



November 12, 2025

Welcome!

**Please take this time to check in with
the people at your table.**

How was their week/day?

How are they doing?



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **SPY 1 Certificates (Birth and Baptism) due by 12/7**
- **SPY 2 Sponsor and Saint Forms due by 12/7**
- **Parish Mission NEXT WEEK**
 - **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday**
 - **10AM & 6:30 PM**
- **NO ANCHOR next TWO Weeks**
 - **Happy Thanksgiving!**
 - **See you on December 3rd**



SAINTS

Fighters

Faith, Courage, and Reform in a Time of
Division



Let us Pray:

Dear holy saints of God,
we join our prayers of praise to yours this day.
With you, we sing of God's goodness,
rejoice in God's mercy,
and celebrate God's incredible love.
Teach us to live as you lived –
always thinking of others,
always recognizing your weaknesses,
always rejoicing in God's gifts,
always following Jesus.

Blessed are you, happy are you,
all holy saints of God.
Pray for us that we, too,
may someday be among God's holy ones.

Amen

The Church Through the Ages: From Unity to Upheaval



For over 1000 years, the Catholic Church shaped the spiritual, cultural, and political life of Europe. From the rise of the Holy Roman Empire to the building of cathedrals and Universities, faith was the foundation of civilization.

Yet by the Middle ages, the Church faced corruption, division, and worldly entanglements.

Power struggles between Kings and Popes, the Avignon Papacy, the Hundred years war, and the Protestant Reformation all weakened confidence in Church leadership.

In response, **God raised up saints and reformers from within the Church** – men and women who defended the faith, purified her life, and called believers back to holiness.

The story of the Church's struggle, reform, and renewal – and of some of the saints who fought for truth in an age of transformation.



The Church and Empire

Christmas Day, 800 CE - Charlemagne crowned Emperor by Pope Leo III, this was the start of the Holy Roman Empire.

The **Holy Roman Empire (800-1806)** was a vast **confederation of territories** in Central Europe unified under a Christian emperor, crowned by the pope.

Represented the idea that Church and state worked together to uphold **Christendom** – the spiritual and political unity of Europe under God.

It bound faith and governance closely, shaping Europe's identity for centuries and laying the groundwork for later conflicts between spiritual and temporal power.



800 AD- Charlemagne crowned Holy Roman Emperor

1054 AD - Eastern Schism

1075-1122 AD - Investiture Controversy

1095-1291 AD - The Crusades

1163-1345 – Notre Dame Cathedral constructed

1200s AD - Scholasticism Flourishes

- Thinkers like **St. Thomas Aquinas** synthesize faith and reason, Universities grow as centers of learning

1305-1377 AD – Avignon Papacy

- Popes reside in Avignon, France; seen as under French influence.
- **St. Catherine of Siena** (1347–1380) (Doctor of the Church)

1378-1417 AD – Great Western Schism

- Multiple claimants to the papacy divide Europe; moral and political authority of the Church suffers

1337-1453 AD – Hundred Years War - **St Joan of Arc**

- Political chaos in Europe weakens the Church influence and contributes to spiritual disillusionment



The Hundred Years' War (1337-1453)

Began as a dynastic conflict between England and France over claims to the French throne after the death of King Charles IV

Church Divided: The war overlapped with the Avignon Papacy and the Great Western Schism, deepening divisions as popes and clergy aligned with rival kingdoms.

Christian nations fighting each other undermined the Church's vision of a unified Christendom.

France emerged victorious – the English were expelled from French territory.

St. Joan of Arc (1412-1431)

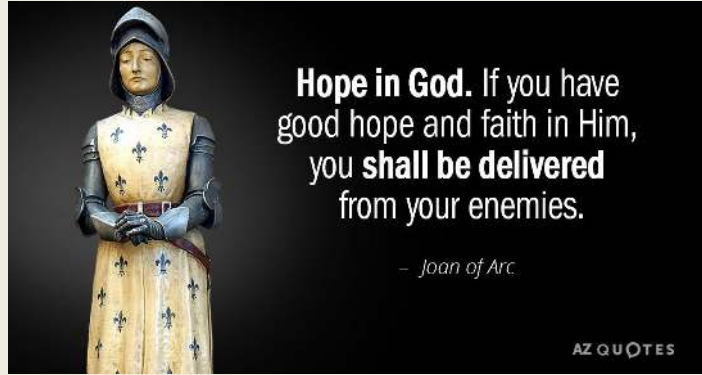


Feast Day: May 30 (day of her Martyrdom)

Patron of: Soldiers and France

Canonized by: Pope Benedict XV (1920)

Her Faith, Courage, and Obedience to God's will foreshadow the spirit of reform and renewal that later saints carried through the reformation era.



