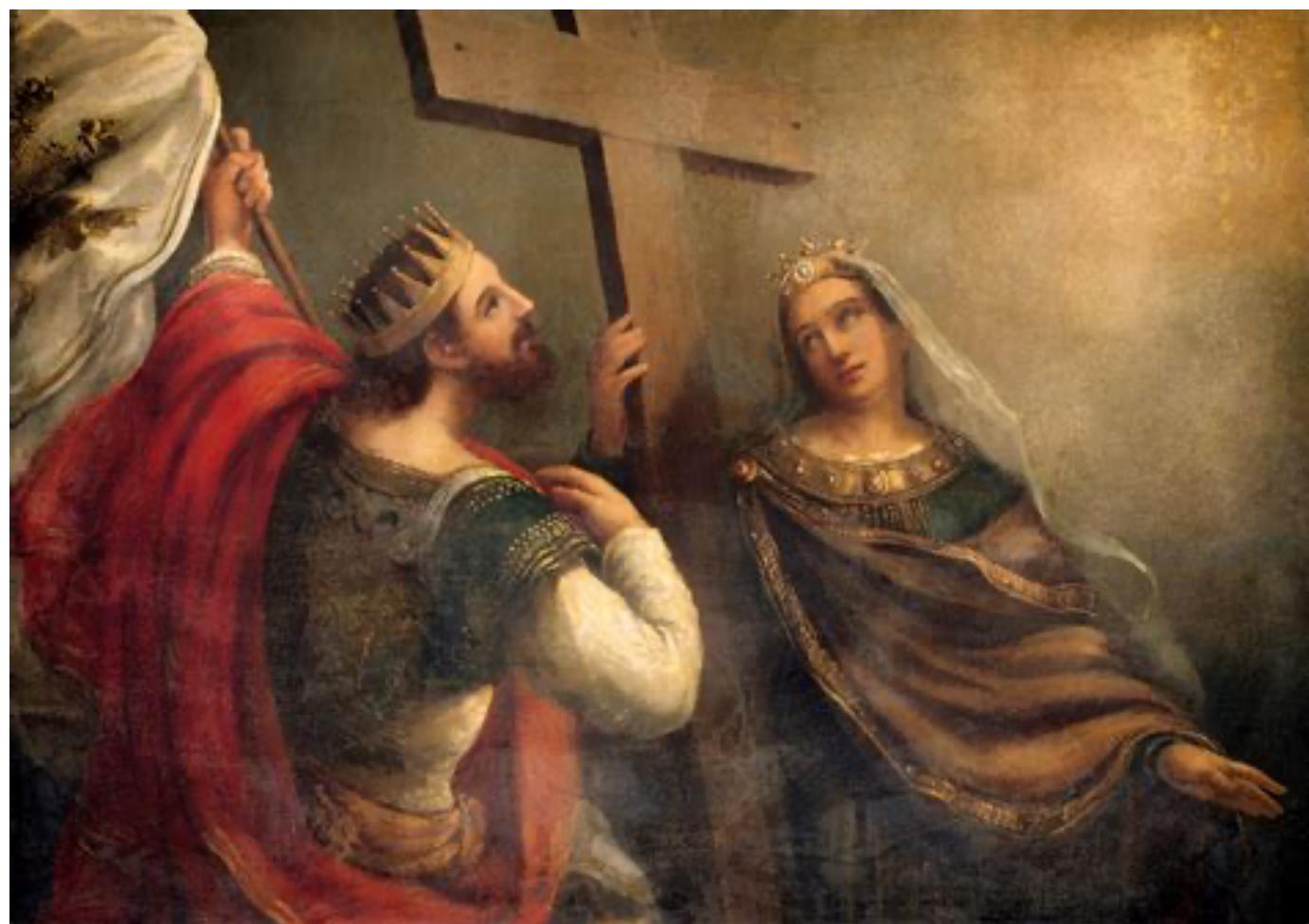


WOOD FROM THE TRUE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST

ST. HELENA, THE MOTHER OF ROMAN EMPEROR CONSTANTINE THE GREAT, WAS BORN AROUND 248 AD IN THE ROMAN PROVINCE OF BITHYNIA (MODERN-DAY TURKEY). SHE CONVERTED TO CATHOLICISM LATER IN LIFE. AFTER CONSTANTINE BECAME SOLE EMPEROR, HE GRANTED HELENA GREAT HONORS AND AUTHORITY. AROUND 326 AD, HELENA UNDERTOOK A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND, MOTIVATED BY DEEP DEVOTION AND A DESIRE TO PROMOTE THE CATHOLIC FAITH. THERE, SHE FUNDED THE CONSTRUCTION OF CHURCHES AND SOUGHT OUT SITES SIGNIFICANT TO THE LIFE OF JESUS, INCLUDING BETHLEHEM AND JERUSALEM.

HER MOST FAMOUS ACHIEVEMENT WAS THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUE CROSS—THE CROSS UPON WHICH JESUS WAS CRUCIFIED. ACCORDING TO TRADITION, HELENA ORDERED EXCAVATIONS NEAR GOLGOTHA AND THE SITE OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE IN JERUSALEM. THERE, THREE CROSSES WERE FOUND, ALONG WITH A TITULUS (A BOARD BEARING CHRIST'S NAME). TO DETERMINE WHICH WAS THE TRUE CROSS, A DYING WOMAN WAS BROUGHT TO TOUCH EACH CROSS, AND UPON CONTACT WITH ONE, SHE WAS MIRACULOUSLY HEALED, THUS REVEALING THE TRUE CROSS. HELENA HAD PART OF IT SENT TO CONSTANTINOPLE AND PART KEPT IN JERUSALEM, ENSHRINED IN THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.



