

About Saint Rita of Cascia

Saint Rita was born near Cascia, in the region of Umbria, Italy in the year 1377. She was married at the age of 12 (which was common in those days), despite her conviction and desire to become a nun. Her husband was a rich, hot-tempered man, who was immoral and had many enemies. Rita put up with his insults, abuse, and infidelities for 18 years and together they had two sons, who “followed in their father’s footsteps.”

Towards the end of her husband’s life, she helped him convert to a more pious way of living. Rita’s efforts were cut short because her husband was stabbed to death not long afterwards. He repented before he died and was reconciled to the Church.

Her two sons planned to take revenge on their father’s killer. Rita pleaded with them not to go down that path, but her pleas fell on deaf ears. So, she prayed that God should take their lives if that should be the only way that they be preserved from committing the sin of murder. They died of natural causes a year later.

After their death, Rita asked to join the convent of Saint Mary Magdalen at Cascia. She was rejected for being a widow, as that convent for virgins only. She was later given the impossible task of reconciling her family with her husband’s murderers. She carried out this task and could enter the convent at the age of 36. She stayed there until her death at the age of 70 in 1447.

Saint Rita of Cascia (Religious) 22 May



Saint Rita is widely honoured and prayed to as a patron saint of impossible causes.

What can we learn from Saint Rita?

Saint Rita put up with more than her fair share of hardship in life and yet she never complained. She always turned to the Lord in times of distress and trusted that He would turn everything unto good.

In our trials and tribulations it can be very easy to become angry and lash out at people. In those times, let us turn to Saint Rita for her intercession and also turn to the Lord that He guide us in His way and teaching.

Sometimes we like to have everything a certain way at all costs. That approach can cause us problems. Rita’s sons had it in their head to murder their father’s killer, no matter what. Thankfully, things turned out a very different way for them.

Rita’s parents marrying her off was not a good idea either. Perhaps from Saint Rita’s life (and her husband’s for that matter) we can learn that we need to be careful in the choices we make for our friends.

Rita persisted in trying to convert her husband. Although he converted late in his life, better late than never. So too, by our example of Christian witness we too may quietly convert people to Christ.

Saint Rita is often depicted with a wound in her forehead. That is because she was asked to suffer in union with Jesus and was given a wound from a thorn in his crown.

The Collect

Bestow on us, we pray, O Lord,
the wisdom and strength of the Cross,
with which you were pleased to endow Saint Rita,
so that, suffering in every tribulation with Christ,
we may participate ever more deeply in his Paschal Mystery.
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading Luke 6:27-38

Love your enemies

‘Jesus said to his disciples:
‘I say this to you who are listening:
Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
bless those who curse you, pray for those who treat you badly.
To the man who slaps you on one cheek, present the other cheek too;
to the man who takes your cloak from you, do not refuse your tunic.
Give to everyone who asks you,
and do not ask for your property back from the man who robs you.
Treat others as you would like them to treat you.
If you love those who love you, what thanks can you expect?
Even sinners love those who love them.
And if you do good to those who do good to you,
what thanks can you expect?
For even sinners do that much.
And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive,
what thanks can you expect?
Even sinners lend to sinners to get back the same amount.
Instead, love your enemies and do good,
and lend without any hope of return.
You will have a great reward, and you will be sons of the Most High,
for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

‘Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate.
Do not judge, and you will not be judged yourselves;
do not condemn, and you will not be condemned yourselves;
grant pardon, and you will be pardoned.
Give, and there will be gifts for you:

a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over,
will be poured into your lap;
because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given
back.’

Antiphon

One thing is necessary: she has chosen the better part,
which shall not be taken away from her, alleluia.

Hymn for the Memorial of Saint Rita

Saint Rita, you teach us that we must
throughout our life ever endure
trials (2) and tribulations that come,
trusting God to keep us secure.
Saint Rita, patron of causes lost, show us how to live lovingly.

With patience and trust you accepted
the plan God had for you in life.
In prayer You put your needs before Him,
that He relieve you from your strife.
Saint Rita, patron of causes lost, show us how to live lovingly.

Although you wished to commit yourself
to a life in community,
you encountered an obstacle there;
marriage your vocation would be.
Saint Rita, patron of causes lost, show us how to live lovingly.

You show us that to follow Our Lord,
love of enemies must increase;
not seeking revenge for the wrongs done,
but to reconcile and make peace.
Saint Rita, patron of causes lost, show us how to live lovingly.

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