

Lives of Saints

St Frances Xavier Cabrini

1850 – 1917

Feast day: 13th November



“We must pray without tiring, for the salvation of mankind does not depend on material success; nor on sciences that cloud the intellect. Neither does it depend on arms and human industries, but on Jesus alone.”

**St Frances
Xavier Cabrini**

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I was born in Lombardi, Italy in 1850, one of thirteen children. At eighteen, I desired to become a Nun, but my health was too poor and I was refused admission to the religious order which had educated me to be a teacher. I helped my parents until their death, and then worked on a farm with my brothers and sisters. In the meantime, I also began charitable work at the House of Providence Orphanage in Cadogno, Italy. In September 1877, I made my vows there and took the religious habit. When the orphanage closed, in 1880, at the request of my Bishop, I founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart to care for poor children in schools and hospitals.

Since my early childhood in Italy, I had wanted to be a missionary in China but, at the urging of Pope Leo XIII, I went west instead of east, more precisely, to the United States. This was the year 1889. I travelled with six sisters to New York City to work with the thousands of Italian immigrants living there. My deep trust in the loving care of my God gave me the strength to be a valiant woman doing the work of Christ.

I found disappointments and difficulties with every step, but I was determined. In 35 years, I founded 67 institutions (schools, hospitals, and orphanages) dedicated to caring for the poor, the abandoned, the uneducated and the sick. I could see them flourish in the aid of Italian immigrants and children.

I went to meet my Creator on December 22, 1917. At the time, my institute had spread to England, France, Spain, the United States, and South America. In 1946, I became the first American citizen to be canonized when I was elevated to sainthood by Pope Pius XII.