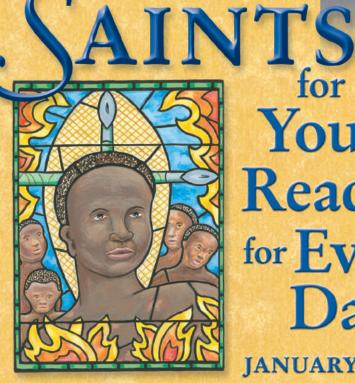
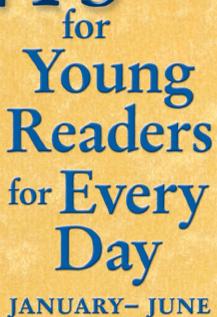
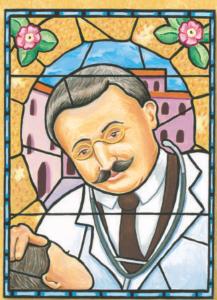
VOLUME ONE









**REVISED, WITH NEW STORIES!** 

# **SAINTS** for Young Readers for Every Day

Third Edition

# VOLUME 1 January–June

Written by Susan Helen Wallace, FSP with Melissa Wright Illustrated by

Jamie H. Aven



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## Dedicated to Venerable Maggiorino Vigolungo

Maggiorino was a teenager who lived not so long ago. He reached a hero's level of love for God and people by following his challenging slogan: "Make a little progress every day."

Known as the young apostle of the press, Maggiorino joined the newly established Society of St. Paul in his native Italy. His burning ideal shines clearly in his own words: "With the help of God, I intend to consecrate my entire life to spreading the message of Jesus through the apostolate of the media. I want to become a saint, a great saint—and soon!"

Maggiorino was just fourteen when he died, but he was ready to meet his Lord. In fact, he had written, "Heaven! Eternal happiness! This is what is waiting for me."

## How to Use This Book

This book offers a story of a saint for each day. Some lived long lives; others died when they were young. Some were close to God from their childhood and teenage years. Others learned the hard way that only God can make us happy.

In these pages you will meet saints from every nation and race. They are from different centuries, starting with the early days of the Church right down to our own times. You'll come to know saintly kings and laborers, queens and housemaids, popes and priests, nuns and religious brothers. They were mothers and fathers, teenagers and children. They were doctors and farmers, soldiers and lawyers.

Saints were as different from each other as we are. They were as human as we are. They lived on this earth, experienced temptations and faced problems. They became saints because they used their will-power to make right choices and they prayed. They tried to correct their faults and they never gave up trusting in Jesus' love for them.

Don't try to read all the stories in a few days. Read them one day at a time. The saint for the day is from the current Church calendar (called the Roman Calendar). When this calendar does not present a saint on a certain day, we have chosen one that we thought you might appreciate learning about. You might ask, "What's the difference between a SAINT and a BLESSED?" Saints are holy persons now in heaven who grew close to God while on earth. The Church declares them saints so that we can love, imitate, and pray to them. Saints can pray to God for us and help us. Persons declared BLESSED are holy people who are now in heaven. Usually the Church requires miracles obtained through their intervention. When the miracles have been carefully studied and accepted as real, the blessed are proclaimed saints. You will also find MARTYRS in this book. Martyrs are people who allowed themselves to be put to death rather than deny God or give up their Catholic faith.

A good way to use this book is to read the saint story for the day either before or after you say your morning or evening prayers. In this way, you'll be able to think about what you read during the day and try practicing the suggestion at the end of the story. (You might also want to read more biographies of the saints you especially liked.)

If you read a story a day, you'll have made many new friends in heaven by the end of the year. And they'll be more than happy to help you to become closer to God.

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# JANUARY

## January 1

## Mary, Mother of God

Today we begin a new year. It's one week since Christmas Day. In the nativity scene we have at home or at our parish, we gaze at Baby Jesus in the manger just as the shepherds did so long ago. We see Mary, his mother, and Joseph, Jesus' foster-father.

Mary was the daughter of Joachim and Anne. She loved God and her Jewish religion very much. Her neighbors probably thought Mary was very ordinary. It would be God's work in her that would make her so special, so full of grace.

