

about this time wrote his 'Treatise on Prayer and Meditation', which a generation later would influence the spiritual writings of St. Francis de Sales.

St. Peter knew that in the Catholic mystical tradition there was a difference between 'knowing God' and 'knowing *about* God'. Intellectual study, philosophy and theology might help us to know *about* God, but only a deep, inner personal relationship with the God who reveals himself as the person of Jesus Christ could lead us to know him. This relationship was developed through prayer and meditation in the quiet of our own hearts.

In this sense the message of St. Peter of Alcantara is timeless. The annual Novena in his honor is a time to ask God for the grace to know Him better, and to love and serve Him.

St. Peter of Alcantara died in 1562 and was canonized in 1699. Spanish and Portuguese missionaries brought the Gospel to South America and it was fitting that, in 1862, St. Peter of Alcantara was named Patron Saint of Brazil. As we journey towards the kingdom of heaven, St. Peter can be our patron as well - a man of prayer, penance, contemplation and concern for others. St. Theresa of Avila vouched for the power of his intercession and patronage.

* (excerpted from: www.norbertines.co.uk)

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.pamphletstoinpire.com

Saint Peter of Alcantara

Feast Day: October 19



**Saint Peter,
pray that we may be as holy
and loving as you were towards the poor.**

Saint Peter of Alcantara

*Born in the Spanish/Portuguese border town of Alcantara in 1499 Peter Garavito was the son of the town's Governor and could have become a minor politician or civil servant in the area. Instead, after studying law in the prestigious university of Salamanca, he joined the Franciscans, choosing the severely penitential branch of the Conventuals known as the Observants. His gifts for administration gave him a leadership role in the Order even before his ordination to the priesthood in 1524.

Inspired by the tradition of the hermits and the Desert Fathers of the Early Church, Peter wanted to live his religious life according to the ancient practice of prayer, hardships, contemplation, fasting and penance. The Observant Franciscans provided him with the monastic setting to live out his vocation. His was a personal Way of the Cross - a way of voluntary austerity - and the daily poverty and deprivations soon marked him out as a holy man.

He attracted the attention of rich and poor, kings and popes, and his reputation as a spiritual advisor spread beyond his native Spain. He spent some time as spiritual guide in the court of King John III of Portugal. In 1538 he was elected Minister Provincial of the Observants

in the Spanish province of Estramadura. The strict observance of the monasteries and Friaries under his guidance gave them the name 'Alcantarines'. St. Peter loved his God with a generosity which was extended to his neighbor.

St. Peter of Alcantara had a special love for the sick who came to him for healing. He was always quick to point out that only God could cure sick people, but that he would pray with them and for them. In our annual Novena that is all we ask him to do - to pray with us and for us for our own needs and the needs of those dear to us.

In 1560 Saint Peter met the Spanish nun St. Theresa of Avila, who was trying to reform the Carmelite ideal: she found the Franciscan from Alcantara a kindred spirit. Both favored an austere religious life - no easy options for either of them. St. Peter became St. Theresa's spiritual director and