

Grapevine Prayer Diary Integrated Notes for October

This month includes many missionaries, rulers receptive and unreceptive to the Gospel, and many martyrs.

1: Gregory (c. 326) ‘the Enlightener’ converted King Tiridates III of Armenia, who made his the world’s first Christian kingdom (c. 301), within which St. Gregory then worked for the next 25 years preaching the Gospel and organizing the Church.

Also on this day, St. Remigius (or ‘Remi’: 533), who, as bishop of Rheims, did much the same, baptizing King Clovis I – influenced by his Christian queen, St. Clotilda (545: 3 June) – and acting as ‘Apostle of the Franks’.

And, St. Bavo (c. 655), also known by his baptismal name ‘Allowin’, a wealthy landowner in Brabant, reputed to have sometimes sold his servants into serfdom, and to lead a wild life, who, after the death of his wife experienced a spiritual conversion through the preaching of St. Amand (c. 675: 6 Feb.). He gave away his possessions to the poor, and putting himself under St. Amand’s direction, joined a monastery in Ghent before accompanying him on missionary journeys in France and Flanders – during one of these, upon meeting a former serf-victim, Bavo had him lead him through the town on a chain. Thereafter he became a hermit in Mendonk, living in a hollow tree until he could build himself a hut, but finally returning to live as a hermit on the grounds of his old monastery, later renamed after him. The parish church under his patronage in Haarlem was made its cathedral when it became a diocese in 1561.

3: Dionysius the Areopagite and Damaris (Acts 17:34): he is reported by Eusebius in his *Church History* to have become first Bishop of Athens, and both are traditionally considered martyrs. An influential body of works about God, the Angels, and the Church appeared in his name several centuries later.

4: Francis of Assisi (1226), whose kindness to animals is recalled by “Dieren Dag”.

6: Faith (Fides; French ‘Foy’/‘Foi’, Spanish ‘Fe’), a virgin martyr of Agen in Gaul, later had churches dedicated to her throughout France, England (a chapel in St. Paul’s Cathedral commemorates an earlier parish church on the site), Italy, Spain, and South America (notably in Bogotá, founded in 1538 under the name of Santa Fe). The earliest surviving written work in a Catalan dialect of Old Occitan is a song about her, but the face of her reliquary in Conques may be a reused portrait of Charlemagne!

Also, St. Bruno (1101), who was educated and later taught (for 18 years) at the cathedral school at Rheims, but wishing to become a monk, went to Grenoble where an old pupil, St. Hugh (1132: 1 April), was bishop, and granted him and six companions the mountainous, wooded land of the Chartreuse: the beginning of the Carthusian or Charterhouse Order.

8 (23 July in the new Roman calendar): Bridget (‘Birgitta’: 1373), daughter of a governor, wife (at 14) of a nobleman, Ulf, with whom she had eight children – including St. Catherine (1381: 24 Mar.), became principal lady-in-waiting to the Queen of Sweden, Blanche. St. Bridget and her husband became Third Order Franciscans and went on pilgrimages – as far as Compostela. After his death in 1344, she applied herself to the founding of the Order of the Holy Saviour (the ‘Bridgettines’), starting with a double monastery at Vadstena, under the patronage of King Magnus: they lived austere, giving all extra income to the poor, though Dr. Farmer notes ‘all the inmates could have as many

books for study as she wished.' She went to Rome in 1349 to obtain approval of her Order (finally granted in 1370), and spent the rest of her life in Italy or on pilgrimages, including one to the Holy Land, serving pilgrims as well as the poor and the sick. She was a visionary in the strict sense of having visual, audible religious experiences, on the strength of some of which, Attwater observes, she offered 'very outspoken advice to the popes about the serious ecclesiastical and political problems of the time.' Written up, he notes they 'exercised wide influence and provoked strong controversy'. Pope Saint John Paul II (2005: 22 Oct.) wrote, 'The Church, which recognized Bridget's holiness without ever pronouncing on her individual revelations, has accepted the overall authenticity of her interior experience'.

9: Abraham and his nephew Lot. The amazing Sixth-century Madaba mosaic map includes a depiction of a Church dedicated to St. Lot.