God chose Mary from all women to be the mother of his Son. The Lord sent the Archangel Gabriel to Mary's town of Nazareth. Gabriel asked Mary to become the mother of God's Son. Mary wanted to please God, and so she answered "yes."With her "yes," Mary became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. She became Jesus' mother. Because she is the mother of Jesus, God's Son, Mary *really* is the Mother of God! What a blessing it was for Mary and her husband, Joseph, to be the ones to raise Jesus! They spent many happy years with him in Nazareth.



When Jesus was about thirty years old, he began his preaching and healing ministry. This is usually called his public life. (It seems that Joseph had died sometime before.) Mary often went with her friends to be near her Son and listen to his words. One day, she attended a marriage celebration in a town called Cana. Jesus and his disciples came too. When the wine ran out, Mary asked Jesus to do something. She wanted him to save the couple from being embarrassed in front of their guests. That's when Jesus worked the miracle of turning plain water into delicious wine!

Mary loved Jesus and believed in him. She was there when he was nailed to the cross. She received his body into her arms after he had died and was taken down from the cross. After Jesus' resurrection, Mary waited with Jesus' apostles for the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. The apostles loved her. They knew they needed more courage to be real followers of Jesus. Mary prayed for them and encouraged them. She taught them how to be disciples of her Son. Mary's feast days are special events that we celebrate throughout the year. Today we honor Mary as God's Mother by going to Mass. We can be very happy because Jesus gave Mary to us as our mother, too.

Mary's life was closely connected with the life of Jesus. To remember the events of Mary's life is to remember the life of Jesus too. Let's ask Mary to help us love her Son Jesus more each day of this new year.

## January 2

# St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen

Basil and Gregory were born around the year 329 in Asia Minor. Today we call this area Turkey. Basil's grandmother, father, mother, two brothers and a sister are all saints. Gregory's parents are St. Nonna and St. Gregory the Elder. Basil and Gregory met and became great friends at school in Athens, Greece.

Basil became a well-known teacher. But he wasn't satisfied. He felt that God was calling him to live as a monk. Basil visited monasteries in Syria, Egypt and Palestine, then moved to the wilderness and started his first monastery. The rule he gave his monks was very wise. Monasteries in the East have followed it down to our own times.

Both Basil and Gregory became priests and then bishops. They often preached about the Holy Trinity, because the errors of Arianism were confusing many people. Arianism was a teaching that denied that Jesus is God.

While he was bishop of Constantinople, Gregory converted many people with his wonderful preaching. But it nearly cost him his life! Once, a young man planned to murder him. He repented at the last moment and begged Gregory's forgiveness. Gregory did forgive him and won him over with his gentle goodness. Forty-four of Gregory's speeches, 243 letters and many poems were published. His writings are still important today. Many people have based their writings on his.

Gregory's good friend Basil had a very kind and generous heart. He always found time to help the poor. He even invited poor people to help those who were worse off. "Give your last loaf of bread to the beggar at your door," he urged, "and trust in God's goodness." Gregory sold his inheritance to help the poor. He also built a hospital where he visited the sick.

Basil died in 379 at the age of fifty. Gregory died in 389 at the age of sixty. He is buried in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Our education, time and talents are all gifts that God has given us. If we want to be like Saints Basil and Gregory, we can use these gifts to help the people around us become closer to God.

January 3

## Most Holy Name of Jesus

In his letter to the Philippians, St. Paul wrote: "At the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10). The name "Jesus" means "God saves" in Hebrew. This name was given to God the Son by the angel Gabriel at the annunciation. The name "Jesus" tells us who our Lord is and what he came on earth to do. Jesus came to save us, his people, from our sins. St. Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, declared, "There is no other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved" (Acts 4:12).

In the fifteenth century, St. Bernardine of Siena promoted devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus. He preached about the power of Jesus' name and was responsible for the addition of the name Jesus to the Hail Mary: "Blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus."

Through the centuries, the Church has taught us to use the name of Jesus with reverence and love. In the liturgy, we end every prayer with the words, "through our Lord Jesus Christ." There is even a short prayer called *The Jesus Prayer*, which is very easy to memorize and repeat. It goes like this: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." Many great followers of Jesus, such as St. Joan of Arc, have died pronouncing his name as a prayer.

We should always use the holy name of Jesus with respect. It's a very bad habit to use the Lord's name in the wrong way, and we should never do this. When we hear other people using the name of Jesus disrespectfully, we can make up for it by praying silently, "Blessed be the name of Jesus."