

Peter Canisius

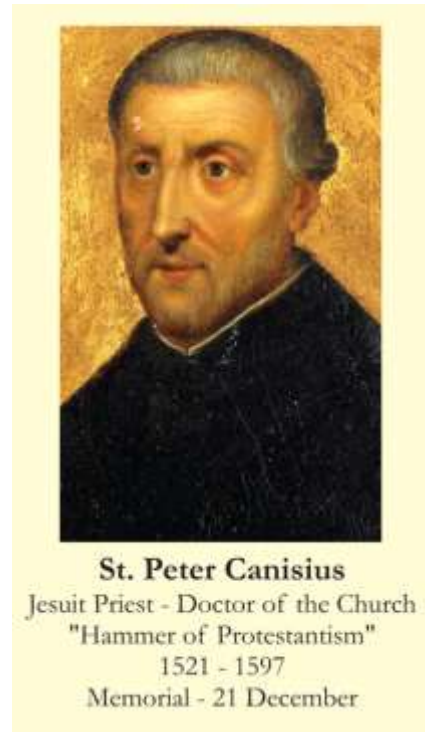
Saint Name: Saint Peter Canisius

Dates: May 8, 1521-December 21, 1597

Location: Netherland

Feast Day: December 21

Peter Canisius was born in Nijmegen, Holland (at that time a part of Germany and previously a part of the Holy Roman Empire), to a wealthy Burgermeister on May 8, 1521. He studied at the University of Cologne where he earned a master's degree at the age of 19. While he was studying at the University he met Peter Faber, one of the founders of the Society of Jesus, and in 1543 Peter Canisius became the first Dutchman to join the society. He was the second great apostle of Germany and became one of the most influential Catholics of his time. Peter believed in the importance in learning and understanding the Catholic faith and was the founder of many universities. By age 43, Peter was a well-known Jesuit who had founded colleges that even the Protestants respected and because of that, the Vatican choose Peter to carry Catholic documents and books through hostile Protestant territories to all the European bishops, a dangerous task in the sixteenth century. During the Reformation years, Peter saw some of his students being swayed from Catholicism to Protestant. His concerns and that of King Ferdinand encouraged Peter to write the catechism of the Catholic faith. The first issue appeared in 1555 and went through two hundred editions before the turn of the century. At the age of 70, Peter suffered a stroke. For the next several years he continued to preach and write with the aid of a secretary until his death, December 21, 1597.



St Peter Canisius was beatified in 1864 by Pope Pius IX and Canonized May 21 1925 by Pope Pius XI. His Feast day is celebrated December 21.