. Though studies were very difficult for him, Joseph gained a great deal of knowledge from prayer. He was ordained in 1628.

Joseph's tendency to levitate during prayer was sometimes a cross; some people came to see this much as they might have gone to a circus sideshow. Joseph's gift led him to be humble, patient and obedient, even though at times he was greatly tempted and felt forsaken by God. He fasted and wore iron chains for much of his life.

The friars transferred Joseph several times for his own good and for the good of the rest of the community. He was reported to and investigated by the Inquisition; the examiners exonerated him.

Joseph was canonized in 1767. In the investigation preceding the canonization, 70 incidents of levitation are recorded.

While levitation is an extraordinary sign of holiness, Joseph is also remembered for the ordinary signs he showed. He prayed even in times of inner darkness, and he lived out the Sermon on the Mount. He used his "unique possession" (his free will) to praise God and to serve God's creation. Given this history, it is perhaps not surprising that Joseph is the patron saint of air travellers, pilots and astronauts!

A prayer for patience

Lord, teach me the art of patience while I am well,
and give me the use of it when I am sick.
In that day either lighten my burden or strengthen my back.
Make me,
who so often in my heart have discovered my weakness
presuming on my own strength,
to be strong in my sickness when I rely on thy assistance.

Thomas Fuller

A Housewife's Prayer

Lord in the daily round, the common task,
The little niggling needs that each day brings,
Give me a spirit that will rise, I ask,
Above the tyranny of little things.
Of little things, the petty jars and frets,
The trivial cares that make a housewife's day,
The disappointments and the small upsets
That prick the nerves, and tongue and temper fray.

Give me, O Lord, the vision that can see
Beauty in homely tasks, in work well done,
Give me the courage that will cheerfully
Accept my lot, nor wish an easier one.
Give me perspective, that the little things
May keep their little places, nor overbear
That faith and hope that are the spirit's wings
To rise in Thee, dear Lord; grant this my prayer.

Florence Reddaway

A comforting Prayer of St Columba (521-597):

Almighty Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
eternal ever blessed gracious God;
to me the least of saints,
to me allow that I may keep a door in paradise.

That I may keep even the smallest door,
the furthest, the darkest, coldest door,
the door that is least used, the stiffest door.

If so it be but in Thine house, O God,
if so that I can see Thy glory even afar,
and hear Thy voice O God,
and know that I am with Thee,
Thee O God.