

only Son, whom she loved more than herself... And from this follows... we are so much beloved by Mary: because she knows that we have been purchased by the death of Jesus Christ.”

In 1762, he was appointed bishop of Santa Agata dei Goti. There, he accomplished several reforms of the clergy, and promoted preaching to people in simple language. In the late 1770’s, he worked vigorously to defend the Redemptorists against political accusations.

Arthritis had become a painful constant in his life, causing a deformity of his upper chest and back. This is why he is often pictured with his chin touching his chest. Eventually, Bishop de Liguori was confined to a wheelchair, and retired from active ministry. His sight and hearing also suffered, of which some maliciously took advantage. As a result, the Pope removed him from Redemptorist leadership.

As he neared the end of his life, attacks of his scrupulosity troubled him. His brother Redemptorists would console him by praying with him a Marian litany and by reading to him from his own writings, perhaps including this quote: “If, in the hour of death, we have Mary on our side, what fear can we have of all the powers of hell?” Early on July 31, 1787, he whispered, “Give me My Lady.” A picture of Mary was given to him. The next day, at noon, he passed away.

Pope John Paul II said, “St. Alphonsus is a gigantic figure, not only in the history of the Church, but for the whole of humanity as well. [...] He did for modern Catholicism what St. Augustine accomplished in ancient times.” Pope Francis wrote that St. Alphonsus Liguori is a “model for the whole Church”.

One of his many written prayers: Jesus, my savior, help me. I am resolved truly to love you, and to leave all to please you. Help me to free myself from everything that hinders me from belonging wholly to you who have loved me so much. By your prayers, O Mother Mary, which are so powerful with God, obtain for me this grace to belong wholly to God. Amen.

Socials with the Saints

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Sources include publications by the Redemptorists,
Butler’s *Lives of the Saints*, and Vatican.va

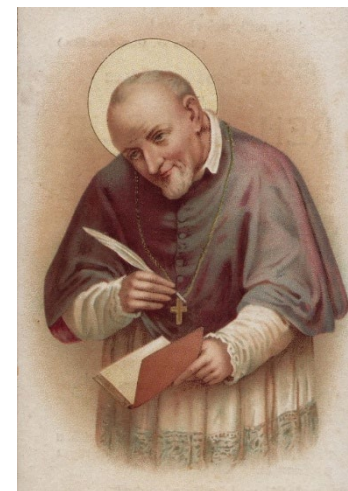
St. Alfonso Maria de Liguori **Alphonsus Liguori** *‘Zealous Doctor of the Church’*

Born: 27 Sept. 1696 at Naples

Died: 1 Aug. 1787 (**Feast Day**)

Canonized 1839

Patron of confessors, theologians, and those who suffer arthritis & scrupulosity



Born to a noble family—his father a captain of the Royal Navy and his grandfather a counsellor at the royal court, his full baptismal name was Alfonso Maria Antonio Giovanni Francesco Consino Domiano Michelangelo Gasparo de Liguori. Alfonso studied painting, music, and architecture in addition to Canon and Civil Law. He surpassed the youngest prescribed age for a doctorate in Canon Law and Civil Law, achieving these honors at only 16 years old. For two years, he observed cases in courtrooms. Finally, at the age of 18, he was able to apply his studies, and his success was undeniable.

Like others of his social status, he enrolled in the Confraternity of Our Lady of Mercy, and with them assisted at the local hospital for ‘incurables;’ feeding them, washing them, and changing bed sheets.

In 1723, Alfonso received the most important case of his life, dealing with about a half-million dollars in today’s currency, between a local nobleman and a wealthy Tuscan landowner. He lost.

Overwhelmed by a sense of injustice, he proceeded with his normal hospital visit, and then stopped into a church named Our Lady of Ransom. There, he felt a spiritual awakening. He left his sword at the altar, and committed his life to God and to Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

Alfonso left the practice of law and pursued the priesthood, to his father’s disappointment. He was ordained in 1726, and threw himself into the service of the poor. Making a private vow never to waste a moment of his life; he organized meetings on street corners, homes, and workshops, which moved into chapels and were called Evening

Chapels. He also preached widely. After a while, he became exhausted. A doctor advised him to take time away.

