

# Raymond of Penyafort

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*Saint Name:* Saint Raymond of Penyafort

*Dates:* 1175 – January 6, 1275

*Location:* Spain

*Feast Day:* January 7



Raymond of Penyafort was born to Aragonian nobility in Vilafranca del Penedes, a small town near Barcelona, Spain around 1175. He was educated at the cathedral school in Barcelona and then the University of Bologna, where he received doctorates in civil and canon law. On his return to Barcelona in 1219, the Bishop appointed him canon, archdeacon and vicar-general. Raymond joined the Spanish Dominicans in 1219 receiving the habit at the age of 47. Raymond served as the confessor for King James I of Aragon who was faithful to the church with one exception – women. Raymond told the king that he must repent his lustful desires or Raymond would leave the island of Majorca (where the king was residing). The king forbade Raymond to leave and threatened any ship's captain who might give Raymond passage. But this did not phase Raymond; according to contemporary accounts, he spread his cappa (black cloak of the Dominicans) over the water and with his walking stick pushed off across the water. Raymond sailed the ~ 160 miles to Barcelona in about six hours. After hearing and witnessing this miracle, King James I renounced his evil ways and thereafter led a chaste and pious life. Raymond remained an advisor to King James I and was often consulted regarding questions of law regarding the practices of the Inquisition in the king's domains. Raymond approved of conjugal visits for those imprisoned so that the spouse should not be exposed to the risk of adultery. In 1229, Raymond was appointed theologian and penitentiary to the Cardinal Archbishop of Sabina and was summoned to Rome in 1230 by Pope Gregory IX, who appointed him chaplain and grand penitentiary. Pope Gregory IX asked Raymond to organize the widely scattered publicized documents of canon law. This collection of canon law is known as the Decretals of Gregory IX and for 700 years Raymond's collection remained a major part of Church law. Canon law was fully codified by 1917. Raymond was 60 years old when he returned to Barcelona and was appointed as the Archbishop of Tarragona, (capital of the Kingdom of Aragon), but he declined. Being free of office, Raymond worked to convert the Moors and Jews to Christianity.

Raymond of Penyafort died 1275 at the age of 100. He is the patron saint of attorneys, barristers, canonists, lawyers, and librarians. He was canonized by Pope Clement VIII April 29, 1601. His Feast Day is January 7.