

## Grapevine Prayer Diary Integrated Notes for August

The recent centenary of the Great War (1914-18) may make us more mindful of 'warfare', physical and spiritual, in the lives and works of many saints and worthies commemorated in August, in which month that War began.

1: The Maccabean martyrs from the second century before the birth of Christ who held firm looking to the resurrection when it was decreed that any who "would not conform themselves to the manners of the Gentiles should be put to death" (2 Maccabees 6:9, King James Version).

*The Book of Common Prayer* notes "Lammas Day" for 1 August. This comes from the Old English 'hlaf', 'loaf' + 'mæsse', 'mass'. In England, it was the first harvest festival of the year, for the wheat harvest – "a day of first-fruit offerings, on which loaves of bread made from the first corn were blessed", as Dr. Eleanor Parker puts it. 'Hlaf' is the first element in two words which are more familiar: 'lord' (from 'hlaf' + 'weard', 'ward' or 'keeper') and 'lady' ('hlaf' + 'dige', 'dough-kneader'). (In the twentieth century the name "Lammas" was seized upon by pseudo-traditional witches and neopagans for a feast of their own.)

2: Basil (1557) became a 'Fool for Christ', wandering around Moscow in all weathers clad in little if anything more than his long beard, destroying the wares of dishonest tradesmen, and praying in the street for the conversion of sinners. He was one of the few who would openly take Czar Ivan 'the Terrible' to task, once presenting him with a slab of raw beef during his strict Lenten fast, saying, "Why abstain from meat when you murder men?" Ivan, in turn, gave him gifts, but he passed them on to those he knew needed them. He was buried in the new Cathedral in Red Square which people soon started calling 'St. Basil's', and when he was canonized some 30 years later, a new chapel was added, over his grave, by the humble, pious Czar Theodore, Ivan's son and heir and himself a sort of 'Fool for Christ'.

5: Oswald as King of Northumbria personally helped interpret the preaching of the Irish St. Aidan to his subjects. In 642 he was killed in battle and mutilated by his invading pagan neighbor, King Penda of Mercia. St. Willibrord (739: 7 Nov.) took some of his relics with him on his mission to Frisia.

6: Moses and Elijah, who in their days had escaped persecution and warred in prayer, spoke on the mountain with the Transfigured Lord Jesus about His coming battle with sin and death of which they, too, would be beneficiaries.

7: *The Book of Common Prayer* notes "Name of Jesus". In the late fifteenth century this feast focusing on the Name of Jesus and its significance ('Jesus' being the Latin form of the Greek version of the Hebrew 'Joshua', meaning 'JHVH is salvation') began to be celebrated at different places, or by different religious orders, at different times. At Salisbury, York, and Durham, and at Aberdeen in Scotland, it was celebrated on 7 August. In the Prayer Diary of the Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe, attention has been given on 1 January to "The Naming and Circumcision of Jesus" (cf. St. Luke 2:21).

8 (first 6, and still in the older Roman calendar, 4): Dominic (Spanish 'Domingo') (1221) studied for a number of years (once, selling his annotated books to feed the poor during a famine), and became a priest and canon at Osma Cathedral in Castile, Spain, and later prior there. J.B. O'Connor notes, "His biographer and contemporary, Bartholomew of Trent, states that twice he tried to sell himself into slavery to obtain money for the liberation of those who were held in captivity by the Moors." While on a diplomatic mission to Denmark for the King with his bishop, he first encountered in Southern

France the baleful effects of the Albigensian heresy, whose adherents consider themselves the only true Christians and 'pure ones' ('Cathars' from Greek 'katharos', 'pure') while hating the material world and denying it was God's creation. Bishop Diego and St. Dominic were soon able to live there as missionaries, simply and in poverty, and attempt to argue and persuade them out of their heresy. Farmer notes they also "trained religious women in communities who lived lives as austere and devoted as those of the perfecti of the Cathars." Then, Diego died, and some Albigenses assassinated the Papal Legate, and Pope Innocent III responded by declaring a crusade against them. Attwater writes, "There followed five years of bloody civil war, massacre, and savagery, during which Dominic and his few followers persevered in their mission of converting the Albigenses by persuasion addressed to the heart and mind." This was the background to his founding the Order of Preachers, or 'Black Friars' (from part of the habit they wore), priests devoted to study, teaching, and preaching, combining community life (including distinct Dominican versions of the Missal and Breviary still in use today) with great missionary mobility. Farmer notes "It rapidly spread all over Western Europe and became a pioneering missionary force in Asia and (much later) in the Americas." He is often depicted with a dog with a torch in its mouth which combines wordplay ('Domini canes', 'dogs of the Lord') with reference to the report that his mother, the Blessed Joan of Aza (1205: 2 Aug.), dreamt before his birth that a dog leapt from her womb with a torch in its mouth, and "seemed to set the earth on fire". He is sometimes depicted with a rosary and considered its inventor, through later confusion with Dominic of Prussia (1461).

