

ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

House colour: RED

Maximilian was born in 1894 in Poland.

The time of his youth was one of political division and unrest across Europe. He was a teenager during the years of the First World War. As a young adult he felt God was calling him to a life of service and prayer to help those around him and to pray for peace and well being. He became a Franciscan Priest and set up a religious movement with special devotion to Our Lady. During the 1930's he set up monasteries in Japan and India.



In 1936 he returned to his homeland of Poland. By that time Europe was again heading towards war and the Nazi regime in Germany, spreading hate and division, invaded Poland in 1939.

Maximilian was one of thousands imprisoned in the notorious death camp of Auschwitz. The harsh regime in these death camps caused hopeless despair. One day a prisoner escaped. The Guard took revenge by selecting 10 people to be sentenced to a long slow painful death of starvation in a bunker. One of the 10 was a family man who begged to be saved so he could see his family. The Guards felt no compassion but Maximilian offered to swap places with the man. Maximilian joined the other 9 condemned men in the bunker and died after 2 painful weeks. Guards later reported that he was the last to die and had led the men in prayer during their time of agony.



BLESSED MOTHER TERESA OF CALCUTTA

House colour: **BLUE**



Mother Teresa was born in Macedonia, on August 26, 1910. She always felt that God was calling her to be a missionary amongst her people. She wanted to teach people about the love of Christ. At the age of eighteen she left her parental home and joined the Sisters of Loreto, an Irish community of nuns with missions in India. After a few months of training in Dublin she was sent to India, where on May 24, 1931, she took her initial vows as a nun. From 1931 to 1948 Mother Teresa taught at St. Mary's High School in Calcutta, but the suffering and poverty she glimpsed outside the convent walls made such a deep impression on her that in 1948 she received permission from her superiors to leave the convent school and devote herself to working among the poorest of the poor in the slums of Calcutta.

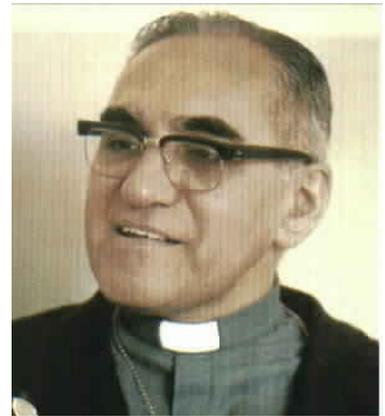
On October 7, 1950, Mother Teresa set up her own order, "The Missionaries of Charity", whose primary task was to love and care for those nobody was prepared to look after. By the 1990s there were over one million Co-Workers in more than 40 countries. Today the Sisters give witness to God's love by working in poor communities across the globe.

"We ourselves believe that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean but if that drop was not there the ocean would be less" Mother Teresa.

BLESSED OSCAR ROMERO

House colour: YELLOW

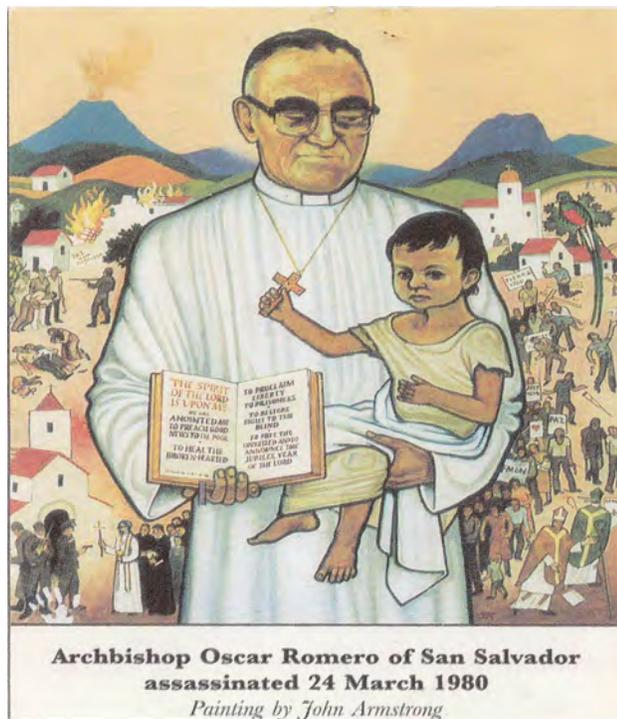
Oscar Romero was born on August 15, 1917. He was born into a large family of five other brothers and sisters. Oscar's father was a carpenter. When he left school, his father had planned for him to be a carpenter. Oscar had other ideas. Oscar wanted to continue to go to higher levels of education. As a little boy Oscar felt God was calling him to live his life in the service of others so eventually he went to a seminary, a college for training priests. His father tried to convince Oscar to stay with him but he eventually let Oscar go to fulfill his own dreams.



