

essentials as the religious garb of his followers, and he imposed on him for all time the name given him by the Infant Jesus, John of God. The saint's first two companions, Antonio Martin and Pedro Velasco, once bitter enemies who had scandalized all Granada with their quarrels and dissipations, were converted through his prayers and formed the nucleus of a flourishing congregation. The former advanced so far on the way of perfection that the saint on his death-bed commended him to his followers as his successor in the government of the order. The latter, Peter the Sinner, as he called himself, became a model of humility and charity.

Among the many miracles which are related of the saint the most famous is the one commemorated in the Office of his feast, his rescue of all the inmates during a fire in the Grand Hospital at Granada, he himself passing through the flames unscathed. His boundless charity extended to widows and orphans, those out of employment, poor students, and fallen women. After thirteen years of severe mortification, unceasing prayer, and devotion to his patients, he died amid the lamentations of all the inhabitants of Granada. His last illness had resulted from a heroic but futile effort to save a young man from drowning. The magistrates and nobility of the city crowded about his death-bed to express their gratitude for his service to the poor, and he was buried with the pomp usually reserved for princes. He was beatified by Urban VIII, 21 September, 1638, and canonized by Alexander VIII, 16 October, 1690. Pope Leo XIII made St. John of God patron of hospitals and the dying. For additional information also see Brothers Hospitallers of St. John of God.

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

Prayer

******Saint John of God, help us to act out of love as soon as we feel the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Help us learn to fight the little voices in our heads and hearts that give us all sorts of practical reasons to wait or delay in our service of God. Amen.

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



Saint John of God

Feast Day March 8



... by day he attended scrupulously
to the needs of his patients ...

St. John of God

*St. John of God (John Cuidad) was born at Montemoro Novo, Portugal on 8 March, 1495, of devout Christian parents; he died at Granada, Spain on 8 March, 1550. He was an only child, and at eight years old, he heard a visiting Spanish priest speak of adventures in the new world with the discovery of America. That very night he ran away from home to travel with the priest and never saw his parents again. They would go from village to village to beg for food until John became sick while in Oropeza, Spain. He was left with a manager of a large estate who nursed him back to health and adopted him. He worked as a shepherd in the mountains until he was 27. Feeling pressure to marry the manager's daughter, whom he loved as a sister, John left to join the Spanish army in the war against France. As a soldier, he was hardly a model of holiness, taking part in the gambling, drinking, and pillaging that his comrades enjoyed. One day, he was thrown from a stolen horse near the French lines. Frightened that he would be captured or killed, he reviewed his life and vowed impulsively to make a change.

When he returned to camp, he kept his spur of the moment vow, made a confession, and immediately changed his life. His comrades did not mind that he was repenting, but hated that he wanted them to give up their pleasures as well. They used his impulsive nature to trick him into leaving his post on the pretext of helping someone in need. He was rescued from hanging at the last minute and thrown out of the army after being beaten and stripped. He begged his way back to his foster-home where he worked as a shepherd until he heard of a new war where Moors were invading Europe. After the war, he decided to try to find his real parents only to discover both had died in his absence.

As a shepherd he had plenty of time to contemplate what God might want of his life. When he decided at 38 that he should go to Africa to ransom Christian captives, he set off for the port of Gibraltar. He was on the dock waiting for his ship when he saw a Portuguese family who had just been expelled from Gibraltar. When he discovered they were a noble family being exiled to Africa after political intrigue,

he abandoned his original plan and volunteered to be their servant. The family fell sick when they reached Africa and John not only nursed them back to health but also earned money to support them. When they recovered and also received a pardon, on the advice of a priest, John returned to Spain.

In Spain, he spent his days unloading cargo ships and his nights visiting churches and reading spiritual books. He quit his job and became a book peddler selling religious books and holy cards. He received a vision of the Infant Jesus at age 41, Who bestowed on him the name by which he would later be known by, John of God. He was told to go to Granada, Spain, where he sold books from a little shop. (For this reason he is the patron saint of booksellers and printers.)

After hearing a sermon from the famous John of Avila on repentance, he was so overcome by the thought of his sins, that he distributed all his worldly goods and went through the streets of the city, beating his breast and calling on God for mercy. Some doubted his sanity, until he made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadeloupe, where the nature of his vocation was revealed to him by the Blessed Virgin Mary. Returning to Granada, he gave himself up to the service of the poor, renting a house in which to care for them and after furnishing it with what was necessary, he searched the city for those afflicted with all manner of disease, bearing on his shoulders any who were unable to walk.

For some time he was alone in his charitable work soliciting by night the needful supplies, and by day attending scrupulously to the needs of his patients; soon however he received the co-operation of charitable priests and physicians. Many beautiful stories are related of the heavenly guests who visited him during the early days of herculean tasks, which were lightened at times by St. Raphael in person. To put a stop to the saint's habit of exchanging his cloak with any beggar he chanced to meet, Don Sebastian Ramirez, Bishop of Tuy, had made for him a habit, which was later adopted in all its