

LITURGY BYTES

More October Saints



One of the most popular saints, **Francis of Assisi**, is celebrated every year on October 4th. Many parishes, either on the day or another closer to the feast, will have a special blessing of their parishioners' pets. He is also the patron saint of Italy. Coming from a rich background, he embraced poverty trying to be Christ-like because he believed in these words of Jesus: "*Announce the kingdom! Possess no gold or silver or copper in your purses, no traveling bag, no sandals, no staff.*" (Luke 9:1-3) Francis was torn between a life devoted entirely to prayer and a life of active preaching of the Gospel. He decided in favor of preaching but always returned to solitude when he could. He wanted to be a missionary but never got to his destination, either in Syria or Africa, because of illness. He lived a short life, dying at the age of 44. Two years before his death, he received the stigmata, the real wounds of Christ in his hands, feet, and side. He recognized creation as another manifestation of the beauty of God. In 1979, he was named patron of ecology. He is also the patron saint of animals, archaeologists, merchants, messengers, and metal workers. On his deathbed, he said these words over and over: "Be praised, O Lord, for our Sister Death." This became the final addition to his *Canticle of the Sun*.



Following the feast of St. Francis, on **October 5th**, the Church gives homage to **St. Maria Faustina**. You might recognize her name as being connected to the annual feast of Divine Mercy celebrated the second Sunday after Easter each year. She was born in Poland and was the third of ten children in her family. She worked as a housekeeper before joining the Sisters of Mercy in 1925. In addition to her sisterly duties, Faustina had a deep interior life. She received revelations from the Lord which were recorded in her diary at the request of Christ and her confessors. At a time when some Catholics had an image of God as a strict judge, Jesus chose to emphasize his mercy and forgiveness for sins acknowledged and confessed. He told Faustina the following: "I do not want to punish aching mankind, but I desire to heal it, pressing it to my merciful heart." Faustina said that the two rays emanating from Christ's heart, represent the blood and water poured out after Jesus' death. She died of tuberculosis in Poland in 1938. She was canonized in the year 2000 by Pope John Paul II. There is a Divine Mercy chaplet which is a popular devotion prayed by many Catholics daily which is credited to Faustina. This devotion resembles devotion to the Sacred Heart which also encourages that God's love and mercy endure forever!

Have a blessed, prayerful, peaceful, and healthy week ahead! ~~ *Michele Hall*