

## **A Selection of Saints**

*(SPECIAL THANKS TO VICKI GARVEY, ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, BARRINGTON, IL, FOR THIS EXPANDED LIST OF SAINTS – ANCIENT AND MODERN)*

### **A Biblical Barrel's Bonanza**

Abraham: 1<sup>st</sup> of the patriarchs who, with Sarah, founded a people; his extraordinary faith in the God of the promises – even when those promises took years to be fulfilled – is still celebrated [Gen 12 - 25]

Andrew: Early disciple who, according to the 4<sup>th</sup> gospel, was the one responsible for getting brother Peter to Jesus [gospels; cf. Jn 1.40]

Anna: Prophet renowned for her life of constant prayer and good works; she recognized in the baby Jesus more than virtually everyone else on the premises [Lk 2]

Daniel: Young Israelite who braved lions and whatever else nasty kings could dish out to defend the God of Israel and the Israelite faith even in foreign lands [bk of Daniel]

David: Most famous of the kings of Israel; though he was a public – and confessed – sinner, his love of and service to God was eventually greater than any of his many sins and misdemeanors [1 Sam – 1 Kg]

Deborah: Judge and prophet who led Israel through a period of unrest; victor and leader in battle whose own general refused to fight without her presence [Jdg 4 - 5]

Dorcas {aka Tabitha}: Devoted to good works and charity; disciple in the Pauline period who was raised from the dead by Peter and whose resurrection was the event that led to conversion for lots of folks in Joppa [Acts 9.36ff]

Elizabeth: “Righteous and blameless woman” who never gave up on the promises of God; mom of John the Baptizer [Lk 1]

Esther: Queen of Persia who saved her people – the Israelites – from certain and painful death by remaining faithful to her God, by prayer and by unmasking the machinations of a liar and scoundrel [bk of Esther]

Gideon: Judge of Israel, he was a leader of rare modesty who led his people during a period of danger [Jdg 6 - 8]

Hulda: Prophet who advised kings; called the ‘mother of the canon’ she is the first on record to have insisted that a text was indeed of God, holy, and worthy of action; contemporary of Jeremiah [2 Kgs 22.8ff]

**Jacob:** 3<sup>rd</sup> of the patriarchs; his trickery was both blessing and curse; frequent conversation partner with God, part of his legacy – with Leah & Rachel – was the 12 tribes of Israel [Gen 25 - 49]

**James:** 3<sup>rd</sup> – with Peter and John – of the disciples arguably closest to Jesus; these 3, for instance, were the only witnesses to the Transfiguration [gospels]

**Jeremiah:** Prophet whose vocation might have had the longest run since he was called to the task when he was a boy and died still active; though he periodically hated the job, he did it and did it well for the sake of his people and for the love of his God [bk of Jer]

**Joanna:** Disciple and wealthy woman who, along with some other women disciples, financed much of Jesus' ministry, and stayed with him to the bitter end [Lk 8.1-3; 24.9]

**John:** One of the early disciples and a member of the 'inner circle'; tradition has him responsible for the 4<sup>th</sup> gospel, 3 epistles and the book of Revelation, though all of that is in dispute [gospels +]

**John the Baptizer:** The forerunner and cousin who 'prepared the way' for the One he knew was greater than he; an icon for Advent, his rather extreme asceticism has made him an unlikely candidate as poster boy for Christmas cards [gospels]

**Joseph:** If ever there was a paragon of self effacement, it is Joe, member and protector of the Holy Family who defers always to Mary and Jesus; given his experience with dreams, it is no wonder that he is named for the great dreamer of the Hebrew Bible [ Matt, Lk; cf Gen 37 - 50]

**Judith:** Pious Israelite who wittingly and winningly saved her people from what had been certain destruction [bk of Judith]

**Leah & Rachel:** Sisters who married and taught Jacob a thing or two about faithfulness; with him, became matriarchs of the whole nation [Gen 29- 34]

**Luke:** Companion to Paul; tradition has him confidant to Mary, physician and author of the 3<sup>rd</sup> gospel [Col 4.14; 2 Tim 4.11 +]

**Lydia:** Disciple of Paul and evangelist in her own right to Thyatira; when not passing the Word, she was a business woman in the purple dye trade [Acts 16.14]

**Mark:** Young companion of Paul; Mark's mother (unnamed) hosted house church/house eucharist in their home; M named in the tradition as author of the earliest gospel [Acts 12 and *passim*; gospels]