- Born in Domrémy, France (1412) during the Hundred Years' War between France and England
- From a young age, Joan experienced visions of **St. Michael, St. Catherine of Alexandria, and St. Margaret of Antioch**, calling her to defend France and support the rightful King, Charles VII.
- At just 17 years old, Joan led French Troops to victory at Orléans (1429) - a turning point in the war.
- She restored hope, unity and faith among the French
- Captured in 1430 and handed over to the English
- Burned at the Stake in Rouen, May 30, 1431 at age 19



- A divine vision revealed to her in a vision a sword with five crosses buried under an altar in a Church that she was to use in battle.
- Impressed King Charles VII with knowledge of his private prayers, convincing him to let her lead the army.
- Enforced strict religious discipline among her soldiers: Regular Confession and Eucharist, banned men who visited brothels
- Siege of Orléans was her defining battle. The English siege was lifted on May 8th 1429 – the turning point in the war.
- Asked to hold the cross higher so she could see it above the flames

The Protestant Reformation



Protestant Reformation - a religious movement in the 1500s lead by Martin Luther, John Calvin and Henry VIII that split the church in western Europe and led to the establishment of many new churches. 8000-30,000!

People grew displeased with the Church's

- Financial Corruption
- Abuse of Power
- Doctrinal Inconsistency

The three Reformations:

- Martin Luther
- The English Reformation
- The Counter-Reformation

The Protestant Reformation: Martin Luther



- Martin Luther's 95 Theses (October 31st, 1517)
- Key Doctrinal Disputes:
 - Sola Fide
 - Salvation by faith alone, not by works or indulgences
 - Sola Scriptura
 - Scripture alone as the ultimate authority in matters of faith
- The Church's response and the division of Western Christianity
- Led to further fracturing of the Church
 - Revolt rather than Reform

Timeline of the Reformation period



1517 — Martin Luther posts the 95 Theses
Traditional date: October 31, 1517

1530 – John Calvin breaks from Catholic Church

1534 — Act of Supremacy / Henry VIII declared
Supreme Head of the Church of England
Key date in the English Reformation

1545–1563 — Council of Trent
Major Catholic reform council; doctrinal
clarifications and reforms implemented over these
years.

The English Reformation:



King Henry VIII (reigned 1509 - 1547)

- Sought annulment from Catherine of Aragon, which the Pope refused to grant

1534 - The Act of Supremacy

- Parliament declared Henry the Supreme head of the Church of England, formally separating the English Church from Papal authority

St. Thomas More



Feast Day: June 22 each year

Patron Saint of Politicians, statesmen, lawyers, and widowers.

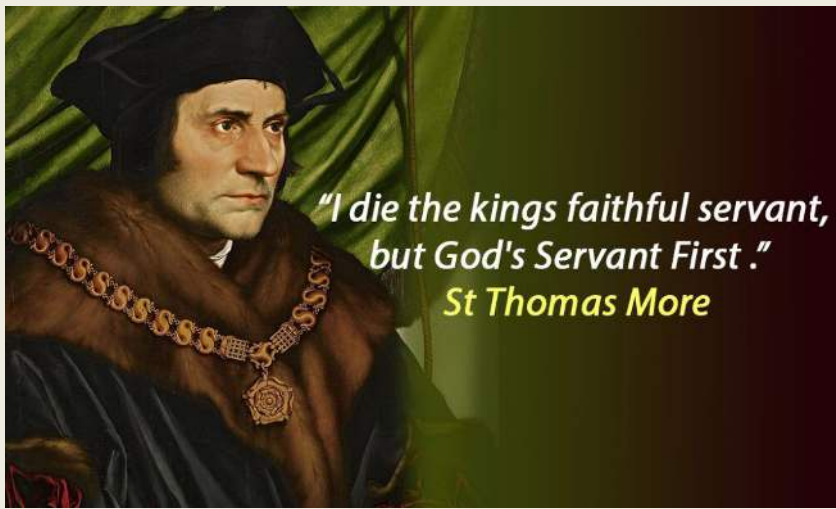
Canonized: May 19th, 1935 by Pope Pius XI

St. Thomas More is a fighter of the English Reformation, embodying conscience, intellect, and courage under pressure.



