

AUGUST 1

ST. ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGUORI

Bishop and Doctor

Founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer

Solemnity

ALPHONSUS MARY DE LIGUORI WAS BORN AT MARIANELLA, a sector of Naples, on September 27, 1696. Firstborn of an aristocratic Neapolitan family, he completed his literary and scientific studies at home. He studied law and achieved his doctorate in civil and ecclesiastical law at the age of sixteen. At the age of twenty he was already known as a brilliant lawyer in the Neapolitan courts.

The turning point in his life came in 1723 with the loss of an important case. This led him to leave the Tribunal and become a priest. He was ordained on December 21, 1726. He immediately began an intense apostolate in the poor sectors of Naples with the urchins and hobos, giving himself specially to the catechesis and moral formation of the most simple people, by way of the Evening Chapels. As a member of the Apostolic Missions, he also dedicated himself to the preaching of missions in the surrounding areas of the Kingdom of Naples.

At a point where his health was seriously endangered by his apostolic labours, he went for a rest to Santa Maria dei Monti in the plateau above Amalfi. There he came in contact with the poor peasants and shepherds who were totally deprived of spiritual care.

This experience gave birth, in the heart of Alphonsus, to the desire to found an institute for the evangelisation of the poor and scattered in the countryside and rural villages. The Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer was born at Scala on November 9, 1732. Alphonsus, along with his first companions, went from village to village, giving all of his human and spiritual gifts for the conversion of sinners. Preaching and prayer formed the heart of his missionary activity. Where he could not reach people with the spoken word, he sought to do so through his writings. His 111 works went through many editions. The most important are: his *Theologia moralis*, *The Great Means of Salvation*, *The Eternal Maxims*, *The Glories of Mary*, and *The Practice of the Love of Jesus Christ*.

In 1762 he was named bishop of Santa Agata dei Goti. As bishop, Alphonsus continued his missionary fervor. He worked especially for the formation of the clergy. In 1775 he left his diocese and withdrew to Pagani, where he died on August 1, 1787, at the age of 91. He was canonized by Gregory XVI on May 26,

1839. On March 23, 1871, Pius IX declared him a Doctor of the Church and on April 26, 1950, Pius XII proclaimed him patron of Confessors and Moral Theologians.

Entrance Antiphon:

The spirit of God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted
(Is 61:1).

The Gloria is sung.

COLLECT

Father, you constantly build up your Church
by the lives of your saints.
Give us the grace to follow Saint Alphonsus
in his loving concern for the salvation of people,
and so come to share his reward in heaven.
Grant this through our Lord Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING

Is 61:1-3

God has anointed me and sent me to preach the good news to the poor

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(Ps 89:1-4,20-21,24,26)

R. Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.

I will sing forever of your love, O Lord;
through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth.
Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever,
that your truth is firmly established as the heavens. R.

With my chosen one I have made a covenant;
I have sworn to David my servant:
I will establish your dynasty forever
and set up your throne through all ages. R.

I have found David my servant
and with my holy oil I anointed him.
My hand shall always be with him
and my arm shall make him strong. R.

My truth and my love shall be with him;
by my name his might shall be exalted.
He will say to me: "You are my father,
my God, the rock who saves me." R.

SECOND READING

2 Timothy 2:1-7

Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

A reading from the Second Letter of Paul to Timothy

Accept the strength, my dear son, that comes from the grace of Christ Jesus. You have heard everything that I teach in public; hand it on to reliable people so that they in turn will be able to teach others.

Put up with your share of difficulties, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. In the army, no soldier gets himself mixed up in civilian life, because he must be at the disposal of the one who enlisted him; or take an athlete - he cannot win any crown unless he has kept all the rules of the contest; and again, it is the working farmer who has the first claim on any crop that is harvested. Think over what I have said, and the Lord will show you how to understand it all.

The Word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

(Jn 15:16)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

I chose you, says the Lord,
to go and bear fruit that will last.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

Mt 9:35 - 10:1

The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few.

A reading of the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus made a tour through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness.

And when he saw the crowds he felt sorry for them because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest.'

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples, and gave them authority over unclean spirits with power to cast them out and to cure all kinds of diseases and sickness.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

God, our Father,
you gave to Saint Alphonsus Mary de Liguori
the grace to celebrate these mysteries,
and through them to offer himself to you as a holy victim
in union with the priesthood of Christ.
Graciously consume our hearts
in the fire of your Holy Spirit.
Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PREFACE

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: And with your spirit.

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right and just.

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For, as on the festival of Saint Alphonsus de Liguori, you bid your Church rejoice, so, too, you strengthen her by the example of his holy life, teach her by his words of preaching, and keep her safe in answer to his prayers.

And so, with the company of Angels and Saints, we sing the hymn of your praise, as without end we acclaim:

Communion Antiphon:

We proclaim Christ crucified,

Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:23-24).

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God,

you made Saint Alphonsus

a faithful minister and apostle of this holy Eucharist.

May all who believe in you receive it often

and give you never-ending praise.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.