ST. PIUS X

POPE & CONFESSOR

ST. PIUS X (POPE & CONFESSOR) WAS BORN GIUSEPPE MELCHIORRE SARTO ON JUNE 2, 1835, IN RIESE, ITALY. HE WAS ELECTED POPE IN 1903 AND WAS KNOWN FOR HIS REFORMS IN CHURCH MUSIC, CATECHESIS, AND LITURGY, AND FOR ENCOURAGING FREQUENT COMMUNION. A STAUNCH OPPONENT OF MODERNISM, HE EMPHASIZED TRADITIONAL CATHOLIC DOCTRINE. HE DIED ON AUGUST 20, 1914, AND WAS CANONIZED ON MAY 29, 1954, BY POPE PIUS XII.



ST. BONIFACE

BISHOP & MARTYR

ST. BONIFACE WAS BORN AROUND 675 IN THE KINGDOM OF WESSEX, ENGLAND, AS WYNFRID. HE BECAME A BENEDICTINE MONK AND LATER A MISSIONARY BISHOP TO THE GERMANIC PEOPLES, WHERE HE ESTABLISHED CHURCHES AND REFORMED THE FRANKISH CHURCH. HE WAS MARTYRED ON JUNE 5, 754, IN DOKKUM (MODERN-DAY NETHERLANDS) WHILE EVANGELIZING. HE WAS CANONIZED SHORTLY AFTER HIS DEATH BY POPULAR ACCLAIM AND PAPAL RECOGNITION.



ST. VINCENT STRAMBI

BISHOP & CONFESSOR

ST. VINCENT STRAMBI (BISHOP & CONFESSOR) WAS BORN ON JANUARY 1, 1745, IN CIVITAVECCHIA, ITALY. HE JOINED THE PASSIONIST ORDER AND BECAME THE BISHOP OF MACERATA AND TOLENTINO, AND WAS KNOWN FOR HIS PASTORAL ZEAL AND PREACHING. AFTER NAPOLEON'S EXILE, HE SERVED AS SPIRITUAL ADVISOR TO POPE LEO XII. HE DIED ON JANUARY 1, 1824, AND WAS CANONIZED ON JUNE 11, 1950, BY POPE PIUS XII.



ST. PHILLIP NERI

PRIEST & CONFESSOR

ST. PHILIP NERI WAS BORN ON JULY 21, 1515, IN FLORENCE, ITALY. KNOWN AS THE "APOSTLE OF ROME," HE FOUNDED THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY AND WAS RENOWNED FOR HIS JOYFUL SPIRITUALITY, DEEP PRAYER LIFE, AND PASTORAL CARE OF YOUTH AND PILGRIMS. HE DIED ON MAY 26, 1595, AND WAS CANONIZED ON MARCH 12, 1622, BY POPE GREGORY XV.



ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS

PRIEST & CONFESSOR

ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS WAS BORN PAOLO FRANCESCO DANEI ON JANUARY 3, 1694, IN OVADA, ITALY. HE FOUNDED THE PASSIONIST ORDER, DEDICATED TO PREACHING THE PASSION OF CHRIST. A MYSTIC AND PREACHER, HE EMPHASIZED PENANCE, PRAYER, AND SPIRITUAL DIRECTION. HE DIED ON OCTOBER 18, 1775, AND WAS CANONIZED ON JUNE 29, 1867, BY POPE PIUS IX.



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

CONFESSOR

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI WAS BORN GIOVANNI DI PIETRO DI BERNARDO IN 1181 OR 1182 IN ASSISI, ITALY. RENOUNCING WEALTH, HE EMBRACED POVERTY AND FOUNDED THE FRANCISCAN ORDER. KNOWN FOR HIS HUMILITY, PREACHING, AND STIGMATA, HE HAD A PROFOUND IMPACT ON CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY. HE DIED ON OCTOBER 3, 1226, AND WAS CANONIZED ON JULY 16, 1228, BY POPE GREGORY IX.



ST. GABRIEL OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS

CONFESSOR

ST. GABRIEL OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS WAS BORN FRANCESCO POSSENTI ON MARCH 1, 1838, IN ASSISI, ITALY. HE JOINED THE PASSIONIST ORDER AND LIVED A SHORT BUT INTENSELY DEVOUT LIFE CENTERED ON THE PASSION OF CHRIST AND DEVOTION TO OUR LADY OF SORROWS. HE DIED OF TUBERCULOSIS ON FEBRUARY 27, 1862. HE WAS CANONIZED ON MAY 13, 1920, BY POPE BENEDICT XV.



St. JOHN BERCHMANS

CONFESSOR

ST. JOHN BERCHMANS WAS BORN ON MARCH 13, 1599, IN DIEST, BELGIUM. A JESUIT SCHOLASTIC
KNOWN FOR HIS EXACT OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE AND CHEERFUL HOLINESS,
HE DIED UNEXPECTEDLY AT AGE 22 ON AUGUST 13, 1621, IN ROME.
HE WAS CANONIZED ON JANUARY 15, 1888, BY POPE LEO XIII.



ST. GEMMA GALGANI

VIRGIN

ST. GEMMA GALGANI WAS BORN ON MARCH 12, 1878, IN CAMIGLIANO, ITALY. A MYSTIC AND LAYWOMAN ASSOCIATED WITH THE PASSIONIST SPIRITUALITY, SHE EXPERIENCED VISIONS, ECSTASIES, AND BORE THE STIGMATA. DESPITE POOR HEALTH AND SPIRITUAL TRIALS, HER LIFE WAS MARKED BY PROFOUND UNION WITH CHRIST. SHE DIED ON APRIL 11, 1903, AND WAS CANONIZED ON MAY 2, 1940, BY POPE PIUS XII.

