

October 16: St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690)

Margaret Mary was chosen by Christ to arouse the Church to a realization of the love of God symbolized by the heart of Jesus.

Her early years were marked by sickness and a painful home situation. "The heaviest of my crosses was that I could do nothing to lighten the cross my mother was suffering." After considering marriage for some time, Margaret entered the Order of Visitation nuns at the age of 24.

A Visitation nun was "not to be extraordinary except by being ordinary," but the young nun was not to enjoy this anonymity. A fellow novice (shrewdest of critics) termed Margaret humble, simple and frank, but above all kind and patient under sharp criticism and correction. She could not meditate in the formal way expected, though she tried her best to give up her "prayer of simplicity."

On December 21, 1674, three years a nun, she received the first of her revelations. She felt "invested" with the presence of God, though always afraid of deceiving herself in such matters. During the next 13 months he appeared to her at intervals. His human heart was to be the symbol of his divine-human love. By her own love she was to make up for the coldness and ingratitude of the world—by frequent and loving Holy Communion, especially on the first Friday of each month. He also asked that a feast of reparation be instituted.

Like all saints, Margaret had to pay for her gift of holiness. Some of her own sisters were hostile. Theologians who were called in declared her visions delusions and suggested that she eat more heartily. A new confessor, Blessed Claude de la Colombiere, a Jesuit, recognized her genuineness and supported her. Against her great resistance, Christ called her to be a sacrificial victim for the shortcomings of her own sisters, and to make this known.

After serving as novice mistress and assistant superior, she died at the age of 43 while being anointed. "I need nothing but God, and to lose myself in the heart of Jesus."

OCTOBER 2021

A 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

- As we start the Alpha course, we ask God to give the team the gifts they need in order to respond faithfully to His call. We pray for each one, the guests and those still to join; that they may have a powerful encounter with Christ as they journey closer to Him. As a parish community, may we have the courage to herald the call to bring people closer to Christ in hope and joy.
- Let us pray that our Parish Community comes together again to be revitalised, to allow God to re-set our lives and our goals and allow Jesus fully and joyfully into our lives.

Some tweets by Pope Francis

- The Holy Spirit impels us to love not only those who love us and think as we do, but to love everyone, even as Jesus taught us. He enables us to forgive our enemies and the wrongs we have endured. He inspires us to be active and creative in love.
- The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is an immense mystery, which exceeds the capacities of our minds, but that speaks to our heart, because we find it encompassed in that expression of Saint John which summarizes all of Revelation: "God is love".
- Perseverance is the gift of God by which all His other gifts are maintained. Let us pray that, as individuals and as Church, we might persevere in doing good, and not to lose sight of what counts.

October 23: St. John of Capistrano (1386-1456)

It has been said the Christian saints are the world's greatest optimists. Not blind to the existence and consequences of evil, they base their confidence on the power of Christ's redemption. The power of conversion through Christ extends not only to sinful people but also to calamitous events.

Imagine being born in the fourteenth century. One-third of the population and nearly 40 percent of the clergy were wiped out by the bubonic plague. The Western Schism split the Church with two or three claimants to the Holy See at one time. The city-states of Italy were constantly in conflict. No wonder that gloom dominated the spirit of the culture and the times.

John Capistrano was born in 1386. His talents and success were great. When he was 26 he was made governor of Perugia. Imprisoned after a battle against the Malatestas, he resolved to change his way of life completely. Aged 30 he entered the Franciscan novitiate and was ordained a priest four years later.

His preaching attracted great throngs at a time of religious apathy and confusion. He and 12 Franciscan brethren were received in the countries of central Europe as angels of God. They were instrumental in reviving a dying faith and devotion.

The Franciscan Order itself was in turmoil over the interpretation and observance of the Rule of St. Francis. Through John's tireless efforts and his expertise in law, the heretical Fraticelli were suppressed and the "Spirituals" were freed from interference in their stricter observance.

When the Turks captured Constantinople in 1453, he was commissioned to preach a crusade for the defense of Europe. Gaining little response in Bavaria and Austria, he decided to concentrate his efforts in Hungary. He led the army to Belgrade. Under the great General John Junyadi, they gained an overwhelming victory, and the siege of Belgrade was lifted. Worn out by his efforts, Capistrano was an easy prey to the infection bred by the refuse of battle. He died October 23, 1456.

Signs - Piers Plowright (1937–2021)

Some sentences leap out
Of the big black book
Like friends.
'Supposing him to be the gardener'
Did not our hearts burn within us?
Come and have breakfast -
Divine ends.

Dressed in the every day:
Gardener, lover, Cook,
Standing in for God.
The truth not far away
But near as brass:
Fruit, fire, and charcoaled fish
Holding the word.

These signs seem right
To me:
No cloud, no lightning flash, no mystery,
No unknown God to puzzle out.
But something, real, solid,
Near at hand -
And free.

Trust – *Hannah Whittal Smith (1832-1911)*

Remember always that there are two things more easily incompatible than oil and water – trust and worry. Would you call it trust if you should give something into the hands of a friend to attend to for you, and then should spend your nights and days in anxious thought and worry as to whether it should be rightly and successfully done? If you have trusted God in a few things, and He has not failed you, trust Him now for everything, and see if He does not do for you exceeding abundantly, above all that you could ever have asked or even thought.