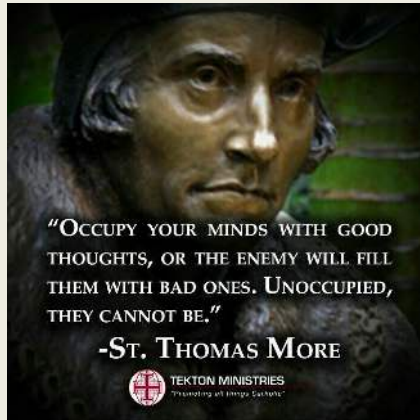
Early Life and Career:

- Born in London in 1478; gifted scholar, lawyer and devoted family man.
- Served as Lord Chancellor of England under King Henry VIII – The highest political office beneath the King.
- Had 4 children Margaret, Elizabeth, Cecily, and John
- When Henry VIII sought to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon and break from Rome, More refused to approve the separation or acknowledge the king's supremacy over the Church.
- Resigned his position in 1532, choosing integrity over influence.



Martyrdom:

- Arrested for refusing the Oath of Supremacy
- Imprisoned in the Tower of London for over a year
- Tried and condemned for treason
- Executed by beheading on July 6th, 1535.



Final words:

"I die the King's good servant, but God's first"

Themes and Legacy:



Conscience over compromise:

More's martyrdom stands as a timeless example of fidelity to truth and conscience, even against immense political pressure.

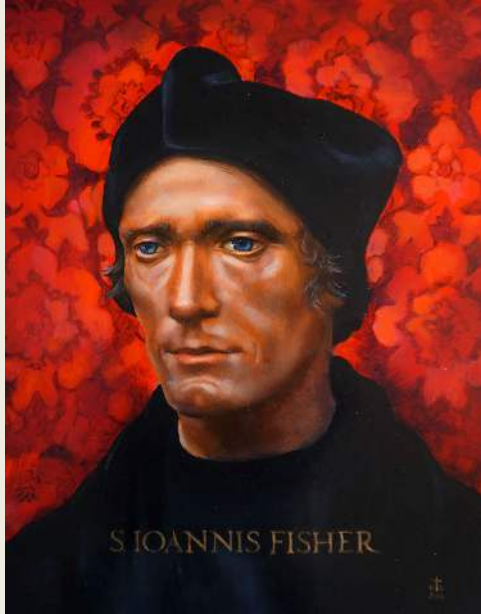
Model for the Laity:

A man of faith *in the world* – as a father and a politician he proved that holiness and integrity belong not only in monasteries but in public life.

Bridge between Faith and Reason:

His writings, especially *Utopia*, explored justice and moral order; his life demonstrated harmony between intellect and faith.

St. John Fisher



Feast Day: June 22nd each year

Patron: of Diocese of Rochester

Bishop of the Diocese of Rochester during the English Reformation.

St. John Fisher stood firm when others fell silent – a bishop who proved that truth is worth more than life itself.

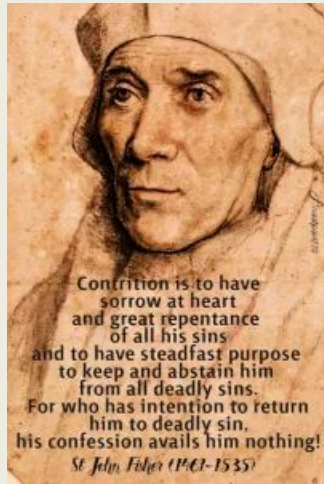
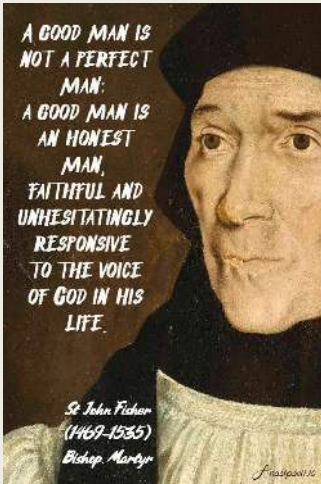


- Born in Beverly, England in 1469.
- Brilliant scholar; earned multiple degrees from the University of Cambridge, where he later served as Chancellor.
- Deeply committed to learning and reform within the Church well before the reformation.
- Served as Bishop of Rochester for over 30 years – the poorest and smallest diocese in England, which he refused to leave for higher office.
- Advisor to Queen Catherine of Aragon during Henry VIII's effort to annul their marriage.
- Publicly opposed the king's separation from Rome and defended the indissolubility of marriage and papal authority.

