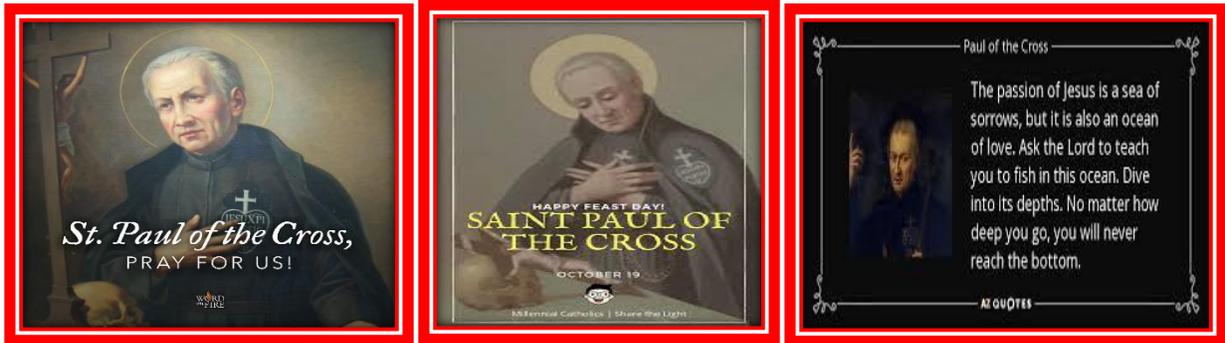


## Daily Saints - 19 October



### Feast of Saint Paul of the Cross

Saint Paul of the Cross, originally named Paolo Francesco Danei, was born on 3 January 1694, in Italy. His parents were Luca and Anna Maria Massari Danei. Paul was the second of sixteen children, six of whom survived infancy; and learned at an early age the reality of death and the uncertainty of life.

Paul received his early education from a priest who kept a school for boys, in Cremolino, Lombardy. He made great progress and at the age of fifteen, he left school and returned to his home at Castellazzo. In his early years, he taught catechism in churches near his home.

Paul experienced a conversion to a life of prayer at the age of 19. Influenced by his reading of the "Treatise on the Love of God" by Saint Francis de Sales and the direction he received from priests of the Capuchin Order it became his lifelong conviction that God is most easily found in the Passion of Christ.

In 1715, Paul left his work helping his father to join a crusade against the Turks who were threatening the Venetian Republic but soon realized that the life of a soldier was not his calling. He returned to help in the family business. On his way home he stopped at Novello, where he helped aging, childless couple until the end of 1716. They offered to make him their heir, but he declined. His uncle, Father Christopher Danei, tried to arrange a marriage, but Paul had no plans to marry. When his uncle died, he kept for himself only the priest's Breviary.

When he was 26 years old, Paul had a series of prayer-experiences which made it clear to him that God was inviting him to form a community that would live an evangelical life and promote the love of God revealed in the Passion of Jesus. In a vision, he saw himself clothed in the habit he and his companions would wear: a long, black tunic on the front of which was a heart surmounted by a white cross, and in the heart was written "Passion of Jesus Christ". On seeing it, he heard these words spoken to him: "This is to show how pure the heart must be that bears the holy name of Jesus graven upon it". The first name Paul received for his community was "the Poor of Jesus"; later they

came to be known as the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, or the Passionists.

St. Paul of the Cross was an extraordinary preacher who possessed many of the mystical gifts including prophecy, bi-location, supernatural perfumes, visions, power over nature, and levitation. Recognized as a Saint during his lifetime, he was usually met by throngs of people who were anxious to obtain a piece of his habit as a relic, to touch him, or to request a cure or a favor. God was with him everywhere he went, and his preaching missions were attended not only by almost all the local townspeople but also those of the surrounding towns so that at huge crowds were present at all his missions.

Once while giving a mission in Orbetello, there was a great commotion in the soldiers' barracks. One of the soldiers, screaming in terror, was being dragged and jostled by an invisible force. St. Paul was brought to the scene and with his crucifix held high, he commanded the spirit to depart. When the devil resisted, he ordered the soldier to make an act of contrition. The Saint then demanded the departure of the devil. No longer able to resist, the evil spirit left. The soldier confessed his sins and thereafter enjoyed the peace of soul and mind.

