

Lives of Saints

St Alphonsus Marie Liguori

1696 - 1787

Feastday: 1st August



I was born at Marianella near Naples in 1696, the eldest of seven children. My family was an old and noble one, though the branch to which I belonged had become somewhat impoverished. I was bright and quick, and made great progress in all kinds of learning. My recreations were riding and fencing and playing cards. I also played the harpsichord. As a young man, I became very fond of the opera, but I had an ascetic repugnance to theatres. I was not sent to school but was educated by tutors under my father's eye. At the age of sixteen, I took my degree as Doctor of Laws, and about the age of nineteen I practised my profession in the courts. I was extraordinarily able and successful.

About the year 1722, when I was twenty-six years old, I began to go constantly into society, and I started to neglect prayer and the practices of piety which had been an integral part of my life. I was enjoying the attention with which I was everywhere received. In 1723, I lost an important court case, and God used my disappointment to wean my heart from the world. In spite of all opposition I now entered the ecclesiastical state. I was ordained a priest in 1726. In 1732, God called me to found the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, with the object of laboring for the salvation of the most abandoned souls. I labored incessantly at the work of the missions. In 1756, I was appointed Bishop of St. Agatha. Here too, I worked very hard. In 1775, I resigned my office to retire to my convent where I died twelve years later.

My writings on moral, theological, and ascetic matters had great impact and have survived through the years, especially my Moral Theology and my Glories of Mary. I am the patron of confessors, moral theologians, and the lay apostolate.

"God wishes
to use Mary as
a Mediator."

**St Alphonsus Marie
Liguori**

S. D. C.
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