

the murderers perished miserably in various ways.

Saint Wenceslaus won the crown of martyrdom in the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian, which he visited on account of their Feast on September 27. He also acknowledged the Feast of the following day with his last words at the fratricidal banquet: "In honor of the Archangel Saint Michael, let us drink this cup, and let us beseech him to lead our souls into the peace of eternal happiness."

Before he died, Wenceslaus forgave his brother and asked God's mercy for his soul. Martyred at the age of twenty-two, Wenceslaus is the national hero and patron of the Czech Republic. He is the first Slav to be canonized. He is also the patron saint of: Bohemia, brewers, and Moravia.

Christian de Scala, son of the fratricide Boleslaus the Cruel, and nephew of the Saint, became a monk and wrote the lives of Saint Wenceslaus and Saint Ludimilla. The Feast of the latter is celebrated on September 16.

**COMMENT:** "Good King Wenceslaus" was able to incarnate his Christianity in a world filled with political unrest. While we are often victims of violence of a different sort, we can easily identify with his struggle to bring harmony to society. The call to become involved in social change and in political activity is addressed to Christians; the values of the gospel are sorely needed today.

**QUOTE:** "While recognizing the autonomy of the reality of politics, Christians who are invited to take up political activity should try to make their choices consistent with the Gospel and, in the frame-work of a legitimate plurality, to give both personal and collective witness to the seriousness of their faith by effective and disinterested service of all people" (Pope Paul VI, *A Call to Action*, 46)  
\* (excerpted from: [www.salvemariaregina.info](http://www.salvemariaregina.info); [www.freerepublic.com](http://www.freerepublic.com))

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# Saint Wenceslaus

Feast Day: September 28



Through the tender-hearted prayers of Saint Wenceslaus,  
the young father of many, O Christ our God,  
release us from our shackles of sin,  
heal our souls, and save us!  
Amen.

## Saint Wenceslaus

\*Saint Wenceslaus was born around 907 near Prague, Bohemia (now the Czech Republic). His was born of a Christian father who was killed in battle when he was thirteen years old, leaving the kingdom to be ruled by his ambitious mother, the pagan, Drahomira (who had feigned conversion and received Baptism), but who encouraged an anti-Christian government. Wenceslaus was raised by his grandmother, Saint Ludmilla, who saw to it that he was educated in the faith.

Drahomira resented her mother-in-law Ludmilla's influence over her son Wenceslaus, and had her murdered. The rule of Drahomira was so cruel, that along with Wenceslaus' younger brother Boleslaus, they had excited the indignation of the nobles. Wearied of a tyrannical and impious rule, they compelled Wenceslaus on behalf of his subjects, to overthrow her and assume power for himself. The nobles proclaimed Saint Wenceslaus King at Prague. He was eighteen years old when he succeeded his father to the throne.

Without regard for the opposition, Wenceslaus worked in close cooperation with the Church to convert his pagan country. He ended the persecution of Christians, built churches and brought back exiled priests. As king, he ruled his kingdom by kindness rather than by authority. He helped orphans, widows, and all the poor with the greatest charity, sometimes even carrying wood on his shoulders by night, to those in need of it. He frequently assisted at funerals of poor

persons, liberated captives, and often visited the prisoners during the night, assisting them with gifts and advice. It caused great sorrow to his tender heart to condemn even the guilty to death. He had the greatest reverence for priests; and with his own hands he would sow the wheat and prepare the wine to be used in the Sacrifice of the Mass. At night, he used to visit the churches barefoot, through ice and snow, while his bloodstained footprints warmed the ground.

The Angels formed his bodyguard. In order to spare the lives of his soldiers, Wenceslaus undertook to fight in single combat with Radislaus, Duke of Gurima; but when the latter saw Angels arming Saint Wenceslaus, and heard them forbidding him to strike, he was terrified and fell at the Saint's feet begging his forgiveness. On one occasion, when he had gone to Germany, the Emperor Otto I, at his approach, saw two Angels adorning him with a golden Cross; whereupon, rising from his throne, he embraced the Saint, bestowed on him the regal insignia, and presented him with the arm of Saint Vitus. Nevertheless, his wicked brother Boleslaus, instigated by their mother Drahomira, invited the Saint to a banquet. Afterwards, while Saint Wenceslaus was praying in a church and preparing himself for the death that he knew awaited him, Boleslaus, together with some accomplices, killed him. His blood is still to be seen sprinkled on the walls. God avenged his Saint; the earth swallowed up the inhuman mother, and