

# 100 Saints

**PURPOSE**

Every Catholic  
Teen Should Know

## St. Gregory the Great

“Act in such a way that your humility may not be weakness, nor your authority be severity. Justice must be accompanied by humility, that humility may render justice lovable.”

**Born:** Around A.D. 540

**Died:** A.D. March 12, 604

**Feast Day:** September 3

No official **patronage** exists for this saint.

### **Background**

Saint Gregory would have been the guy in high school voted “Most Likely to Succeed.” His resume would have been longer than his peers’ term papers. He has so many accomplishments and changed the Church in so many ways that it is almost impossible to mention them all here, so we will just hit a few highlights.

Gregory was born in Rome in the middle of the sixth century. He was brilliant, likable, kind but firm. He began in politics, was later ordained a priest, and, after that, served beneath the pope. Years later, when Gregory, himself, became pope, he removed bad priests from office, used the Vatican’s wealth as ransom for prisoners who were held captive, and allotted every ounce of the Church’s power to aid and feed the poor and hungry. He reformed the Mass (liturgy), clarified doctrines that had been misinterpreted, redefined our calendar system, and played a huge part in what we now know as “Gregorian chant” (yes, it is named after him). He taught priests and bishops how to be better servants. If his priests were unwilling to serve or interact with the poor or those who were most in need, Gregory removed them. He refused to eat until the poor had eaten first

and, even then, usually dined with at least a dozen poor souls. Gregory was one of a kind. For this reason, he is known not merely as "St. Gregory" but "St. Gregory the Great."

Gregory's personality is well-represented by the Gregorian chant he designed — a fiery combination of passion and praise. He loved people and the Lord with all his heart. He refused to let "how things *had always been done*" dictate what needed to be done. Gregory reminds us that art and beauty ought to draw the viewer and hearer to God, not to self. Though he was constantly surrounded by poverty, death, and dark political times, Gregory focused on the light, truth, and beauty. He reminded us that in order to live as a Catholic Christian, you have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

If you ever feel overwhelmed by the negativity and evil of the world, ask St. Gregory the Great to pray with you to keep hope alive and maintain a good attitude. This "great" saint (literally) is a living example that things will get better if you trust and serve God. Focus on God and there is no telling how much you can accomplish, whether people voted you "Most Likely to Succeed" or not.

### **Notable Moments/Achievements**

- Served for five years as the mayor of Rome
- Became a Benedictine monk after resigning from office
- Founded six monasteries
- First monk to be elected as pope
- Most famous written works are "On Pastoral Care," "Homilies," "Dialogues," his sermons on Ezekiel and the Song of Songs, and "Moralia in Job"
- Declared a "Doctor of the Church," an honor bestowed on only 36 saints (to date)