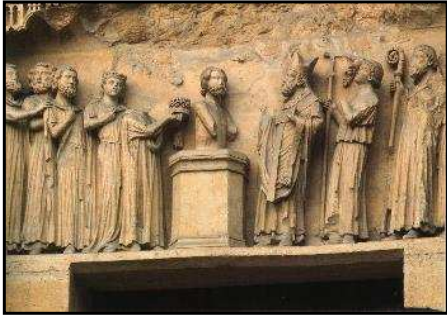


October 1 - Remigius (d.533)



If you've ever prayed for the ill children of non-Christian friends, then you are following in the steps of Remigius.

Remigius was bishop of Reims late in the 5th century, and the king's son was ill. The queen, Clotild, was a Christian, but the king of the Franks, Clovis I, was not. Then Remigius prayed for their ailing son, and he was healed. The king was so overwhelmed with gratitude, that he decided to acknowledge and honour the Christian God.

In his enthusiasm King Clovis seems to have turned his royal household into something akin to the aftermath of a Billy Graham rally/Alpha course, for he commanded that all 3,000 members of the royal household and followers become Christians at once, and be baptised.

Under the protection of King Clovis, Remigius carried on preaching the Gospel throughout the Frankish kingdom. He did some extensive church-planting - founding bishoprics and churches - and was greatly loved by the people up to his death in Reims in 533.

(Image from St Remigius Church – Dusseldorf)

October 4 - St. Francis of Assisi



St Francis (1181 - 1226) is surely one of the most attractive and best-loved of all the saints. But he began by being anything but a saint. Born the son of a wealthy cloth-merchant of Assisi, Francis' youth was spent in fast-living, parties and on fast horses as a leader of the young society of the town. Then he went to the war between Assisi and Perugia, and was taken prisoner for a year.

By the time of his release, Francis had changed. Perhaps his own suffering had awakened him to that of others. In any case, he abandoned warfare and carousing, and began to help the poor and the lepers of his area. Then one day a voice which seemed to come

from the crucifix in the small, semi-derelict church of Damiano Assisi 'Go and repair my house, which you see is falling down'.

This religious experience was a vital turning point in Francis' life: Jesus Christ became very real and immediate to him. His first action was to begin repairing the church, having sold some of his father's cloth to pay for materials. His father was not amused, in fact he was furious - until Francis renounced his inheritance and even his clothes by his dramatic stripping off in the public square of the town. The Bishop of Assisi provided him with simple garments, and Francis began his new life.

His inspiration was always religious, not social, and the object of his quest was always the Crucified Christ, not Lady Poverty for her own sake. Francis rebuilt San Samiano, and then travelled as a pilgrim. His compassion for the poor and lepers became famous. Soon disciples joined him, and they set up a communal life in simple wattle and daub huts. They went on occasional preaching tours. (Not until later did they become an Order whose theologians won fame in the Universities.)