Also, St. Denis, sent, according to Gregory of Tours in his *History of the Franks*, with other missionary bishops from Italy to Gaul, where he was martyred by beheading among the tribe of the Parisii. He was later confused with St. Dionysius the Areopagite and the author of the writings attributed to him. The great abbey, burial place of the kings of France, was built over his tomb.

10: Paulinus (644) was sent to England by St. Gregory the Great in 601 as part of a second group of missionary monks. When St. Edwin (633: 12 Oct.), then still pagan king of Northumbria, was permitted to marry the Christian princess, St. Ethelburga of Kent (647: 8 Sept.), as long as she and her household enjoyed freedom of conscience, St. Paulinus went with her as chaplain, having been consecrated bishop and assisted by his deacon St. James (11 Oct.). As first bishop of York, he baptized both the king and their little princess, St. Enfleda (c. 704: 24 Nov.), but when St. Edwin was killed in battle defending against an invading English pagan-Welsh Christian alliance, St. Paulinus returned to Kent with St. Ethelburga and seven-year-old St. Enfleda. The widowed queen became a nun and abbess, while he became bishop of Rochester, with St. James continuing the northern mission.

Also, St. Daniel and his companions, Agnellus, Samuel, Donulus, Leo, Hugolinus, and Nicholas (1227), seven Franciscan friars martyred as missionaries, following in the footsteps of the first Franciscan martyrs, St. Berard and his companions, Otho, Peter, Accursio, and Aiuto (1220: 16 Jan.). Stephen Donovan notes 'Each one approached Daniel, the superior, to ask his blessing and permission to die for Christ.'

12: Wilfrid (709), a Northumbrian educated at Lindisfarne, was patronized by St. Enfleda when she was Oswy's queen, and studied further in Rome. He became bishop of York, but when St. Theodore as Archbishop divided his diocese in four without consulting him, he became the first English bishop to make an appeal to Rome. On the way there, he spent a year preaching the Gospel among the pagan Frisians. Pope and Synod found in his favour, though he eventually accepted a reduced jurisdiction, and even this was sadly not the end of disputes.

13: Edward the Confessor (1066), son of English King Ethelred and Norman Queen Emma, spent much of his life in exile during the time of Danish Kings of England, including that of Cnut, who married his widowed mother, and that of his half-brother, Harthacnut, who at last favoured him as his successor. As King of England, he strengthened ties with the Papacy. He promoted not only monks but also secular clerks (from home and abroad) to bishoprics, and rebuilt the Abbey Church of St. Peter at

Westminster, where he was buried, and where, after his being formally canonized in 1161, his body was translated on 13 October 1163 by the Archbishop of Canterbury, St. Thomas Becket.

14: Callistus (or ‘Calixtus’) I (c. 222), a Christian slave of a Christian freedman of the Imperial household was put in charge of a bank for Christians – and somehow lost all the money, and fled. Recaptured, he was sentenced to the treadmill. His creditors gained his release, hoping he could return at least some of the money – perhaps trying to do so, he got arrested again for creating a disturbance in a synagogue. Taken from his master as a prisoner of the State, he was sent to the mines in Sardinia. Marcia, mistress of the Emperor Commodus but sympathetic to Christians, asked Pope St. Victor I (c. 199: 28 July) for a list of Christian prisoners there whom she could get pardoned and released – Callistus was not on it, but begged her representative to bring him away, too, which he did. St. Victor gave him a pension, and his successor, Pope St. Zephyrinus (217: 20 Dec.) put him in charge of a cemetery owned by the Church (and later called after him), and made him a deacon. Serving well and ably after being given this second chance, Callistus succeeded him as Pope. He became controversial with some for readmitting to Communion murderers, adulterers, and fornicators who had confirmed their repentance with due penance, and for defying Roman civil law by insisting Church law took precedence and allowing free Christians and Christian slaves to marry each other. He excommunicated Sabellius, who contended that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were merely three modes of appearance of God. He was revered as a martyr, but scholars do not consider likely the details in his late *Acts* of how he was martyred. Duke St. Everard (866: 16 Dec.) obtained relics of St. Callistus for an abbey under his patronage in Cysoing, near Doornik, but they were removed soon after to Rheims for fear of the Normans, and have remained there ever since.

