

## Saint John of God 8 March



### About Saint John of God (1495 – 1550)

Saint John of God was born to a poor but devout family in Portugal in 1495. After serving as a soldier in Spain under the Emperor Charles V, he devoted his life wholly to the service of the poor and the sick.

After completing his military service, he began to distribute religious books. The Gutenberg printing press had just been invented. John had an intense religious experience which resulted in him experiencing temporary insanity. As a result he was thrown into a mental institution and it was there he realised how badly the poor and sick were treated. Once he recovered from his mental illness, he devoted the rest of life to caring for the sick and poor.

In Granada he gathered a group of followers around him who felt called to look after the sick and poor and he founded a religious order which is now known as the Brothers Hospitallers of Saint John of God.

The Sisters of Saint John of God were founded in Wexford, Ireland in 1871. They came to Australia and opened hospitals in Western Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. These hospitals are now run by Saint John of God Health Care.

Saint John of God died on 8 March 1550, his 55th birthday.

### What can we learn from Saint John of God's life?

Many saints were moved by a terrible experience to convert to the faith or live it our more fully. Saint John of God is no exception. Although his family were devout, it was not until he saw for himself how badly the poor and sick were treated that he really put his faith into action.

He used the printing press, which was a relatively new invention in his day, to proclaim the Gospel **and spread the message of God's love in the world. In our time and place, we have so many means of communication – we must use them for their intended purposes and at the same time use them to evangelise the world. If we are not familiar with these media, we need to get people to teach us how to use them, so that those who do not know Christ will come to know him through us.**

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Collect

O God, who filled Saint John of God with a spirit of compassion, grant, we pray, that, giving ourselves to works of charity, we may merit to be found among the elect in your Kingdom. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Luke 4:24-30

No prophet is ever accepted in his own country

Jesus came to Nazara and spoke to the people in the synagogue:  
**'I tell you solemnly, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country.**  
**'There were many widows in Israel,**  
**I can assure you, in Elijah's day,**  
when heaven remained shut for three years and six months  
and a great famine raged throughout the land,  
but Elijah was not sent to any one of these:  
he was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a Sidonian town.  
**And in the prophet Elisha's time there were many lepers in Israel,**  
**but none of these was cured, except the Syrian, Naaman.'**  
When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged.  
They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town;  
and they took him up to the brow of the hill their town was built on,  
intending to throw him down the cliff,  
but he slipped through the crowd and walked away.

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## Antiphon

O praise the Lord, all you nations,  
for his merciful love towards us is great.

## Hymn for the Memorial of Saint John of God

1. Saint John of God, you would be born  
**into a fam'ly who were poor;**  
yet they would be faithful to God  
by daily prayer and Him adore.

2. **In Emperor's army you served,**  
**but did not serve your heart's desire;**  
for the Lord had called you to serve  
Him and neighbour and never tire.

3. To spread the Gospel where you went  
**and spread Christ's Name throughout**  
the earth,  
you used the means of printed word  
which recently had come to birth.

4. You saw the pain and hardship which  
the sick and poor daily endured:  
for them you cared with greatest love  
and their dignity you assured.

5. As followers of Jesus Christ,  
may we attend to those in need,  
**rememb'ring them in daily prayer,**  
supporting them in word and deed.

Text: LM; Chris deSilva and Alessio Loiacono  
Tune: O Waly Waly

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