As a priest Oscar served his parish community which had both rich and poor people in it. His country El Salvador was ruled by a military government who used violence to keep the poor, poor and the very wealthy, wealthy.

Oscar spoke out on behalf of the poor. He ignored the death threats from the military in his fight for justice. Then on 24 March 1980, whilst saying Mass in his church, he was assassinated.

To the citizens of El Salvador, Oscar Romero was declared a martyr 3.02.2015. Beatified 23.05.2105.



ST BERNADETTE

House colour: GREEN

Bernadette was born into a poor family living in the country area in the South of France not too far from the border with Spain. One day when she was out collecting wood for a fire in her poor family home, she became aware of a vision of a lady standing in an opening to a cave on the banks of the River Gave.



Bernadette's parents had run a small business as millers but they fell on hard times. As a child Bernadette described herself as naughty and was said to have a poor memory and difficulty learning and suffered from asthma.

On 11 February 1858 Bernadette along with other members of her family were out collecting wood for a fire. When they came to a stream Bernadette could not cross so she remained alone on the bank. It was as she waited alone, looking at the cold water and wondering how she would catch up with the others that Bernadette became aware of a rustling in the trees and a bright light against the rock face of a cave. It was an indescribable light like a golden cloud. She became aware of the light forming a shape of a cross and then from the midst of this supernatural light a young lady appeared. Bernadette describes this young lady as looking small and young maybe 17 years old and dressed in white. To start with the lady does not speak. Bernadette in fear and awe takes out her rosary and prays. The lady seems to pray too. Over the following days Bernadette returned to this part of the river bank and witnessed further apparitions of the lady she knew to be Our Lady the Mother of Jesus. Over the days that followed Bernadette visited the grotto and prayed. As weeks passed, many people came to the grotto and were cured of ailments and sickness. The authorities were suspicious of Bernadette and gave her a hard time but she always remained true to her account.

Bernadette listened to her heart and knew that her vocation in life was to pray. She entered a convent and dedicated her life to prayer – prayer for the world and prayer for God's Kingdom to come on earth.

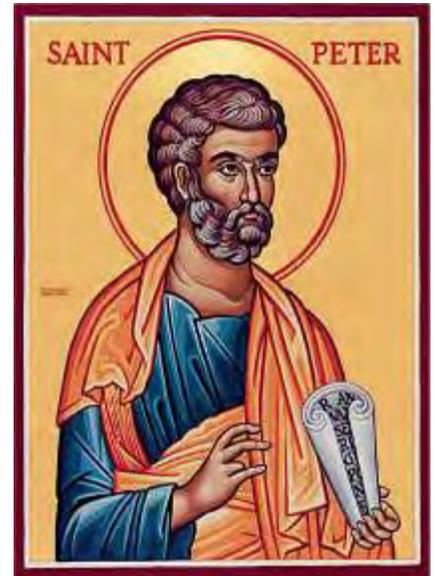
She died in Nevers on April 16, 1879, still giving the same account of her visions. Bernadette died at a young age.

Lourdes is one of the major pilgrimage destinations in the world.

SAINT PETER

House colour: PURPLE

Saint Peter who died in AD 64 also known as **Simon Peter**, was an early Christian leader, one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ according to the New Testament and Christian tradition, and the very first Bishop. He was from the village of Bethsaida in the province of Galilee. His brother Andrew was also an Apostle. Peter is regarded as the Catholic Church's first pope. He is credited with establishing the Church in Antioch and either in person or through his epistle; his words were received by scattered communities of believers: Jews, Hebrew Christians and Gentiles.



Originally Peter was a fisherman. Jesus called him as he walked along the shore of Lake Galilee and he was assigned a leadership role and was with Jesus during events witnessed by only a few of the Apostles, such as the Transfiguration, the Garden of Gethsemane and the healing of Jairus' daughter. In the New Testament, Peter declared Jesus as the Messiah however he also denied knowing Jesus.

For Christians today the life of Peter inspires them in their journey of faith. He of all the disciples highlighted the difficulties of being a disciple. Christians are comforted by the fact that even Peter didn't always get it right and lacked the required faith.

Peter is said to have been crucified under Emperor Nero Augustus Caesar. It is traditionally held that he was crucified upside down at his own request, since he saw himself unworthy to be crucified in the same way as Jesus Christ. Catholic tradition holds that Saint Peter's site of crucifixion is located in the Clementine Chapel, while his mortal bones and remains are contained in the underground Confessio of St. Peter's Basilica.

His feast day is June 29th and ever since 1736, a statue of Saint Peter has been crowned in St. Peter's Basilica with a papal tiara, ring of the fisherman, and papal vestments, as part of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

Today Peter remains the rock, the foundation on which Jesus built his Church:

"On this rock (*petra* in Greek) I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it."

(Matthew 16:18,19)