He was to give a talk at Santaflora. Because of his great popularity, the church was crowded. An even greater number of people gathered in the square outside the church. So that both groups could hear him, the Saint stood at the church door and began to speak. The day was clear and bright, but suddenly the sky became dark and rain began to fall in torrents. The people immediately panicked and ran about in confusion. Seeing in this disturbance the work of the devil, the missionary held his crucifix high and blessed the air. Immediately the sky cleared and the people returned to their places. To the wonderment of all, everyone in the square was completely dry, whereas a moment before they had been thoroughly wet.

During another sermon to the people gathered outdoors, the sky suddenly became dark and threatened a terrible storm. Assuring his listeners that it was the work of the devil to prevent the good they were gaining; Paul blessed the black clouds with his crucifix. To the amazement of the people, the rain fell all around, but not a drop of water touched the Saint or the members of his audience.

The Saint was scheduled to conduct a mission on the Isle of Elba and was in need of a ship to take him there. The Saint approached a sea captain, who indicated that his ship was badly damaged from a storm at sea and had been drawn up on shore. The Saint told the captain not to worry, that through the power of God their journey would be successful. Captain Fanciullo, an eyewitness, tells what took place.

"Wherefore the master, with his sailors and myself, began to haul the vessel towards the sea. The servant of God, too, taking his crucifix from his breast, held it up with his left hand, and with his right helped to haul. In an instant, the vessel was in the sea, and both I and others standing by thought it a miracle to get it into the sea with so few hands. I saw Father Paul embark and set sail for Porto Ferrajo, on the Isle of Elba,

which they happily reached. News reached us that no sooner were they disembarked than the vessel split in two and sank."

Once St. Paul of the Cross was walking beside a farmer who was driving his two young oxen. When the animals became agitated and began giving the farmer some trouble, he blasphemed so badly that the Saint began to admonish him. Becoming even angrier, the farmer leveled a gun at the Saint. Horrified more at the indecent language than he was frightened for his own life, the Saint drew his crucifix from his belt and held it high, saying: "Since you will not respect this crucifix, these oxen will." As if they understood, the oxen fell immediately to their knees before the image of the crucified Saviour. At the sight of the miracle, the farmer threw down his gun, begged pardon of the Saint, and soon went to Confession and reconciled himself to God.

He died on 18 October 1775 in Rome, Italy of natural causes.

### **Quotes of St. Paul of the Cross**

- "The service of God does not require good words and good desires, but efficient workmanship, fervor, and courage"
- "When you are alone in your room, take your crucifix, kiss its five wounds reverently, tell it to
- preach to you a little sermon, and then listen to the words of eternal life that it speaks to your heart; listen to the pleading of the thorns, the nails, the precious Blood. Oh, what an eloquent
- sermon!"
- "The Mass is the most favorable occasion to speak with the eternal Father because then we
- offer Him His only Son as a victim for our salvation. Before celebrating, reflect on the sufferings of your Redeemer, commune peaceably with Him, even in the midst of dryness; carry to the altar the needs of the entire world."
- "How wonderful are the treasures which are enclosed in the divine Eucharist! I exhort you, even though you live in the world, to receive Communion often, but with piety. Holy Communion is the most efficacious means of uniting one's self to God. Always prepare yourself well for this sacred banquet. Have a very pure heart, and watch over your tongue, for it is on the tongue that the Sacred Host is laid. Carry Our Lord home with you after your thanksgiving, and let your heart be a living tabernacle for Jesus. Visit Him often in this interior tabernacle, offering Him your homage, and the sentiments of gratitude with which divine love will inspire you. Preserve carefully the sentiments of love with which you are filled after Communion."
- "when you have committed a fault, humble yourself before God, and cast your fault into the infinite ocean of, charity, and at once it will be effaced from your soul; at the same time all distrust will disappear."
- "Build an oratory within yourself, and there have Jesus on the altar of your heart. Speak to Him often while you are doing your work. Speak to Him of His holy love, of His holy sufferings and of the sorrows of most holy Mary"

- "If during life, we have been kind to the suffering souls in purgatory, God will see that help be not denied us after death."
- "In times of aridity arouse your spirit gently, by acts of love; then rest in the will of God. It is thus that the soul gives the strongest proof of her fidelity to God. Make a bouquet of the sufferings of Jesus, and place it on the bosom of your soul, as I have told you. You can from time to time call them to mind and say sweetly to your Saviour: 'Oh good Jesus, .... Ah, what sufferings! what sorrows! O my God! for what are Thou all wounded! Ah, dear sufferings! dear wounds! I wish to keep you always in my heart'."
- "Suffering is brief; joy will be eternal."