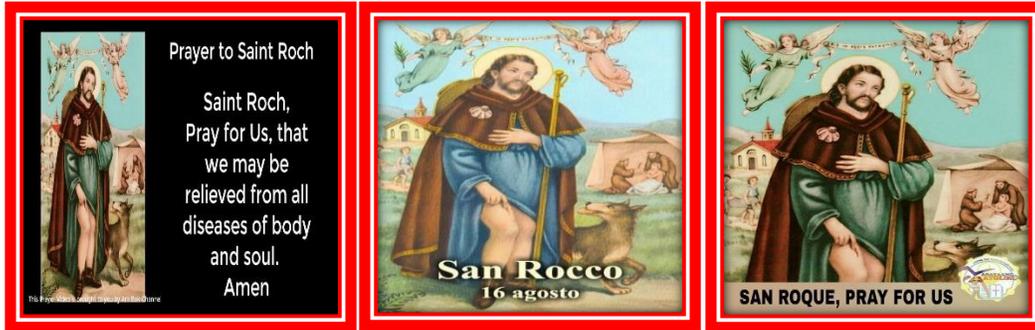


Daily Saints - 16 August



Feast of Saint Roch

He is the patron saint against cholera, against diseased cattle, against epidemics, against knee problems, against plague, against skin diseases and rashes, bachelors, dogs, falsely accused people, invalids, relief from pestilence, surgeons, tile makers.



The St. Roch Novena for Plague, Pestilence, and now Covid-19

Say this prayer:

O Blessed Saint Roch, Patron of the sick, have pity on those who lie upon a bed of suffering. Your power was so great when you were in this world, that by the Sign of the Cross, many were healed of their diseases. Now that you are in Heaven, your power is no less. Offer to God our sighs and tears and obtain for us the physical and spiritual health we seek:

Share your request here ...

This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Roch: Pray for us, that we may be relieved from all diseases of body and soul.
(Repeat three times)

St. Roch was born in 1295 at Montpellier, France, the son of the governor. He was born with an unusual and deep red mark on his chest in the shape of a cross, a sign that the Blessed Virgin Mary had heard and answered his mother's prayers for her barrenness to be healed. As a child, St. Roch was deeply religious, fasting twice a week after the example of his pious mother. His parents died when he was twenty years of age, after which he gave his inheritance to the poor, handed the government of the city over to his uncle, and began a new life as a poor mendicant pilgrim.

Free from all earthly cares, St. Roch joined the Third Order Franciscans, donned the familiar pilgrim's garb (a common practice of popular piety at the time), and set out on a pilgrimage to visit and pray at the holy places in Rome.

When he came upon the town of Acquapendente near Viterbo, he saw that it was badly struck by the black plague which was wreaking havoc across Europe. He sojourned there for a time to care for the sick both in private homes and in the hospitals—at great risk to himself.

Instead of contracting the highly contagious disease, St. Roch cured many people simply by making the Sign of the Cross over them. He continued his charitable work until the disease was halted from spreading further in the village, after which he continued on his pilgrimage. His miraculous healing power evidenced itself in the same manner in every plague-infested town that he passed through on his way to Rome, and in Rome itself.

When his travels brought him to the town of Piacenza, he discovered that he was no longer spared from the deadly disease, having finally contracted it in the leg. Instead of burdening anyone with his sickness, he commended himself to God and awaited his death in a remote and abandoned forest hut. Providentially, a local nobleman's hunting dog found and befriended him, bringing him food daily and licking his wounds. A spring arose nearby to provide St. Roch with fresh water.

The nobleman followed his dog into the woods one day, which led him to discover and aid the holy pilgrim. Slowly St. Roch's health was restored, after which he received divine inspiration that he should return to his native Montpellier.

Once there he found the city at war. He refused to disclose his identity to the soldiers so that he could remain poor and unknown, having renounced his former life as the son of the governor. But his obfuscation aroused suspicion. He was accused of being a spy disguised as a pilgrim. St. Roch did

not defend himself against these charges—wishing to conceal his true (and noble) identity—and instead entrusted himself completely to God's will. He was cast into prison by his own uncle, who failed to recognize his nephew's altered appearance. According to legend, St. Roch was forgotten and abandoned in prison—but God sent angels to minister to him while he was held in captivity. He died there five years later in 1327. After his death, it seems a birthmark in the form of a cross on his chest identified him as the son of the former governor.