Martha & Mary: Sisters, close companions of Jesus; disciples and apostles in their own right, understanding his messianic mission even when others don't [Lk 10.38-42; esp. Jn 11]

Mary, mother of Jesus: *The saint extraordinaire*; young woman who cooperated with God to bring Jesus into the world at great risk to herself [gospels, esp. Matt & Lk]

Mary of Magdala: Apostle to the Apostles; 1<sup>st</sup> witness to Jesus' Resurrection; faithful to him even to the cross – when most abandoned him – and beyond [all gospels]

Matthew: Tax collector turned disciple; tradition has him author the 2<sup>nd</sup> gospel (though it currently stands in 1<sup>st</sup> place in bibles) [gospels]

Michael: Chief of the angels and champion of God against enemies foreign and domestic [Jude 8; Rev 12.7]

Miriam: Prophet who led Israel in a liturgy of thanksgiving at the Red Sea; later presented as a model of faithfulness by Micah; sister of Moses [bk of Exodus; Mic 6.4]

Moses: Most important of Israel's leaders; reluctant at first to lead a disagreeable and contumacious mob, he became the epitome of the good leader, taking seriously his role to hold both the people and God accountable to the promises [Ex - Deut +]

Paul: Most spectacular conversion in the Bible; apostle who more than any of the others is responsible for the spread of infant Christianity, and he did it without ever having met Jesus during the latter's 3 year ministry [Acts, epistles]

Peter: Beloved bumbler, probably the most famous of all the disciples; despite his many mistakes and errors of judgement along the way, remained one of Jesus' closest friends and staunchest allies [gospels; Acts]

Phoebe: Deacon of the church at Cenchræ, disciple; benefactor of Paul and company [Rom 16.1]

Rebekah: Took a husband on faith; challenged God; taught her son Jacob to be the leader God's revelation to her promised he'd be [Gen 24 - 28]

Ruth: Moabite whose faithfulness was a model even for the God of Israel and a scandal to a complacent Israel; great-grandma of David [bk of Ruth]

Samaritan woman: Unnamed character who, as a result of one conversation with Jesus, recognized him as messiah; became the apostle to the Samaritan community, possibly to the horror of other disciples [Jn 4]

Sarah: Waited 25 years for the promise of God to be fulfilled and challenged God to be faithful to the promise; she and Abe become the parents of a nation and a major religion [Gen 12 - 23]

Stephen: 1<sup>st</sup> Christian martyr; one of the earliest of the deacons, he was not content merely to 'set the table,' but got on with preaching the Word, an act that cost him his life [Acts 6]

Susanna: Disciple; wealthy woman who traveled with Jesus during his ministry and contributed to the upkeep of the whole band of disciples [Lk 8.1-3; cf. her namesake in Dan 13]

Syrophoenecian woman: Unnamed character whose persistence taught Jesus something about the nature of his ministry [Mk 7.26ff]

Thomas: Apostle, sometimes maligned, who taught us that there is a place in the life of faith for questions and legitimate doubts [gospels; cf. esp. Jn 20]

Timothy: Young companion of Paul; entrusted by P with the care and nurture of several of the infant church's new missions [Acts 16.1-3; epistles, including 2 that bear his name]

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### **Lanterns of Light in Otherwise 'Dark Ages': 1<sup>st</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

Agnes of Rome [304]: Twelve year old who tried to convert a company of Roman soldiers despite the dangers to herself, she died for her stubborn and faithful adherence to her religious heritage

Anskar of Denmark & Sweden [865]: Everybody else in his day and age was terrified of those folks in the North, but Anskar saw possibilities where others saw peril; it took 300 years from the planting of his seeds, but Scandinavia became Christian mainly due to this plucky fellow

Alcuin of Tours [804]: Went from the land of his birth and education to found school upon school in the land of the Gauls; a man of immense personal piety and learning, he was responsible for much liturgical trend-setting in his day; partly due to his efforts at education, writing and editing, we have, for instance the "Collect for Purity"

Bede of Jarrow [735]: Called to the monastic life as a boy, Bede thrived there, did a fair amount of biblical work, wrote the most complete history of the English church we still have; we owe Bede much of the tradition surrounding the modern feast of the Epiphany