Catholicreadings.org



Feast Day
June 22

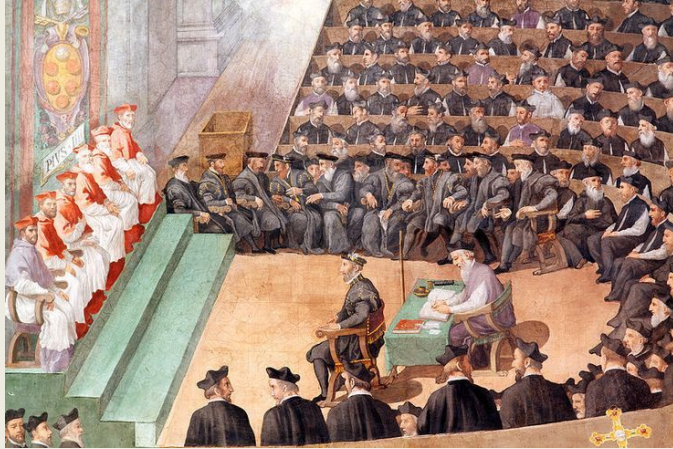


- Imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1534 for rejecting the Act of Supremacy, which declared Henry VIII the head of the church of England.
- Pope Paul III made him a Cardinal while he was still imprisoned – Henry reportedly said he'd send his head to Rome instead of his hat.
- Executed June 22, 1535 – the only English Bishop to die for refusing the king's authority over the Church.
- Canonized in 1935 by Pope Pius XI, alongside St. Thomas More.

Themes and Legacy:

- **Courageous Leadership:**
 - Fisher stood as a solitary bishop faithful to Rome when all others submitted to the king's command.
- **Scholar and Shepherd:**
 - A model of holiness in leadership – blending intellectual strength with pastoral care.
- **Witness to Truth:**
 - His fidelity to conscience and the Church's unity foreshadowed the Church's later renewal during the Counter-Reformation

The Counter-Reformation:



The Council of Trent (1545-1563)

- Catholic Church's response to the Protestant movement- not just a reaction but a *true internal reform* that sought to renew faith, clarify doctrine, and correct abuses

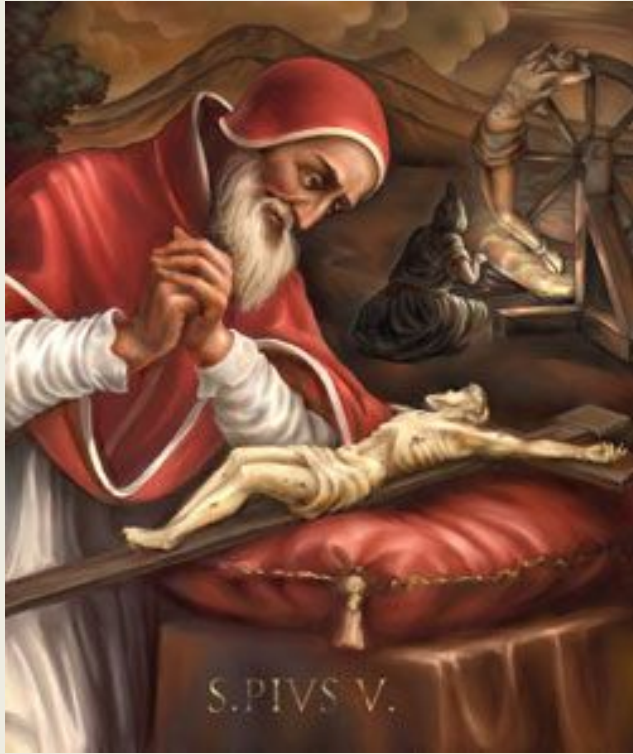
Defining Catholic doctrine and reforming abuses

- Affirmed that Scripture and Tradition both convey divine revelation
- Faith and Good works are both essential to salvation
- Seven Sacraments affirmed as channels of grace
- Enhanced training of clergy through seminaries.
- Regulation of indulgences and Church offices
- Clearer standards for Bishops and Priests

