

2. It was not granted to St. Roch to be preserved from the dread disease, but his patience and resignation to God's will greatly increased his heavenly merits. It may please God also to permit such an evil to befall us and our associates, for many a person to whom it might not otherwise be granted, is thus led back to God, has a good death, and attains eternal blessedness. Our good Lord afflicts the body with sickness in order to save the soul. **When sickness attacks a community, pray fervently to St. Roch that through his intercession the souls of men may be benefited by it.**

3. Consider that certain diseases of the soul are communicable and spread like contagion. They are much worse than the plagues which attack the body. Such diseases are the various vices: impurity, intemperance, inordinate love of pleasure. Roch fled the dangerous occasions of these vices with so much zeal that he relinquished his wealth and prominent position that, in the guise of a poor pilgrim and servant of the sick, he might preserve his soul from sin. **Think frequently of the example he has given, and invoke his intercession for yourself and your family against contagion of the body and of the soul.**

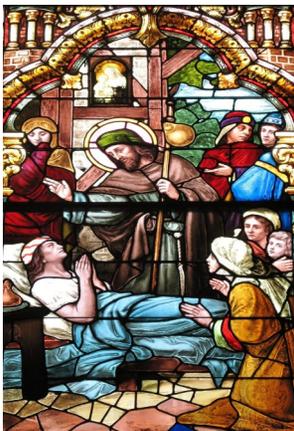
PRAYER TO ST. ROCH/ROCCO

**O GREAT ST. ROCCO, DELIVER US, WE BESEECH THEE, FROM THE SCOURGES OF GOD;
THROUGH THY INTERCESSION, PRESERVE OUR BODIES FROM
CONTAGIOUS DISEASES, AND OUR SOULS FROM THE CONTAGION OF SIN.**

OBTAIN FOR US SALUBRIOUS AIR; BUT, ABOVE ALL, PURITY OF HEART.

**ASSIST US TO MAKE GOOD USE OF HEALTH, TO BEAR SUFFERINGS WITH PATIENCE;
AND, AFTER THY EXAMPLE, TO LIVE IN THE PRACTICE OF PENANCE AND CHARITY,
THAT WE MAY ONE DAY ENJOY THE HAPPINESS WHICH THOU HAS MERITED BY VIRTUES.**

ST. ROCCO, PRAY FOR US—3 TIMES



Stained glass window depicting St. Roch/Rocco making the sign of the cross over a sick person.

Saint Roch or Rocco

**Feast: August 16,
August 17 by the Third Order of St. Francis**

(PATRON SAINT AGAINST CONTAGIOUS DISEASES)



**O God,
who did grant to St. Roch the promise, which an angel recorded on
a tablet, not to permit anyone who sought his intercession to be
afflicted with a contagious disease;
grant, we beseech Thee, that we, who celebrate his memory, may
be preserved from every contagion of soul and body.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Saint Roch

from:

THE FRANCISCAN BOOK OF SAINTS,
ed. by Marion Habig, ofm.

Roch was the only son of a wealthy nobleman in France, who seems to have been governor of the town of Montpellier. In answer to the persevering prayers of his parents, this child was granted to them. His future career was indicated by a birthmark in the form of a red cross that was deeply marked on his breast.

The parents raised their boy in a devout manner. Proof was given when, at the age of 20, he lost both parents. He did not use the immense fortune he inherited for his personal benefit, but he sold all the personal property and distributed the proceeds among the poor while he transferred the ownership of the real estate to his uncle. This done, he joined the Third Order of St. Francis, put on a pilgrim's garb, and journeyed to Rome to visit the tombs of the Apostles.

When he arrived at Acquapendente in northern Italy about the year 1315, he found that an epidemic had broken out there and was making fearful ravages. Roch did not hasten on, as many another person, fearful for his life, would have done, but according to the example of Christ and the admonition of the beloved disciple (1 John 3:16), he offered his life in the service of his brethren in Christ. He went to the hospital of St. John, which was filled with the plague stricken, and offered his services to the brothers there. He also went to individual homes and sought out the sick, serving them without resting by day and by night. God rewarded his heroic charity by causing many to be cured at the mere Sign of the Cross which Roch made over them. When the plague abated, Roch proceeded on his journey to Rome.

But there, too, an epidemic had broken out. Besides visiting the holy places, Roch again devoted himself to the care of the sick, many of whom were miraculously cured by him. He performed the same services in many other towns of Italy until he arrived in Piacenza and was himself stricken with the dread disease. In the very hospital where he had cured so many sick, he was now looked upon as an intruder, who as an outsider had no right to claim a place there. In order not to be a burden to others, he arose, left the house, and with the support of a staff dragged himself wearily to a neighborhood woods. There he came upon a dilapidated hut with a bit of straw, where he lay down, thanking God for the quiet lodging.

God also provided for his nourishment. As He once took care of Elias, sending him bread by means of a raven, so He now sent bread to Roch by means of a dog from a neighboring country house. The sick man gradually recovered. When he had regained sufficient strength, he was divinely inspired to return to his native town.

There furious warfare was raging. The soldiers whom he encountered thought he was a spy. He was led before the governor of Montpellier, his own uncle, who, however, did not recognize his nephew in the emaciated prisoner, and had the supposed spy cast into prison. Roch did not say a word in his defense; he wished, like Christ, to accept in silence whatever heaven had ordained for him. Because of the disturbances of the war, he was almost completely forgotten, and languished in prison for 5 years. Then death put an end to his trials on August 16, 1378.

When he felt that his end was drawing near, he asked that a priest might come and administer the last sacraments. The priest, on entering the prison, beheld it supernaturally lighted up and the poor captive surrounded with special radiance. As death claimed its victim, a tablet appeared on the wall on which an angelic hand wrote in golden letters the name of Roch, and the prediction that all who would invoke his intercession would be delivered from the plague.

Informed of all that took place, Roch's uncle came to the prison and, shortly after, also the governor's mother, that is, Roch's grandmother. She identified the dead man as her grandson by the birthmark of the red cross on his breast. 

They gave him a magnificent funeral and had a church built in his honor, in which his body was entombed. His veneration was approved by several popes and soon spread throughout Europe. He was canonized by Pope Urban VIII. He is the patron against contagious diseases.

ST. ROCH, PATRON AGAINST CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

1. The prediction that St. Roch would be a special patron against contagious diseases has been so remarkably verified that he is invoked by all Christian peoples in such sad times. In 1415, when a general council was held in Constance, an epidemic broke out. A great procession was inaugurated in honor of St. Roch to invoke his intercession, and immediately the epidemic was checked. We read in the annals of the Franciscan Order that many convents were preserved from contagious disease due to the devotion they tendered the saint, and for this reason prayers are offered daily in the convents of the order to obtain his protection.

Could you not say a prayer each day in honor of St. Roch, so that he will protect you and your house from contagious disease?