15: Teresa of Avila (1582) tells in her *Autobiography* how, as little children, she and the brother nearest her in age ‘used to discuss ... how we could become martyrs.’ Instead, she became a Carmelite nun, and, with the help of the Franciscan reformer and mystic, St. Peter of Alacántara (1562: 19 Oct.) founded a reformed Carmelite convent – followed by 16 more. Donald Attwater says, ‘St. Teresa is the classic example of one who combined the life of religious contemplation with an intense activity and commonsense efficiency in “practical” affairs, and she recorded the results of both in literary form.’

17 (Roman calendar, 23 June): Etheldreda (which eventually became ‘Audrey’), daughter of the king of East Anglia, lived with her first husband as brother and sister: widowed after three years, she retired to the isle of Ely, her dowry. She was brought out of her retirement for a dynastic marriage to Ecgfrith, prince of Northumbria: they also lived as brother and sister. When, after succeeding to the throne, he wished to go back on this agreement, she was supported by St. Wilfrid, and eventually allowed to become a nun. She retired to Ely, restored a church there, and founded a double monastery over which she presided as abbess, dying in 679.

18: Luke, a Greek physician (Colossians 4:14) and companion of St. Paul and author of the Gospel bearing his name and its continuation, The Acts of the Apostles (where he sometimes slips into writing about ‘we’ and ‘us’): his vivid word-painting may have given rise to the tradition he was also a painter, a popular subject for 15th-16th-century Flemish painters, among others.

20: John Cantius (1473), Patron of Poland and Lithuania, spent most of a long life as Professor of Sacred Scripture in Cracow, though he also made one pilgrimage to Jerusalem, hoping to become a martyr en route, and four pilgrimages on foot to Rome. Attwater says, ‘He impressed upon his students the need for moderation and good manners in controversy, and was noted for his boundless generosity to the poor’.

25: Crispin and Crispian, martyrs particularly venerated at Soissons since at least the sixth century, were treated in a late, unreliable legend as missionaries who, like St. Paul, earned their keep by a trade – in their case, shoemakers. Their shrine was later rebuilt by St. Eligius (or ‘Eloi’, 660: 1 Dec.). They may be most familiar to many due to Shakespeare’s attention in *Henry V* to the Battle of Agincourt being won on their Feast.

28: Simon and Jude, apostles (Simon ‘the zealous’: St. Matt. 10:4, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15, Act 1:13, using a couple different words to translate the Hebrew ‘qana’; and Judas ‘not Iscariot’ in John 14:22 also identified with the ‘Thaddaeus’ or ‘Lebbaeus’ of different manuscripts of Mark 3:18, Matt. 10:3). There are many, varied later accounts of where they preached: one has them martyred together in Persia, with this date perhaps reflecting that of a translation of (supposed) relics to St. Peter’s, in Rome.

29: James Hannington (1885), bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa, martyred as he attempted to pioneer a shorter and healthier highland road to Buganda, together with fifty Christian bearers as companions, by King Mwanga: the first of many Protestant and Catholic Uganda martyrs over the course of the following half year.

31: Wolfgang (994), was educated at the abbey of Reichenau, and followed a friend from there, Henry, to the cathedral school of Würzburg for further study. When Henry became Archbishop of Trier, he brought Wolfgang there to teach; he also worked to help reform the archdiocese. After Henry’s death (964), he entered the Benedictine monastery at Einsiedeln, where he was later ordained priest by St. Ulrich (973: 4 July). St. Ulrich had been instrumental in stemming the pagan Magyar invasion, and (supported by the Emperor Otto I) requested that Wolfgang be sent as the most suitable person to evangelize them in Pannonia where they had settled (though Attwater calls the mission ‘short and discouraging’, in the event). He became Bishop of Regensburg in 972, and proved a great reformer, especially of monasteries – including returning the abbey of St. Emmeram out of the power of his see to the care of its own abbots. He also tutored the future Holy Roman Emperor, St. Henry II (1024: 13 Apr.). While the world’s most famous Wolfgang at present – Mozart – is named after his grandfather, I suspect his grandfather is named after the ‘earliest recorded famous bearer of the name’, St. Wolfgang.

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