

Remembering the Saints - September

In our Sunday prayers there is always a petition remembering the saints who have gone before us to rest with God; we give thanks for their lives as models of faith and hope and love. Many times when we pray these prayers we gratefully remember friends and family members who have died. But it can also be good to call to mind the saints of the past who have showed us different ways of being a faithful disciple; they can encourage us in our own lives of following Jesus. I hope the brief stories of the saints here will be inspirational to us all. If you are interested in learning more about any of the saints mentioned, a Wikipedia or Google search is only a few keystrokes away!

In September the church commemorates:

September 2

Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig, bishop, renewer of the church, died 1872

Grundtvig was, with Søren Kierkegaard, one of the two great Danish theologians of the nineteenth century. As a pastor, he battled the prevalent idea that Christianity was more a philosophy than divine revelation. He wrote over a thousand hymns.

September 9

Peter Claver, priest, missionary to Colombia, died 1654

Born into Spanish nobility, Claver became a Jesuit missionary, and served in present-day Colombia. His ministry was focused on the slaves that arrived there. He gave them food and medicine, learned their dialects, and taught them Christianity.

September 13

John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, died 407

John was a priest in Antioch and an outstanding preacher. His eloquence earned him the nickname "Chrysostom" ("golden mouth"). Appointed bishop of Constantinople, seat of the empire, he criticized corruption in the court. As a result, he was exiled by the empress.

September 14

Holy Cross Day

Helena, mother of Constantine, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and found what may be the actual site of Jesus' crucifixion. Her son built two churches there, and the dedication of one of them gave rise to this celebration of our Lord's victory on the cross.

September 16

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, martyr, died around 258

Cyprian served as a bishop during a time of great persecution of Christians. He insisted on receiving back those who had left the faith under duress. He also provided medical care during a severe epidemic.

September 17**Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, died 1179**

A mystic who was widely influential within the church, Hildegard advised and reproved kings and popes, wrote poems and hymns, and produced treatises in medicine, theology, and natural history. She was also a musician and artist.

September 18**Dag Hammarskjöld, renewer of society, died 1961**

A Swedish diplomat, Hammarskjöld served as the second Secretary General of the United Nations until his death in a plane crash while trying to negotiate peace in present-day Zambia. His journal, published as *Markings*, revealed the depth of his Christian faith.

September 21**Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist**

Matthew (or Levi) was a tax collector in Capernaum for the Roman government. Tax collectors were frequently despised for dishonesty and for assisting the occupiers. Jesus nevertheless showed love for them, and chose Matthew to be a disciple.

September 29**Michael and All Angels**

Michael the archangel, captain of the heavenly hosts, is remembered on this day along with the other angels and archangels. The word “angel” means messenger, and in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, these beings have a fully spiritual nature and no physical body.

September 30**Jerome, translator, teacher, died 420**

Jerome was a biblical scholar and translator, but rather than translating the original Hebrew and Greek scriptures into classical Latin, he worked in the commonly-spoken Latin of the day, creating a version called the Vulgate.