**Brigid/Briget/Bride of Kildare [523]:** Mother of Celtic Christianity (of which Patrick is father), Brigid was a true prodigal, giving away everything not nailed down; she founded and administered perhaps the 1<sup>st</sup> of the double monasteries and is often pictured in bishop's regalia

**Catherine of Alexandria [4<sup>th</sup> c.]:** Defender of the faith and philosopher of deserved repute, she confounded an emperor and 50 world-class philosophers who thought debating 'a mere woman' would be a piece of cake; she won the debate and converted the erstwhile scoffers

**Columba of Iona [597]:** Had it not been for his itchy fingers and penchant for a certain book of psalms, our copyright laws would have a different take; eventually a man of striking austerity, he and his followers are responsible for the flavor of much of continental Christianity

**Cyril & Methodius of Russia [869, 885]:** 'Apostles to the Slavs,' they did more than conversion and modeling of Christian virtue; we owe the 'cyrillic' alphabet to Cyril and the translation of the Bible into Slavonic to his brother Methodius

**David of Wales [544]:** While the Angles, Saxons and Jutes were raging around the countryside of much of Western Europe, wreaking havoc and panic, one of the safe havens was little Wales where Dave's learning, piety and guardianship helped the faith flourish in this small pocket of sanity

**Gregory the Great of Rome [604]:** A pope who defended the city against barbarians, authored one of the earliest texts on pastoral care and guided the church in the growing traditions of liturgy and music [witness gregorian chant]; called by Bede 'the apostle to the English' for his evangelization of the Angles & Saxons

**Hilary of Poitiers [367]:** Late to the faith – he was baptized at 30 – Hil made up for time lost; a scholar, he defended the faith on intellectual fronts against prevailing heresies; bishop who took pastoring seriously, he assiduously cared for his home flock

**Hilda of Whitby [680]:** Noble of birth, Hildy turned to the religious life and founded a double monastery; her gifts and pursuit of learning, holiness, justice and peace set hundreds of others on the right path; administrator and counselor for a major church synod, she favored the Celtic position on all points, but conceded gracefully when defeated by the Roman position

**Ita of Kileedy [570]:** Of royal descent, she became a religious, founded a school, taught the kiddies, some of whom went on to become the foremost and most stellar of the saints of the Celts

**John Chrysostom of Constantinople [407]:** Desert monastic to urban priest to Patriarch of Constantinople, he was one of the greatest preachers the church had yet met [chrysostom means 'golden-mouthed']; keenly tuned to the needs of the people

entrusted to his care, he was also dogged in his belief in the importance of the stature of the laity in the church

Lucy of Italy [4<sup>th</sup> c]: With her mother Eutychia, prodigal giver of gifts to all and sundry; stubborn in her defense of the faith, she was unmoved – literally – by either persuasive words or the efforts of 1,000 men and yokes of oxen

Mary of Egypt [317]: Desert ‘mother’ who renounced her heretofore rather ‘free’ lifestyle and took up the life of extreme asceticism in the wilderness in pursuit and imitation of Jesus who’d battled demons in the same place before her

Monnica/Monica/Monika of Hippo [387]: What’s a mom to do? Her recalcitrant boy (later to become the great saint) Augustine was not eager to embrace mom’s faith, but her persistent good example in deed and word, and her constant prayer eventually nurtured him and a few buds into the faith

Nicholas of Myra [342]: Will the original Santa Claus please stand up? Jesus might have noted that ‘the poor you will always have with you’ [Matt 26.11] but Nick did his best to ensure that there’d be no poor in his diocese and he did it by giving way beyond the call of duty

Patrick of Ireland [461]: A Brit who was captured and enslaved by the Irish when a boy, he escaped, became a Christian and had a vision in which the Irish called him back among them; back he went to evangelize a whole people and give the church at large one of its most enduring rituals: the new paschal fire at the Great Vigil of Easter

Paula of Rome [4<sup>th</sup> c] A Roman noble, widowed, she gave all of her property and finery to the poor, left Rome for the Holy Land where, among other things, she founded a monastery, taught virtue by example and apparently translated part of the Bible into Latin (along with Jerome who often and erroneously gets all of the credit)

Perpetua of Carthage [202]: Refused to worship or even honor foreign gods, insisting that her Christianity be respected, confounding governors and onlookers

Scholastica of Monte Cassino [543]: With her [twin?] brother Benedict, did much to frame ‘religious life’ in its formative stages for both men and women

