

## Biography of Bruno by Fr. André Ravier, s.j.

The twelve chapter titles below are links to the main chapters of André Ravier's (1905-1999) biography of Saint Bruno: **André Ravier, s.j., *Saint Bruno the Carthusian***, written in 1981 and translated by Bruno Becker, O.S.B., Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1995. these extensive excerpts (almost the complete book, slightly edited for web purposes and updated, but without the footnotes and index) from the pen of a writer who wrote so many books on Carthusian history and spirituality are included here for their inspirational value and for a fuller understanding of Bruno's soul through his historical circumstances. It is an important read for an admirer of Bruno and for any serious student of the Carthusian Charism. The book is out of print; it is reproduced here with the kind permission of Ignatius Press:

<http://transfiguration.chartreux.org/SaintBruno.htm>

### The Twelve Chapters

Prologue

I Bruno's Childhood

II Master Bruno

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# SAINT BRUNO

FEAST DAY: OCTOBER 6



SAINT BRUNO,

pray for all those who are possessed.

## Saint Bruno Priest (1030—1101)

\*This saint has the honor of having founded a religious Order which, as the saying goes, has never had to be reformed because it was never deformed. No doubt both the founder and the members would reject such high praise, but it is an indication of the saint's intense love of a penitential life in solitude.

He was born in Cologne, became a famous teacher at Rheims and was appointed chancellor of that archdiocese at the age of 45. He supported Pope Gregory VII in his fight against the decadence of the clergy, and took part in the removal of his own scandalous archbishop, Manasses. Bruno suffered the plundering of his house for his pains.

He had a dream of living in solitude and prayer, and persuaded a few friends to join him in a hermitage. After a while he felt the place unsuitable and, through a friend, was given some land which was to become famous for his foundation "in the Chartreuse" (from which comes the word Carthusians). The climate, mountainous terrain and inaccessibility guaranteed silence, poverty and small numbers.

Bruno and his friends built an oratory with small individual cells at a distance from each other. They met for Matins and Vespers each day, and spent the rest of the time in solitude, eating together only on great feasts. Their chief work was copying manuscripts.

The pope, hearing of Bruno's holiness, called for his assistance in Rome. When the pope had to flee Rome, Bruno pulled up stakes again, and spent his last years (after refusing a bishopric) in the wilderness of Calabria (southern Italy).

He was never formally canonized, because the Carthusians were averse to all occasions of publicity. Pope Clement X extended his feast to the whole Church in 1674.

**COMMENT:** If there is always a certain uneasy questioning of the contemplative life, there is an even greater puzzlement about the extremely penitential combination of community and hermit life lived by the Carthusians.

**QUOTE:** "Members of those communities which are totally dedicated to contemplation give themselves to God alone in solitude and silence and through constant prayer and ready penance. No matter how urgent may be the needs of the active apostolate, such communities will always have a distinguished part to play in Christ's Mystical Body..."  
*(Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life, 7).*

\* (excerpted from: *Saint of the Day*)