

St. Frances Cabrini



Feast Day: November 13

Patron of: Immigrants

Status in Church: Canonized July 7, 1946, First American citizen to be canonized by the Roman Catholic Church. Foundress of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Biography:

Frances Cabrini was born on July 15, 1850 in Italy to a large family. As a child, she was sick and weak, which later barred her from entering into many religious orders, even though that is what she wanted to do. After completing school and training, Frances went on to become a teacher for several years while staying at home caring for her parents until their death.

In 1874, Frances was asked to move from home to run an orphanage badly in need of her help. There, she met other young women who wanted to become religious sisters. She took her vows in 1877 to be-

come a sister, adding Xavier to her name to honor St. Frances Xavier, who conducted missions in China. In 1880, they began their own order, the Institute of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with Frances as the head.

In 1889, the bishop asked Frances to go on a mission to minister to Italian immigrants who were being mistreated in America. She decided to abandon her dream to go to China to evangelize and instead went to New York. Without knowing anyone there or even the language, Mother Cabrini still managed to start an orphanage for Italian children soon after her arrival. Within a couple of years, the Bishop urged Mother Cabrini to open a hospital for poor Italian immigrants, so she and her sisters began devoting themselves to this new ministry, and found themselves very successful there. From about 1895 to 1905, Mother Cabrini continued quickly starting schools, hospitals and other immigrant ministries around the country, as well as in Europe and Latin America. In 1909, Mother Cabrini became a US citizen. At the age of 67, after traveling tirelessly around the country and the world to keep up with her missions, she finally fell ill and died in Chicago on December 22, 1917.

Mother Cabrini:

- **crossed the ocean twenty-five times**
- **set up schools, orphanages and hospitals**
- **opened sixty-seven institutions in nine countries, on three continents.**

A Witness of Catholic Social Teaching (CST)

Mother Cabrini and her sisters cared for the sick and educated poor children. Their ministry to the immigrant community showed a special care for the least, and a **preferential option for the poor**. They also took care to recognize the **dignity of the human person** by helping the poor and outcast immigrants. Francis showed an openness to the call of God when she gave up her own dreams of being a missionary in China and instead responded to the needs of American immigrants with generosity and love.

Prayer of Intercession

Good and loving God,
Thank you for the beautiful example of your servant, Francis Cabrini. Help her life to inspire us to listen to your call, persevere in working for the poor, and tirelessly put others before ourselves. Bless the poor and the immigrants around us and those who work for them. Strengthen the efforts of all the saints striving on your earth today. Amen.