9: Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, the name taken by the converted Jewish philosopher, Edith Stein, on becoming a Carmelite nun. She was transferred from Cologne to Echt in the Netherlands with her sister, Rosa, in 1938. But following the Nazi occupation, and the Dutch Bishops's public condemnation of Nazi racism on 20 July 1942, they were seized, deported, and soon murdered.

10: Lawrence (258) was a deacon martyred in Rome during the persecution under the Emperor Valerian. Donald Attwater writes that, according to tradition, when ordered "to hand over the church's valuables, he assembled the poor and sick", saying, "Here is the church's treasure." Other traditions report that he also arranged for a lesser treasure, the Cup used at the Last Supper, to be smuggled to Spain, where it can now be seen in the Cathedral in Valencia.

11 (12 in older calendars): Clare of Assisi (1253) when 18 was moved by the preaching of St. Francis (1226: 4 Oct.) to renounce all her possessions and become a nun. Within a couple weeks, she was joined by her sister, St. Agnes (1253: 16 Nov.), and they were soon able to live next to the chapel, San Damiano, which St. Francis had rebuilt. Joined by others, including their mother, Ortolana, after their father died, they became the Order of Poor Ladies under a Rule written for them by St. Francis. While some came from afar to join them, they also established a convent near Florence, led by St. Agnes, and others followed soon enough, also in Spain, France, Bohemia, and England. St. Clare guided her convent for 40 years, often despite serious ill-health during her last 27 years. Her emblem is a ciborium or monstrance as, when, in 1224, the Emperor Frederick II was leading an army, including Muslim troops, against Assisi by way of San Damiano, St. Clare, despite being ill, came to the wall bearing the Reserved Sacrament, and they withdrew. Attwater notes she has been described as "the most authentic expression of evangelic perfection as understood by St. Francis", and her Order is found in 75 countries today.

12: Jambert (or 'Jaenbe(o)rht', among various spellings; c. 792) was a Kentish monk at St. Augustine's, Canterbury – who went on to become its abbot, and, in 765, Archbishop of Canterbury. King Offa of Mercia had subjected the Kingdom of Kent to his rule, but in 776 it regained its freedom.

But Offa subjugated Kent again, and wanted a third metropolitan see besides Canterbury and York: Lichfield, the main bishopric of Mercia – and gained the consent of Pope Hadrian I over St. Jambert's opposition, with Canterbury losing about half the territory of its province to this new Archbishopric. But his successor, St. Athelhard (c. 805: 12 May), persuaded Pope St. Leo III (816: 12 June) to reverse the decision after the death of Offa, and Canterbury was the only southern Archiepiscopal see ever after.

13: Radegund (587), a pagan Thuringian princess, kidnapped as a child by invading Franks, was taught to read and became a Christian in their care. She agreed to marry their king, Clotaire I, who did the opposite of living his Christian faith in his repeated unfaithfulness to her. When he murdered her brother, she escaped to St. Medard (545: 8 June), Bishop of Noyon, and persuaded him to risk making her a deaconess and nun. She later founded Holy Cross monastery at Poitiers, and placed it under the Rule of St. Caesarius of Arles (543: 27 August). (He had founded the first known convent for women in Gaul in 512, and written them the first western Rule written exclusively for women. His sister, St. Caesaria (c. 530: 12 Jan.) had become its first abbess. Among the provisions of the Rule were that every nun should learn to read and write, and that they should have the sole right of electing their own abbess. Pope St. Hormisdas (523: 6 Aug.) confirmed their full exemption from all Episcopal authority. St. Caesarius was also zealous in redeeming captives, Christian and non-Christian alike. And Thomas Strahan notes "that he was the first to introduce in his cathedral the Hours of Terce, Sext, and None; he also enriched with hymns the psalmody of every Hour.") The Holy Cross abbey became a centre of scholarship, with the nuns spending two hours each day in study. St. Venantius Fortunatus (c. 605?: 14 Dec.) became chaplain to the nuns of Holy Cross and close friend of St. Radegund, and of her adopted daughter, Agnes, whom she championed to be consecrated abbess. When the Emperor Justin II sent her a relic of the Cross from Constantinople, he composed the hymns 'Vexilla Regis' and 'Pange, lingua' (still sung today). Another friend was the hermit and later abbot, St. Junian of Mairé, whose Feast is also 13 August, as they died on that very same day in 587.