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### **Consecrating Centuries: 11<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer of Germany [1945]: Christian pacifist and theologian whose faith and courage led him to protest the Nazi regime actively and publicly; his thoughtful and gritty in-the-trenches and in-the-face-of-the-enemy activism taught him and us the true *Cost of Discipleship*

Catherine of Siena [1380]: One of the few women granted the title 'Doctor of the Church,' Catherine earned every stripe; her rigorous and uncompromising devotion to the faith led her to reform the church and to advise princes, kings and popes [none of whom received her criticisms kindly] and her compassion for the ill and for sinners made her sought after as nurse and confessor

Constance of Memphis and her community [1878]: During the Yellow Fever plague and panic, 30,000 citizens fled the city; of those who remained, 200 or so died daily; in the thick of the dead and dying, Constance and brave companions stayed to nurse and comfort the ill, to care for the bereaved and to bury the dead; by the time the disease had run its course, over 90,000 had contracted the fever and of those, more than 5,000 – including Constance and several of her company – had died

Thomas Cranmer of England [1556]: *The* principal figure in the English Reformation, Cranmer is the person chiefly responsible for the shape of the faith, its worship, doctrine and practice, as the primary author of both the 1<sup>st</sup> *Book of Common Prayer* [1549] and its first revision [1552]; for his reforming work and faithfulness to the fledgling faith, he was arrested and eventually executed under Mary I, but he lives on in the words we still use among the pages of the *BCP*, 1979

Jonathan Myrick Daniels [1965]: A seminarian in Boston, Jonathan was so moved by an address by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that he went to Selma, AL to assist the Civil Rights Movement with its voter registration drive; while there he was arrested for his protesting, and having been summarily and inexplicably released from jail, he was shot and killed when he shielded a sixteen year old young woman from a man who was threatening her

Enmegahbowh [1902]: An Odawa [aka Ottawa] Native American from Canada, he is the 1<sup>st</sup> recognized Native American priest in the Episcopal Church; spent most of his life of ministry in Minnesota where, among other things he brought about a lasting peace between the Ojibway and Dakota peoples and his internal understanding of Native tradition enabled him to enculturate Christianity among other native peoples

Elisabeth of Hungary [1231]: Though a royal princess, Lis devoted herself to those in need, especially homeless children and lepers; established a hospice to care for the dying, and in her spare time went fishing, but sold her catch to fund yet other projects for the poor of her country

Francis of Assisi [1226]: Impressed by a sermon on a passage about discipleship, Frank decided to practice what another had preached, so he abandoned a life of comfort, founded a band of brothers – and later with his sister Clare , a band – of sisters who wandered without possessions preaching and helping people, loving everyone as Christ had loved all

Thomas Gallaudet of the United States [1902]: ‘Apostle to the Deaf’, Tom was son of the founder of a School for the Deaf and a mother who could neither hear nor speak; priest of the Church, he married Elizabeth Budd, herself unable to hear or speak, and founded a church – St Ann – that would be a special haven for those with hearing impairments; through his efforts, the first person with complete loss of hearing was ordained, breaking through a long-held prejudice and impediment to ordination of those with any impairment of the senses

George Herbert of England [1633]: Best – and justly – know for his poetry, he was known among several of his contemporaries as the model of a saintly parish priest; the words which survive him in poetry and prose invite us into a keenly honed spirituality, and his careful reading of the ordinary continues to remind us of the divinity of the routine, the nobility of the ‘small stuff’

Richard Hooker of England [1600]: If Cranmer is the principal shaper of the infant Church of England – and he is – Hooker is its chief theologian; his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, based on natural law as determined by the Creator, ranges broadly through scripture, tradition, reason and experience to defend and commend the English Reformation and the theology undergirding *The Book of Common Prayer*

Joan of Arc/Jeanne d’Arc [1431]: The 14 year old farmer’s daughter whose saintly voices, not to mention her own personal valor, led her on an unlikely quest to rout the English and crown a king [Charles VII of France]; she was later betrayed by the very folks she had led to victory; suspected by court, church and army, she was eventually burned at the stake

Absalom Jones of the United States [1818]: Born and raised a slave, educated by the Society of Friends, he bought his own freedom; ostracized by a church that didn’t approve of the color of his skin, Absalom and others founded a church, applied for and were received into the Episcopal Church [Diocese of Pennsylvania] which later ordained him deacon and then priest

