

# PERSONHOOD: MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

*Each one of us has tremendous dignity because each of us is created in the image of God. We are more than a mass of cells reacting to environmental stimuli.*

## SAINTS AND PRAYERS

### *St. Catherine of Bologna (patron saint of artists) Feast day: March 9*

Catherine of Bologna was a Poor Clare and mystical writer, born at Bologna, September 8, 1413 and died there, March 9, 1463. When she was ten years old, her father sent her to the court of the Marquis of Ferrara, Nicolo d'Este, as a companion to the Princess Margarita. Here Catherine pursued the study of literature and the fine arts; and a manuscript illuminated by her which once belonged to Pius IX is at present reckoned among the treasures of Oxford. After the marriage of the Princess Margarita to Roberto Malatesta, Prince of Rimini, Catherine returned home, and, determined to join the little company of devout maidens who were living in community and following the rule of the Third Order of St. Augustine in the neighboring town of Ferrara. Later the community, yielding to the entreaties of Catherine, adopted the Rule of St. Clare, and in 1432 they were clothed with the habit, of the Second Order of St. Francis by the provincial of the Friars Minor.

The increasing number of vocations, however, made it necessary to establish other monasteries of the Poor Clares in Italy, and in pursuance of the Brief of Callistus III, "Ad ea quae in omnipotentis Dei gloriam", convents were founded at Bologna and Cremona. St. Catherine was chosen abbess of the community in her native town, which office she held until her death. The grievous and persistent temptations which in the early days of her religious life had tried her patience, humility, and faith, especially the latter virtue, gave place in later years to the most abundant spiritual consolation, and enjoyment of the heights of contemplation. A large part of St. Catherine's counsels and instructions on the spiritual life are to be found in her "Treatise on the Seven Spiritual Weapons", which contains, besides, an account of the saint's own struggles in the path of perfection, and which she composed with the aid of her confessor shortly before her death. The body of St. Catherine, which remains incorrupt, is preserved in the chapel of the Poor Clares at Bologna. St. Catherine was canonized by Pope Benedict XIII. Her feast is kept on the 9th of March throughout the Order of Friars Minor.

### *St. Vincent de Paul (patron of charitable societies) Feast day: September 27*

St. Vincent was born of poor parents in the village of Pouy in Gascony, France, about 1580. He enjoyed his first schooling under the Franciscan Fathers at Acqs. Such had been his progress in four years that a gentleman chose him as subpreceptor to his children, and he was thus enabled to continue his studies without being a burden to his parents. In 1596, he went to the University of Toulouse for theological studies, and there he was ordained priest in 1600. In 1605, on a voyage by sea from Marseilles to Narbonne, he fell into the hands of African pirates and was carried as a slave to Tunis. His captivity lasted about two years, until Divine Providence enabled him to effect his escape. After a brief visit to Rome he returned to France, where he became preceptor in the family of Emmanuel de Gondy, Count of Goigny, and General of the galleys of France. In 1617, he began to preach missions, and in 1625, he lay the foundations of a congregation which afterward became the Congregation of the Mission or Lazarists, so named on account of the Priory of St. Lazarus, which the Fathers began to occupy in 1633.



It would be impossible to enumerate all the works of this servant of God. Charity was his predominant virtue. It extended to all classes of persons, from forsaken childhood to old age. The Sisters of Charity also owe the foundation of their congregation to St. Vincent. In the midst of the most distracting occupations his soul was always intimately united with God. Though honored by the great ones of the world, he remained deeply rooted in humility. The Apostle of Charity, the immortal Vincent de Paul, breathed his last in Paris at the age of eighty.

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O my Jesus, Thou who art very Love,  
enkindle in my heart that Divine Fire  
which consumes the Saints and transforms them into Thee.  
O Lord our God,  
we offer Thee our hearts  
united in the strongest and most sincere love of brotherhood;  
we pray that Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament  
may be the daily food of our souls and bodies;  
that Jesus may be established as the center of our affections,  
even as He was for Mary and Joseph.  
Finally, O Lord, may sin never disturb our union on earth;  
and may we be eternally united in heaven with Thee  
and Mary and Joseph and with all Thy Saints.  
Amen.