And (as well as on the Saturday of the Fourth Week of the Holy Cross, in October): Nerses (a name sometimes spelled 'Narses') IV 'Shnorhali' ('filled with Grace': 1173), who came of an Armenian clerical family: his uncle, Catholicos Gregory II, educated both him and his older brother, who became Catholicos Gregory III. His brother consecrated him bishop, and St. Nerses later became co-Catholicos with him, and then succeeded him. St. Nerses worked, without final success, for the union of the Armenian and Greek Churches. If his brother is known for his collections of hymns and translations of Greek and Latin martyrologies, St. Nerses became the foremost Armenian poet and writer of his age. His nephew, St. Nerses of Lambron (1198: 17 July), became Archbishop of Tarsus; he translated Greek, Latin, Syriac, and probably Coptic works, and is another of the greatest Armenian poets and writers. He too worked for union with the Greek Church (unsuccessfully) and the Latin Church (with partial success). Of this nephew, Attwater writes, "To me," Narses declared to critics of his endeavours, "Armenians, Latins, Greeks, Egyptians, Syrians are all one. My conscience is clear."

Also, Florence Nightingale, who put her medical training at the Lutheran community of Kaiserswerth to good use with her team of volunteers during the Crimean War and went on to lay the foundation of modern nursing with her Training School at St. Thomas's Hospital in London in 1860.

14: Maximilian Kolbe (1941), a Polish Franciscan, founded the *Militia Immaculatae* (the 'Knighthood of the Immaculate Virgin Mary') in 1917 together with six fellow-seminarians. It eventually published magazines and a daily newspaper, and started a radio station, with a Japanese monastery and press

being added in 1931, in Nagasaki. After the occupation of Poland, he was arrested and sent to Auschwitz, where he volunteered to substitute for another prisoner when ten were picked to starve to death, naked, in an underground bunker, as an 'example' to deter escape attempts. There he comforted and encouraged the others, until murdered by lethal injection.

15: The Falling Asleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary as distinct beneficiary of her Son's victory over sin and death. St. Matthew 27:52-53 – "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many" (KJV) – was taken by many in the early Church (for example, St. Clement of Alexandria (c. 215: 4 and 5 Dec.) in his *Stromata*, VI.vi) to refer to their going into the heavenly Jerusalem above. This grace was also widely believed to be subsequently granted to the Blessed Virgin Mary, whence the description of this day as the Feast of the Assumption. Dr. Farmer notes "the principal feasts of Mary were retained in the Book of Common Prayer, with the exception of the Assumption which was removed in 1549, but retained at Oxford University and other places. Also at Oxford Laud installed the statue over the porch of the church of St. Mary."

20: Oswin (651), friend of St. Aidan and King of part of Northumbria after the death of his cousin, Oswald, resisted the aggression of another cousin, Oswy, King of the rest of Northumbria who wished to rule all of it. Seeing he was outnumbered, Oswin disbanded his army to avoid bloodshed, but was murdered by Oswy, who, later repenting, built a monastery on the site.

Also the Feast of St. Bernard (1153), who not only wrote a spiritual classic, *On Loving God*, and reformed the Cistercian order of monks, but called Hugh de Payens (who, with seven other French knights had taken it upon himself to protect pilgrims in the Holy Land) 'Master of the Knights of the Temple', providing them with a rule enabling knights to live as monks (very like Cistercians, though with special emphasis on the Books of Joshua and the Maccabees in their sacred refectory reading).

Also commemorated together with his wife, Catherine, on the anniversary of his death is William Booth: founders of the Salvation Army.

24: Bartholomew appears in the lists of the Twelve Apostles in Sts. Matthew (10:3), Mark (3:18), and Luke (6:14), and in Acts (1:13). St. John does not mention that name (which means 'Son of Tholmai'), and many scholars think he and Nathanael there (1:44-51, 21:2) are one and the same. Nothing is certainly known of his later life, though traditions consider him an apostle of Lycaonia, 'India', and Armenia. Eusebius, the first to mention him after the Bible, reports that, in the late second century, Pantenus found a Gospel of St. Matthew in Hebrew in India, left there by him. He is reported to have been flayed alive, then beheaded, in Armenia, and his relics brought westward, with an arm being given to Canterbury by Queen Emma during her second marriage, to Cnut (who reigned 1017-35). Felix's near-contemporary Life of St. Guthlac (714: Feast, 13 Apr., translation 30 Aug., commemoration, 26 Aug.) records that St. Bartholomew appeared to him to console and aid him, and Crowland abbey, established in the site of his hermitage, was dedicated to St. Bartholomew.