Julian of Norwich [ca. 1417]: We don't really know the name of this extraordinary mystic – she gets her titles from the Church of St Julian in the town of Norwich to which her hut was attached – but the counsel she imparted to several during her lifetime lives in the spirituality they lived and handed on, and the legacy in her writings, gleaned from her several visions, and concentrated almost entirely on the impact and meaning of divine love is as fresh and invigorating as ever: 'I can make all things well; I will make all things well; I shall make all things well; and thou canst see for thyself that all manner of things shall be well'

Kamehameha & Emma of Hawaii [1864, 1885]: Though royalty – the king and queen of their then island nation – Kame and Em amazed the citizenry by moving among them to learn first-hand the needs of the populace and to fulfill said needs [by, for instance, raising and contributing funds to establish a hospital for smallpox victims, building schools and inviting the Church of England to found a church presence]; after Kame's death, Em went on for another ten years, doing good works and being a model, as the then Archbishop of Canterbury put it, of 'saintly piety'

Martin Luther King, Jr. of the United States [1968]: Baptist preacher and academician, Martin is best known for his founding and leadership of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and its creed of non-violent confrontation of bigotry, racism and hatred; led by his Lord in what he termed a 'mountain-top experience' where he was promised that he'd never be alone in the struggle, Martin's and his followers' articulation of the discrimination alive and active in the country led eventually to the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, 1965 and 1968

Margaret of Navarre [1549]: Sister of the king of France and a queen herself, Marge was a young woman at the time of the Reformation; life-long Roman Catholic, an intellectual and a humanist, she defended religious liberty, putting herself way out on a long limb, hiding and protecting dissidents, scholars and artists, thus demonstrating a spirit of democratic thought and rights

Margaret of Scotland [1093]: A church reformer as well as Queen of Scotland, she gave the male clergy 'what-for' concerning laxity in worship and piety and liturgy; in her spare time, she built schools, hospitals and orphanages, improved the quality of life of poor Scots, especially those living in the remote outer reaches of the country, restored Columba's Iona and founded Dunfermline Abbey

Catherine McAuley of Dublin [1841]: Heiress – by today's standards certainly a multi-millionaire – she noticed that young girls, sent in from the farms to get city jobs to help the family, were being abused in every form, exploited and cheated, so she used her fortune to build a house to take them in and protect them; one thing led to another and she gathered around her a like-minded band of women and it led to the largest English speaking community of women religious in the world [Okay, technically she was RC, but she was terrific and the founder of my former religious community]

David Pendleton Oakerhater of the United States [1931]: A Cheyenne from Oklahoma, he received instruction in the Christian faith while a prisoner of the US army, went to seminary and was ordained deacon; now ‘God’s warrior,’ David returned to Oklahoma to minister among his people, building and running missions and schools, pastoring and nurturing his flock and leading them to the faith he had found and the One who had renewed his own life: “I come back to my people to tell you to go with me now in this new road, a war that makes all for peace”

Teresa of Avila [1582]: ‘Doctor of the Church’ and reformer of her own [Carmelite] community and of the church [“Be brave and dare act with a holy boldness”], Big Tess, as she is affectionately known, was a mystic of enormous gifts whose spiritual direction was sought and honored by her contemporaries and whose surviving written works, including *The Way of Perfection* and *Interior Castle*, continue to model the spiritual life to contemporary seekers

Sojourner Truth of the United States [1883]: Called ‘Miriam of the Later Exodus,’ Sojourner began life and lived 28 years of it as a slave, fled with the help of the Society of Friends and re-invented herself first as activist for the poor and homeless, particularly abused and homeless women; eventually she broadened her perimeters of care and activism to the causes of abolition and women’s rights in obedience to the call of the God for whom she renamed herself: ‘Sojourner’ because she was called to travel for the causes and ‘Truth’ because, as she said, “The only master I have now is God and His name is Truth”

William Tyndale of England [1536]: Seeing a need for public access to the wealth of the Bible, Will determined to translate the texts from the various ancient languages in which they were available – and in which very few were schooled – into contemporary English, and what a furor that humble offer of service caused; before his enemies – including Henry VIII and Wolsey – finally got him executed, Tyndale had completed the New Testament, Pentateuch, Jonah, Joshua - 2 Chronicles, and portions of this work live on in the *King James Version* of 1611 to vindicate his vision

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