

November 8: Blessed John Duns Scotus (c. 1266-1308)

A humble man, John Duns Scotus has been one of the most influential Franciscans through the centuries. Born at Duns in the county of Berwick, Scotland, John was descended from a wealthy farming family. In later years he was identified as John Duns Scotus to indicate the land of his birth.

John received the habit of the Friars Minor at Dumfries, where his uncle Elias Duns was superior. After novitiate John studied at Oxford and Paris and was ordained in 1291. More studies in Paris followed until 1297, when he returned to lecture at Oxford and Cambridge. Four years later he returned to Paris to teach and complete the requirements for the doctorate.

In an age when many people adopted whole systems of thought without qualification, John pointed out the richness of the Augustinian-Franciscan tradition, appreciated the wisdom of Aquinas, Aristotle and the Muslim philosophers—and still managed to be an independent thinker. That quality was proven in 1303 when King Philip the Fair tried to enlist the University of Paris on his side in a dispute with Pope Boniface VIII. John Duns Scotus dissented and was given three days to leave France.

In Scotus's time, some philosophers held that free will is an illusion. An ever practical man, Scotus said that if he started beating someone who denied free will, the person would immediately tell him to stop. But if Scotus didn't really have a free will, how could he stop? John had a knack for finding illustrations his students could remember!

After a short stay in Oxford he returned to Paris, where he received the doctorate in 1305. He continued teaching there and in 1307 so ably defended the Immaculate Conception of Mary that the university officially adopted his position. That same year the minister general assigned him to the Franciscan school in Cologne where John died in 1308. He is buried in the Franciscan church near the famous Cologne cathedral.

NOVEMBER 2022

A prayer from Taizé

Christ Jesus, as we stand in silence before you, we let this burning prayer rise up to you: may weapons cease to be fired on the land of Ukraine! Support those who desire peace and who, in Ukraine, Russia, Belarus and elsewhere, are taking initiatives to stop the war.

Prayers of Intercession for our parish

- We pray for all who have taken responsibility to lead others in ministry in our parish: may they be given wisdom and perseverance by the Holy Spirit.
- We pray for all members of our parish, and we pray that more will be guided by the Lord to join us.
- We pray that the love of God will shine out in all that we do and say, so that others may see Christ in us.
- We pray that we will be drawn ever closer in communion with each other and with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Recent tweets by Pope Francis

- How beautiful is a Church that can run through the streets of our world with the desire to bear the joy of the Gospel to everyone. That is what we are called to do: to roll away the stone from the tomb where we have often enclosed the Lord, in order to spread his joy in the world.
- Each of us is called to holiness, to a unique and unrepeatable form of holiness. The Lord has a design of love for everyone. He has a dream for your life. Welcome it! Pursue it joyfully!
- A sound and sustainable ecology, one capable of bringing about change, will not develop unless people change, unless they are encouraged to opt for another style of life, one less greedy and more serene, more respectful and less anxious, more fraternal.

November 23: St. Columban (543?-615)

Columban was the greatest of the Irish missionaries who worked on the European continent. As a young man he was greatly tormented by temptations of the flesh, and sought the advice of a religious woman who had lived a hermit's life for years. He saw in her answer a call to leave the world. He went first to a monk on an island in Lough Erne, then to the great monastic seat of learning at Bangor.

After many years of seclusion and prayer, he travelled to Gaul with 12 fellow missionaries. They won wide respect for the rigour of their discipline, preaching, and their commitment to charity and religious life at a time characterized by clerical slackness and civil strife. Columban established several monasteries in Europe which became centers of religion and culture.

Like all saints, he met opposition. Ultimately he had to appeal to the pope against complaints of Frankish bishops, for vindication of his orthodoxy and approval of Irish customs. He reproved the king for his licentious life, insisting that he marry. Since this threatened the power of the queen mother, Columban was ordered to be deported back to Ireland. His ship ran aground in a storm, and he continued his work in Europe, ultimately arriving in Italy, where he found favour with the king of the Lombards. In his last years he established the famous monastery of Bobbio, where he died. His writings include a treatise on penance and against Arianism, sermons, poetry and his monastic rule.

Writing to the pope about a doctrinal controversy in Lombardy, Columban said: "We Irish, living in the farthest parts of the earth, are followers of St. Peter and St. Paul and of the disciples who wrote down the sacred canon under the Holy Spirit. We accept nothing outside this evangelical and apostolic teaching. I confess I am grieved by the bad repute of the chair of St. Peter in this country.... Though Rome is great and known afar, she is great and honoured with us only because of this chair.... Look after the peace of the Church, stand between your sheep and the wolves."

CALLED TO BECOME – *Edwina Gately*

You are called to become

A perfect creation.
No one is called to become
Who you are called to be.
It does not matter
How short or tall
Or thick-set or slow
You may be.
It does not matter
Whether you sparkle with life
Or are as silent as a still pool,
Whether you sing your song aloud
Or weep alone in darkness.
It does not matter
Whether you feel loved and admired
Or unloved and alone
For you are called to become
A perfect creation
No one's shadow
Should cloud your becoming,
No one's light
Should dispel your spark.
For the Lord delights in you,
Jealously looks upon you
And encourages, with gentle joy,
Every movement of the Spirit
Within you.

When flustered – *Fr. Michael Hollings & Etta Gullick*

Lord, things go wrong, and I am becoming agitated,
and may say and do things that will hurt others.
Please help me to trust in you and keep calm.
Make your peace well up in me and still my agitation,
so I may behave as you would have me do.

