

## MARCH CALENDAR SAINTS AND COMPOSERS

### **March 1 – David, bishop**

In the Roman enclave of Cymru (Wales), during the 5<sup>th</sup> century, David of Menevia became a founder of monasteries and then a bishop. Archbishop Dubricius chose him as his successor as Primate of Wales. According to legends, David founded eleven monasteries after he became archbishop; he also made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. David died in about the year 544; he is honored still as the patron saint of Wales.

### **March 2 – John Welsey, reformer**

John and Charles Wesley were the sons of Samuel Wesley, an Anglican priest. He was ordained an Anglican priest in 1728. John went to England's colony of Georgia as a missionary (1735-38). Returning to England, John preached a form of Christianity that he had learned from Moravian settlers in Georgia, in which a strong feeling of faith was at the heart of Christianity and vigorous hymnody was an expression of faith. John later became a leader in the Methodist movement. He continued to encourage active participation through hymn singing, wrote many hymn texts and codified directions for hymn singing *from his collection Select Hymns (1761)*

### **March 3 – Mother Katherine Drexel, religious**

Born in 1858, Katherine inherited a large fortune from her father, Francis Anthony Drexel. Responding to the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore (1884), and at the suggestion of Pope Leo XIII, Katherine founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People. From 1891 until her death in 1955, she devoted great energy and a fortune of \$12 million to the work of her order. She established Xavier University in New Orleans in 1915, and her work was hailed by Pope Pius XII.

### **March 4 – Antonio Vivaldi, composer**

*Born in Venice, Italy, in 1678, Antonio Vivaldi was certainly the most influential Italian composer of his generation, and a major composer of the Baroque era. Ordained as priest in 1703, he was dubbed the "red priest" because of his red hair. He soon ceased celebrating Mass and immersed himself in musical activities. He remained outwardly religious and even continued to recite his breviary. Though his composed in all genre, religious and secular, and he traveled widely, he died destitute in Vienna on July 28, 1741.*

### **March 5 – Heitor Villa-Lobos, educator**

Born in 1887, Villa-Lobos began his musical career as a cellist in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He studied with Nadia Boulanger, in France, and was then named Director of Music Education for Rio de Janeiro. He implemented many programs for music educators and codified an original pedagogy of sight singing for children, *Orpheonic Concentrations*. His legacy is his quest for the roots of Brazilian musicality in his nation's folk music and the development of musical education for all the children of Brazil. Villa-Lobos died in 1959.

### **March 7 – Perpetua and Felicity, martyrs**

In the third century, Vibia Perpetua, a young widow and a new mother, was a catechumen in Roman Carthage (north Africa). Felicitas, her slave, was a catechumen, along with Perpetua, preparing for baptism. Perpetua and Felicity and three other catechumens were imprisoned for treason, failing to offer sacrifice to the emperor's divinity. They were martyred in the year 203. Perpetua and Felicity are included in the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I).

### **March 8 – John of God, religious**

Born in Portugal in the late fifteenth century, John became known as the patron of booksellers, in Granada. After a visit with John of Avila, John took care of insane asylum inmates and rented a house near the asylum where he cared for sick people who had been abandoned. He took up the name of John of God. A religious community later took up his work and chose to be called Brothers Hospitalers of St. John of God. After his death at age fifty-five, John came to be honored as the patron of hospitals, nurses and the sick.

**March 9 – Gregory of Nyssa, bishop and theologian**

Gregory was an bishop in Palestine in the later half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Greatly effected by the deaths of his brother Basil and his sister Macrina, in 379, Gregory re-examined his life and began to develop as a philosopher and theologian. Gregory is one of the three “Cappadocian Fathers,” who are considered the greatest theologians of the Eastern Churches. Gregory died in about the year 394.

**March 10 – Harriet Tubman, preacher and liberator**

Born into slavery in about 1820, Harriet Tubman became one of the most successful “conductors” on the Underground Railroad. Risking recapture and death, she led more than 300 hundred slave to freedom, trusting in God’s presence to protect her. After the Civil War, she worked tirelessly for freed slaves and started a home for poor and sick African Americans in Auburn, New York. Most spirituals were actually Underground Railroad songs with coded references. “Steal Away to Jesus”, “Jesus” is actually a coded reference to Harriet Tubman. “....steal away home.” “Home” is code for freedom.