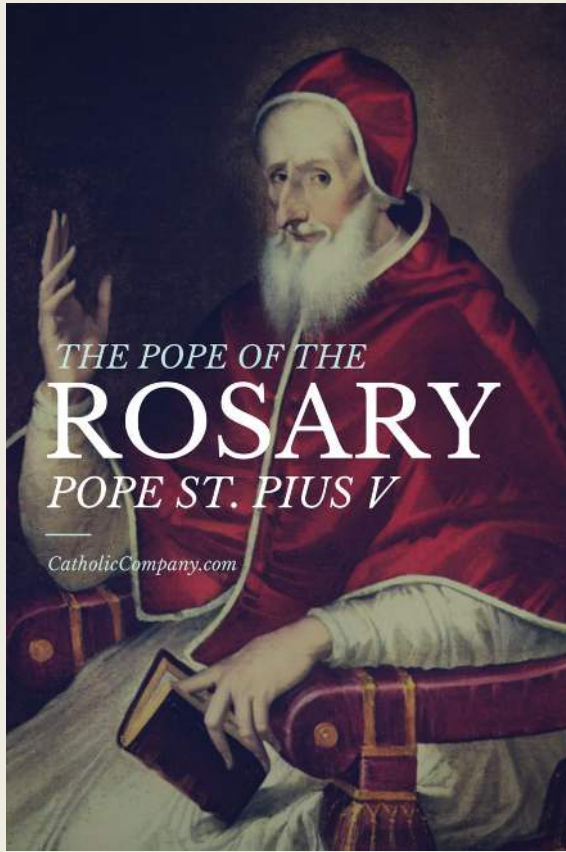
Founding of new religious orders (Jesuits)

The Church Re-centered itself on holiness, education, and evangelization.

Pope St. Pius V (1504-1572)



- Feast Day: April 30th
- Patron Saint of Alessandria, Italy
- Born Antonio Ghislieri in 1504, became pope in 1566
- Key figure in Counter Reformation, implementing reforms from the Council of Trent
- Focused on moral discipline, clerical reform and liturgical standardization
- Excommunicated Queen Elizabeth 1 of England for supporting Protestantism



Reforming the Church from within:

Implemented the Tridentine Mass – standardizing the liturgy across the Catholic world until Vatican II

Enforced catechisms and seminaries to educate priests and laity

Strict moral reform: Combated simony, indulgence abuse, and lax clerical behavior

The Battle of Lepanto (1571): Organized the Holy League, a coalition of Catholic states to defend Christendom against the Ottoman Empire.

Credited the Intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary for the victory. Instituted the Feast of Our Lady of Victory on October 7th. (He encouraged all of Europe to pray the rosary as a spiritual weapon against the Turks)



The saints of the Reformation period served as models of holiness, obedience, courage and faith inspiring the faithful during political and spiritual crisis.

They acted as unifying figures across fragmented Christendom

Their examples reinforced the Church's moral and spiritual authority, even when political and religious divisions threatened unity.

Through courage, reform, and prayer, the saints were the living backbone of the Church, sustaining faith and unity in a fractured medieval world.



Discussion Questions

1. Before today's presentation, how did you view the Protestant Reformation? Has your perspective changed after learning about the Catholic response, and what questions do you still have about this period?
2. Many of the Saints we studied demonstrated obedience to God and his Church, even when it was difficult. How can you cultivate that same trust and obedience in your own life, even when Church teachings challenge you?
3. St. Joan of Arc was only a teen at the time of her martyrdom, and St. Thomas More was a father who risked his family's well being to remain faithful, how can you follow their example by offering your own gifts and responsibilities to God in your life?
4. Church history is full of ordinary people who remained faithful and others who strayed from the church, yet God's Church has endured. How does knowing this affect the way you view your own struggles and failures in living out the



RESOURCES

- **Bishop Barron on Catholicism and the Reformation**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NFyyMxnyGI>
- **Heroes of the Catholic Reformation by Dr. Tim Gray**
 - <https://app.formed.org/app/audios/607937>
- **Characters of the Reformation by Hilaire Belloc**
 - **EBook:**
<https://app.formed.org/app/ebooks/114617>
- **A Man of all seasons (1966) Full Movie | Paul Scofield**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTLldxK20hU>
- **Joan of Arc - (1999) Full Movie in HD**
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tt9IzIzF8gQ>



Final Prayer



Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

Saint Michael the Archangel,
defend us in battle.
Be our protection against the
wickedness and snares of the
devil.

May God rebuke him, we
humbly pray;
and do Thou, O Prince of the
Heavenly Host -
by the Divine Power of God -
cast into hell, satan and all the
evil spirits,
who roam throughout the world
seeking the ruin of souls.
Amen.