While on the Amalfi Coast, he encountered poor shepherds and peasants whose lives were so far removed from others that they'd had no formal spiritual care. He resolved to begin a congregation of priests dedicated to serving the most abandoned, poor, and forgotten persons. This he did in 1732 at Scala, naming it the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer – known as the Redemptorists, approved by Pope Benedict XIV in 1749. Gathering others who were inspired by this mission, Fr. Alfonso and company traveled throughout Italy. The Congregation reached to Poland, Austria, and beyond. Today, about 4,500 Redemptorists serve in 82 countries alongside men and women who share their spirituality.



Alfonso's spiritual message focuses on three aspects: Jesus in his crib, Jesus on the Cross, and Jesus in the Eucharist. To these he adds a deep devotion to Jesus' Blessed Mother. All of this he rooted in prayer.

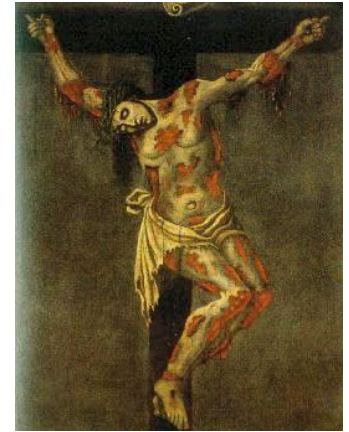
"Having observed," he wrote, "that so many passages of both the Old and New Testaments assert the absolute necessity of prayer, I have made it a rule to introduce into all our missions ... a sermon on prayer; and I say, and repeat, and will keep on saying as long as I live, that our whole salvation depends on prayer ... For if you pray, your salvation will be secure."

An excerpt from his writings on prayer: "Acquire the habit of speaking to God as if you were alone with God. Speak with familiarity and confidence as to your dearest and most loving friend. Speak of your life, your plans, your troubles, your joys, your fears. In return, God will speak to you—not that you will hear audible words in your ears, but words that you will clearly understand in your heart. These may be feelings of peace, hope, interior joy, or sorrow for sin...gentle knockings at the door of your heart."

Lesser known, yet founded before the Redemptorists, are the female Redemptoristines; contemplative nuns founded by Maria Celeste

Crostarosa in 1731 with Fr. Alfonso de Liguori as their spiritual director, modeled around meditation on the life and virtues of Christ. Their Rule of Life was given formal approval by the Vatican in 1750.

Alfonso's gifts as a communicator are found in 111 written works including the *Way of the Cross* often used in parishes—which includes the popular Act of Contrition, and books like *How to Converse with God* and *The Glories of Mary*, as well as in musical compositions and paintings (seen here).



Alfonso composed important works of moral theology including his formal *Theologia Moralis*. To this day, he is considered the greatest moral theologian in the Church's history, called the 'Moral Doctor of the Church,' and is upheld as the patron saint of confessors. Despite this, throughout his lifetime he suffered terribly from scrupulosity, which is now considered a religious expression of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Thus, when advising confessors to treat penitents with compassion, he spoke from his own heart. The Redemptorists continue his work through a ministry called Scrupulous Anonymous.

Alfonso showed support for approval of the liturgical feast of the Sacred Heart by sending an essay and a copy of his Novena to the Sacred Heart to the pope. Zealously, he promoted devotion to Jesus' heart in the Blessed Sacrament. His 'Act of Spiritual Communion' prayer is often used to this day. In his book *Visits to the Blessed Sacrament*, he wrote: "You must also be aware, that in a quarter of an hour's prayer, spent in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, you will perhaps gain more than in all the other spiritual exercises of the day."

On his desk, he kept an image of Our Lady of Good Counsel, based on an Albanian icon. A similar image is beloved by contemporary Redemptorists. He encouraged daily prayer of the Rosary and visits to Marian shrines. The motto for the Redemptorists connects to his spiritual awakening at the shrine of Our Lady of Ransom: *With God there is plentiful redemption*. He wrote: "(Mary) has loved us more than any other created being loves us, since she has given for us her