

Lives of Saints

St Joseph Cafasso

1811 - 1860

Feastday: 23rd January



“We are born to love, we live to love, and we will die to love still more.”

St Joseph Cafasso

S.D.C.
S O C I E T A S
D O C T R I N
C H R I S T I A N Æ

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I was born in 1811, in northern Italy, near the city of Turin. I had loving parents who were willing to sacrifice for my education, and I went to Turin to study as a priest. I was ordained a priest in 1833. When I graduated, I became a theology professor, and was Superior of the college in Turin from 1846 to 1860. I taught many young priests over the years.

I became known as the priest who believed in the gentle and loving mercy of God. I was kind. I gave people courage and hope, and I became renowned as a confessor. I was also a Retreat house director, and at one point, the Pastor of Saint Francis Church. I guided many priests, religious and lay people in the spiritual life. I promoted especially, the devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

I met John Bosco in 1827 when he was just twelve. I later helped him begin his great priestly ministry with boys. I also guided him when he started his religious order known as the Salesians. I directed other founders, too.

There were many social needs in my time. One of the most urgent was the prison system. Prison conditions were disgusting. I assisted over sixty men who were sentenced to death. I told them of God's love and mercy, and heard their confessions. All of them repented and died in the peace of Jesus.

I died in 1860. It was St. John Bosco who preached the homily at my funeral. Pope Pius XII proclaimed me a saint in 1947.