Also, Emily de Vialar (1856), who was baptized secretly under the anti-Christian French 'Directory'. At 15, she began looking after her father and younger brothers after her mother died – and to minister to those in need on his estate. At 35, she received an inheritance from her grandfather, and buying a house from which the better to carry out her charitable works, she and three companions founded the Sisters of St. Joseph 'of the Apparition' (cf. St. Matt. 1:18-20). She soon started a second house – in Algeria, doing medical missionary work, beginning during a cholera epidemic. But when she clashed with the local bishop, he excommunicated her. Attwater notes, "she was vindicated, but [...] had to go back to France." But from there, they spread throughout the world – to Jerusalem, for example, and, in her last year, to Australia: though with drastic ups and downs along the way.

Attwater quotes her, “Quietly to trust God is better than trying to safeguard material interests – I learned that by bitter experience.”

25: Gregory (c. 775) was a Frank who became a young disciple and helper of St. Boniface (754: 5 June) when he was visiting the abbey at Trier where St. Gregory’s grandmother was abbess. Around 750, he was made abbot of St. Martin’s, Utrecht, helping make it a centre of learning and missionary training for students from many nations, Franks, Frisians, Saxons, Bavarians, Swabians, and Englishmen. After the death of St. Willibrord (739: 7 Nov.), no new Bishop of Utrecht was consecrated, and St. Boniface had taken charge and appointed St. Eoban (754: 5 June) as administrator: when they departed together on a missionary journey which would end in their martyrdoms, St. Gregory was left to administer the diocese – he did, and directed the Frisian mission for the next twenty years. One of his Frisian disciples, St. Liutger (809: 26 Mar.), wrote his life. Attwater notes that when “called on to assign a sentence on the murderers of his two half-brothers, Gregory refused to do so, ordering them to be released after he had given them a salutary admonition” (and, Butler adds, “a suit of clothes with an alms” each).

26: Melchizedek, King of Salem, who met and blessed Abram when he and his company were returning from rescuing Lot and his fellow prisoners of war.

27 (in other calendars 4 May, and, together with her son, 15 June): Monica (387), long-suffering wife of Patricius and mother of St. Augustine, whose prayers were answered by the conversions of both, and all three of whom suffered the reign of the apostate Emperor Julian (who, among other things, tried to take over and paganize the Christian ‘social services’ ). In St. Augustine’s early work *On the Happy Life*, to the question, “Everyone who possesses what he wants is happy?”, St. Monica answers, “If he wishes and possesses good things, he is happy; if he desires evil things – no matter if he possesses them – he is wretched.” To this, her son replies with a martial image, “Mother, you have really gained mastery of the very stronghold of philosophy.”

28: Augustine (430) was, for much of the first 32 years of his life, a sort of catechumen ‘at war’ within himself, and, as a Manichean for some nine years, with Christian orthodoxy as well. But, once baptized, for the next 44 years (34 as Bishop of Hippo), he was persuasively ‘at war’ with various heretical groups to try to win them back to the Church. He also wrote about the conditions needed for a “just war”. When Boniface, Governor of Africa, and Galla Placidia, Imperial Regent for her son, came into conflict, St. Augustine worked for their reconciliation. Boniface had called in the Vandals from Spain to help, but when peace was restored between Governor and Regent, the Vandals preferred war against Boniface to returning home. He fled to Hippo which they besieged, and St. Augustine died there before they gave up.

Also St. Moses the Ethiopian (c. 405), who had been a bandit chief before his conversion. After years of spiritual warfare at the still-active Coptic monastery of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Sketis, he was murdered by Berber raiders whom he greeted peacefully rather than by defensive fighting.

Also, Joaquina de Vedruna (1854), who married a lawyer, Theodore de Mas, at 16: a happy marriage which produced nine children. But when Napoleon invaded Spain, she took the children to safety while he stayed to fight – and die, leaving her a widow at 33. After caring for her children at their estate in Vic for a decade, she started a community for nursing and teaching, the Carmelites of Charity. Attwater writes, “the foundation prospered and spread, and provided nurses for both sides in the Carlist wars” though they had to escape to France when the fighting became too dangerous.

She was attacked by a slow paralysis for her last four years, forcing her to resign as their Superior. Attwater writes, "the disease eventually rendered her helpless and speechless: but it failed to quench her spirit and religious trust." After she died at 70 in a cholera epidemic, the institute worked on, spreading throughout Spain, Hispanic America, and the world. Of their six children who survived to adulthood, two daughters became Poor Clares and two, Cistercian nuns.

29: The Beheading of St. John the Baptist.

30: John Bunyan, author of *The Holy War* (1682), as well as that other even more famous allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Part 1, 1678, Part 2, 1684).

David Llewellyn Dodds