

FEBRUARY 2010 FEAST DAYS

Tuesday, February 2 — Presentation of the Lord



This feast commemorates Mary's purification and the presentation of Jesus in the temple. In the Middle Ages, a tradition began of blessing candles and holding a procession of light on this day. As a result it is also known as "Candlemas" — Christ our light has come to us. We also remember the first members of the Bordeaux Sodality who made their first act of consecration on Feb. 2, 1801.

Saturday, February 6 — Saint Paul Miki and Companions



In the late 16th century, 26 martyrs of Japan were crucified on a hill. Among them were priests, brothers and laymen, Franciscans, Jesuits and members of the Secular Franciscan Order — all united in a common faith and love for Jesus and the Church. Brother Paul Miki, a Jesuit scholastic, is the best known among these martyrs. When missionaries returned to Japan in the 1860s, at first they found no trace of Christianity. But after establishing themselves they found that thousands of Christians lived around Nagasaki and had secretly preserved the faith. Beatified in 1627, the martyrs of Japan were canonized in 1862.

Monday, February 8 — Saint Josephine Bakhita



Josephine was born around 1869 in Sudan and raised in the Islamic faith. She was kidnapped as a child by slave traders who gave her the name "Bakhita," meaning "lucky one." She was purchased at about the age of 12 by an Italian consul who brought her to Italy. There she lived with the Canossian Sisters in Venice and was formally introduced to the faith, baptized, and eventually granted her freedom. In 1896 she joined the Canossian Daughters of Charity and for 25 years served as a cook, seamstress and portress of their houses in northern Italy. She died in 1947. Pope John Paul II canonized this first Sudanese saint in October 2000 as a witness to evangelical reconciliation and as a model of freedom.

Wednesday, February 10 — Saint Scholastica



Scholastica was the twin sister of St. Benedict, the founder of Western monasticism, and she is the patroness of Benedictine nuns. She died in 543 and was buried in Benedict's tomb where he joined her in death soon after.

Thursday, February 11 — Our Lady of Lourdes



This memorial honors the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Since 1992 this memorial has been observed as the World Day of Prayer for the Sick. It is a special time for us to pray for the sick, especially for the members of our Marianist Family in health centers.

Wednesday, February 17 — Ash Wednesday



We begin the season of Lent with ashes on our foreheads. This strong symbol calls us to an inner journey of transformation. The contemporary spiritual writer, Ronald Rolheiser, says:

Lent is a season for each of us to sit in the ashes, waiting while some silent growth takes place within us, and simply being still so that the ashes can do their work in us.

Monday, February 22 — The Chair of Peter, Apostle



Today's feast, attested as early as the mid-fourth century, has its roots in the commemoration of dead relatives and friends celebrated in Rome between February 13-22. At this commemoration, a chair was left empty for particular deceased persons. Because the date of Peter's death was unknown, it came to be commemorated on February 22, eventually celebrating his taking pastoral responsibility of the Church of Rome.