**March 17 – Patrick, bishop**

Patrick was born into a ministerial family in Roman Britain. His father was a Christian priest. At about 16, he was kidnapped by pirates and sold as a slave in Ireland. He escaped back to Britain and after his ordination as priest and bishop, he returned to Ireland, as a missionary, in about 432. He is said to have established his major church in Armagh. He died in 461 and his buried with Brigid at Downpatrick.

**March 18 – Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop and doctor**

Born in about 313, Cyril became bishop of Jerusalem, his birth place, in about 349. He is credited with coining the term “Theotokos” (Mother of God). This description of Mary as confirmed by the General Council of Ephesus in 351. It is likely that Cyril instituted the observances of Palm Sunday and Holy Week in Jerusalem in the form that was brought back, by pilgrims, to other churches.

**March 19 – Joseph, husband of Mary**

The gospels portray Joseph as a man of deep faith, dedicated to God’s will for him. Joseph, a distant relative of King David, was a *tekton*, a person involved in building trades from architect to carpenter. He is credited with being involved with the rebuilding of Sepphoris, the Galilean capital a few miles from Nazareth

**March 21 – Johann Sebastian Bach**

*A Baroque contemporary of Vivaldi, Bach was born in Eisenach, Germany, in 1685. Sebastian (as he was known by his family) received most of his musical education from his brother, Johann Christoph, after the death of his father, Johann Ambrosius. Johann Sebastian was a virtuosic performer, and prolific composer in all genres, sacred and secular. His skills as a composer gained him a unique position in the history of music.*

**March 23 – Gregory the Illuminator, missionary**

Born in Armenia in about 240, Gregory was raised as a Christian in Cappadocia. About the year 280, he managed to convert the king to Christianity. This event brought him his nickname, because he brought the enlightenment or “illumination” of the gospel to Armenia – the first nation to officially became Christian.

**March 24 – Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdamez, bishop and martyr**

Oscar Romero was born in 1917 in Ciudad Barrios, near the city of San Miguel, El Salvador. Ordained to the priesthood in Rom, during World War II, he returned to El Salvador, where he became a well-know radio preacher and pastor in San Miguel. In 1974, he became bishop of Santiago de Maria and in 1977, archbishop of San Salvador. He came to recognize that the needs of the poor required that the church make what the South American bishops at Medellihad called the “the preferential option of the poor. Romero became an outspoken critic of the violence and human rights violations of the government. On March 24, 1980, Archbishop Romero was shot to death by an unknown gunman while saying mass in the chapel of the cancer hospital where he lived. His tomb in San Salvador cathedral is a popular shrine.

**March 25 – Annunciation; traditional date of Jesus’ death; Celebration of the First Mass in the English American Colonies.**

In the colony of Mary Land, the first group of settlers arrived at the little island in the Chesapeake Bay, called St. Clement’s Island. They left their ships, erected a large cross and celebrated Mass on March 25, 1634.

**March 27 – Louis Lambillotte, teacher**

Born in Belgium, in 1796, Louis Lambillotte is acknowledged as a pioneer in the restoration of Gregorian chant. A member of the Society of Jesus, he found a school and monastic libraries for the study of chant manuscripts. He published a facsimile edition, the *Antiphonaire de Saint-Grégoire*, a late 9<sup>th</sup> century manuscript from St. Gall.

**March 28 – First N.P.M. Convention of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians.**

The Convention opened on this date in 1978, in Marywood College, Scranton, Pennsylvania.

***March 31 – Franz Joseph Haydn, musician, composer***

*Born in 1732, during the Baroque era, Haydn was a dominating force of the later Classical era. Acknowledged as the father of the symphonic form, “Papa” Haydn or the “grand old man” of music, composed in all genre, sacred and secular. One of Haydn’s most famous compositions, Missa in honorem BVM, the “Great Organ Mass”, was composed during the years of 1766-70.*