

FEAST DAY OF SAINT JEROME EMILIANI

***The Feast Day of Saint Jerome Emiliani is July 20th.

The origin of Feast Days: most saints have specially designated feast days and are associated with a specific day of the year and these are referred to as the saint's feast day. The feast days first arose from the very early Christian custom of the annual commemoration of martyrs on the dates of their deaths at the same time celebrating their birth into heaven.

***(excerpted from: www.catholic-saints.info)

IN HIS FOOTSTEPS:

Become a foster parent.

Millions of children need the love and care of a foster family.

Contact your local Family Services agency
or Catholic Charities to find out how you can help.

PRAYER

Saint Jerome Emiliani,
watch over all children who are abandoned or unloved.

Give us the courage to show them

God's love through our care.

Help us to lose the chains that keep us
from living the life God intended for us.

Amen.

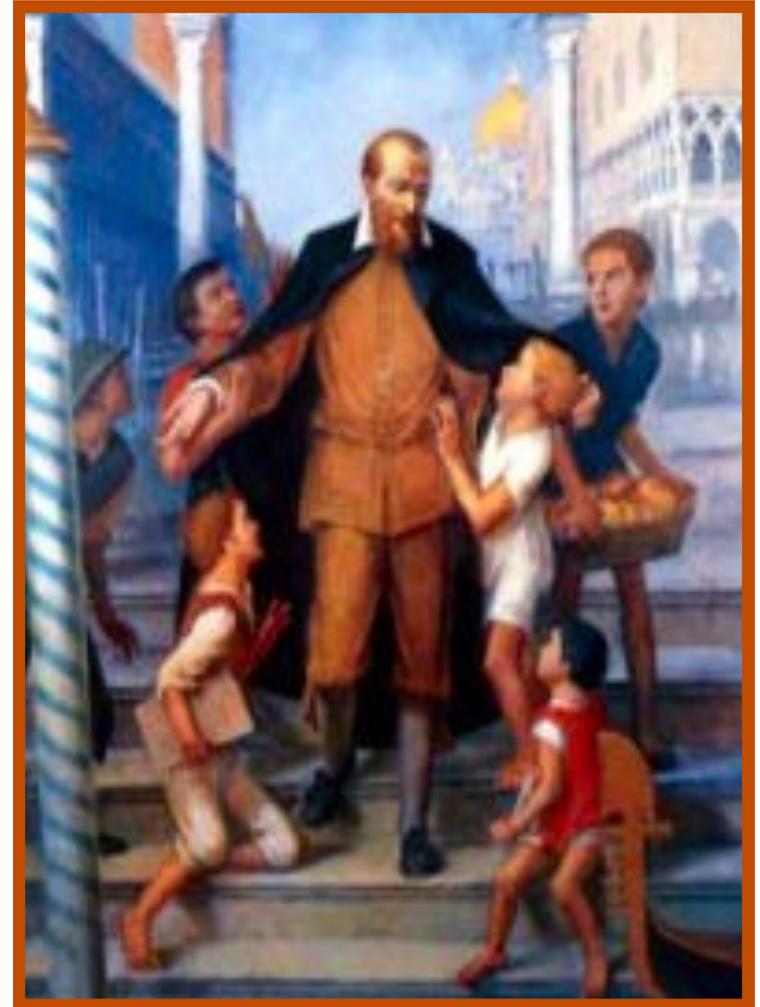


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Saint Jerome Emiliani

Humanitarian

Feast July 20th



Patron Saint
of Orphans
and Abandoned Children

SAINT JEROME EMILIANI
(1481 - 1537)

*Jerome Emiliani lay chained in the dark dirty dungeon. Only a short time before he had been a military commander for Venice, Italy in charge of a fortress. He didn't care much about God because he didn't need him—he had his own strength and the strength of his soldiers and weapons. When Venice's enemies, the League of Cambrai, captured the fortress, he was dragged off and imprisoned. There in the dungeon, Jerome decided to get rid of the chains that bound him. He let go of his worldly attachments and embraced God.

When he finally was able to escape, he hung his metal chains in the nearby Church of Treviso—in gratitude not only for being freed from physical prison but from his spiritual dungeon as well.

After a short time as mayor of Treviso he returned to his home in Venice where he studied for the priesthood. The war may have been over but it was followed by the famine and plague that war's devastation often brought. Thousands suffered in his beloved city. Jerome devoted himself to service again—this time, not to the military but the poor and suffering around him. He felt a special call to help the orphans who had no one to care for them. All the loved ones who would have protected them and comforted them had been taken by sickness or starvation. He would become their parent, their family.

Using his own money, he rented a house for the orphans, fed them, clothed them, and educated them. Part of his education was to give them the first known catechetical teaching by question and answer. But his constant devotion to the suffering put him in danger too and he fell ill from the plague himself. When he recovered, he had the ideal excuse to back away, but instead his illness seemed to take the last links of the chain from his soul. Once again he interpreted his suffering to be a sign of how little the ambitions of the world mattered.

He committed his whole life and all he owned to helping others. He founded orphanages in other cities, a hospital, and a shelter for prostitutes. This grew into a congregation of priests and brothers that was named after the place where they had a house: the Clerks Regular of Somascha. Although they spent time educating other young people, their primary work was always Jerome's first love—helping orphans.

His final chains fell away when he again fell ill while taking care of the sick. He died in 1537 at the age of 56.

*(excerpted from: www.catholic.org)

BEYOND HIS DEATH

**After the death of Jerome his community was about to disband, but was kept together by Gambarana, who had been chosen superior. He obtained the approval (1540) of Paul III. In 1547 the members vainly sought affiliation with the Society of Jesus; then in 1547-1555 they were united with the Theatines. Pius IV (1563) approved the institution, and St. Pius V raised it to the dignity of a religious order, according to the Rule of St. Augustine, with solemn vows, the privileges of the mendicants, and exemption. In 1569 the first six members made their profession, and Gambarana was made first superior general. Great favor was shown to the order by St. Charles Borromeo, and he gave it the church of St. Mayeul at Pavia, from which church the order takes its official name "Clerical regulares S. Majoli Papiæ congregationis Somaschæ". Later the education of youth was put into the programme of the order, and the colleges at Rome and Pavia became renowned. It spread into Austria and Switzerland, and before the great Revolution it had 119 houses in the four provinces of Rome, Lombardy, Venice, and France. At present the order has ten houses in Italy two of which are in Rome. The general resides in Rome at S. Girolamo della Carita.

***(excerpted from: www.newadvent.org)