

Priest of the Week



St. Jerome
345-420
Doctor of the Church

Jerome was born into a Christian family in what is now Croatia about 345 AD. Coming of age at a time when Christianity was gaining more influence in the Roman Empire, Jerome was educated in Rome, studying philosophy and languages. He would eventually be able to read and write in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic. Although raised a Catholic, he was skeptical to claims of Christianity and indifferent to his faith during his youth. Using classical Greek and Roman authors to describe Christian concepts lead him to take seriously his baptism into Christ.

After recovering from a long illness in his late twenty's, Jerome began an intense study of the Bible and to live an ascetic life. Ordained a priest in 379, his knowledge of language and the Scriptures were a great asset to the Church councils of his time.

Jerome also wrote numerous books, commentaries and letters concerning the Bible, the development of theology, and leadership of the Church, at times getting into serious disagreements with others. However, the main focus of his life's work became translating the Bible from its original Hebrew and Greek into Latin, which was then the common language of the western Roman Empire. This led him to travel to the Holy Land. Living in Bethlehem he spent 15 years translating what would later be called the Latin Vulgate Bible, which is considered his most important achievement as a scholar

Dying on September 30, 420, at about the age of 75, his body was first buried in Bethlehem, but later reburied in Rome. A contemporary of other important leaders and theologians of the early Church, such as St. Augustine, St. Gregory of Nazianzan, and St. Basil the Great, Jerome is a canonized saint and patron of librarians, translators and Scripture scholars. St. Jerome is recognized as a Doctor, or great theologian, of the Church. His feast day is September 30th. St. Jerome, pray for us!