

House of Roche

St. Lorenzo Ruiz & St. Joan of Arc



Fr. Nicholas Ernest Roche

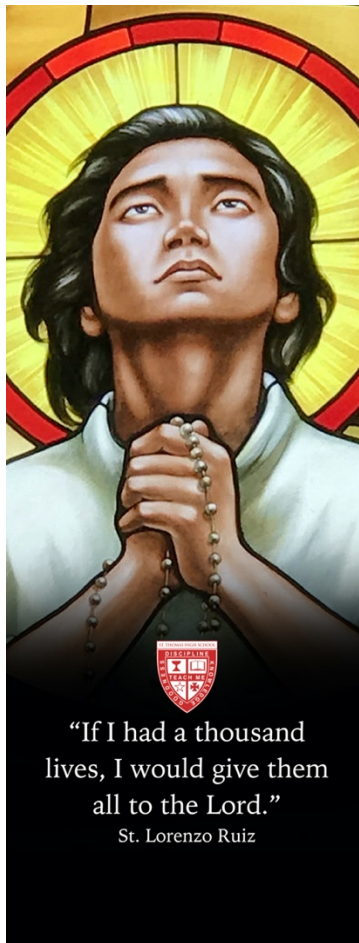


- General biography:
 - Born in Wexford, County Cork, Ireland on February 7th, 1866.
 - Born to poor Irish family.
 - His family immigrated to Toronto, Canada.
 - He lived on a farm and worked for his family beginning at age 13.
 - He was ordained to the priesthood in Toronto on December 17th, 1897.
 - Was sent to Houston, Texas in the summer of 1900 to found St. Thomas College (later High School).
 - School was at two locations in Downtown before moving to Austin and Hadley street.
- Interesting stories/information:

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- Extremely charismatic personality and powerful public speaker.
 - Great influence on many young men in inspiring them to realize their vocation as priests.
 - In 1916, he became head of the Basilian Novices.
 - Captivated with his words:
 - “He had the fits of holding his audience in rapt attention.... He was so intensely earnest, and yet so simple in expression. His language just flowed along.”-Fr. Charles Collins
 - “He exerted lasting influence on his hearers. In him, nature and grace did combine to make a manly priest and a priestly man.”-Father T.P. O’Rourke
 - He was able to recruit many young men to attend STH.
 - He quickly made St. Thomas College well-known to the Houston community through his ability to make friends and speak convincingly.
 - He quickly obtained the money and land at Austin and Hadley street where he built the first permanent location of the school.
 - He later became head of St. Michael’s College in Toronto in 1922.
 - He died in 1932 from a cerebral aneurysm, perhaps brought on by his intense work ethic and many responsibilities he took on.
- From his personal diary:
 - “Sense of duty. Kinder to all, especially my own.”
 - “I must learn to offer up all my crosses to God.”

St. Lorenzo Ruiz



Summary of Life:

St. Lorenzo Ruiz was born around 1610 in Manila in the Philippines. His father was Chinese and his mother Filipino. He received a formal education from Spanish Dominicans and spoke three languages; he also worked as a calligrapher for the Dominicans. He was known for his honesty and integrity as a young man as well as a dedicated altar server. He joined the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary, an organization of lay people dedicated to praying the rosary, and had a fierce devotion to the Blessed Mother. He married and had three children, two sons and a daughter. In 1636, he was falsely accused of murder: Two Spanish sailors were involved in a drunken brawl which resulted in the death of a man. Spanish authorities, not intending to send one of their own in prison, looked for someone to blame and found Lorenzo, a Filipino-Chinese, as a perfect scapegoat. The Filipino-Chinese, at that time, suffered the worst discrimination from the Spaniards who considered them as the lowest among the social class in the Philippines. Filing of trumped up charges and gathering phony witnesses were common sights in the courts during Spain's tyrannical rule, leaving Filipinos with practically nothing to defend themselves except to surrender their fate to the mercy of the corrupt judges issuing the verdicts. Thus, he was a victim of racism. Compelled to leave the country, Lorenzo, with his wife and children, joined the Dominican missionaries on what he thought was a missionary work to Macao, China. But not wanting to endanger his family, they stayed behind and he boarded the ship.

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On board the ship were three Dominican priests and they were about to sail to Japan in spite of a violent persecution there. They arrived in Nagasaki and a fierce persecution of Christians was underway by the Tokugawa Shogunate. About 50,000 Christians were in Japan at the time. They ordered the missionaries to reject their faith in front a large group of Japanese Christians and then ordered them to leave the island. They refused and were subjected to days of intense torture including the “bamboo treatment” which were thin needles of bamboo shoved under fingernails, water torture characterized by water being poured continuously into their mouths, ears, nose, and eyes, and the worse of all, “the pit”. This last torture had people hung upside down from their feet above a pit with their foreheads slashed so that they bled to death slowly. A couple of the priests finally gave in after many hours of the “bamboo treatment” but Lorenzo and some other companion Christians continued to resist. They encouraged the priests to not despair and Lorenzo was then picked out to endure “the pit”. Despite a whole day of the torture, Lorenzo did not give in indeed recited prayers including the Rosary from his upside down position and continued to encourage his companions as well as pray for his captives. He finally uttered his famous last words, “Had I a thousand lives, all these to Him I would offer” and in response a samurai cut threw him with a katana.

Outline of Life:

- Born around 1610 in Binondo, Manila in the Philippines and died September 28th, 1637 in Japan.
- Feast Day: September 28th.
- Notable Information:
 - His father was Chinese and his mother Filipino.
 - Received a formal education from Spanish Dominicans and spoke three languages.
 - Was known for his honest and integrity as a young man.
 - Was an altar server and worked as a calligrapher for the Dominicans.
 - He joined the Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary, an organization of lay people dedicated to praying the rosary, and had a fierce devotion to the Blessed Mother.
 - He married and had three children, two sons and a daughter.
 - In 1636, he was falsely accused of murder:
 - Two Spanish sailors were involved in a drunken brawl which resulted in the death of a man.
 - Spanish authorities, not intending to send one of their own in prison, looked for someone to blame and found Lorenzo, a Filipino-Chinese, as a perfect scapegoat.
 - The Filipino-Chinese, at that time, suffered the worst discrimination from the Spaniards who considered them as the lowest among the social class in the Philippines.
 - Filing of trumped up charges and gathering phony witnesses were common sights in the courts during Spain’s tyrannical rule, leaving Filipinos with practically nothing to defend themselves except to surrender their fate to the mercy of the corrupt judges issuing the verdicts.

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- Compelled to leave the country, Lorenzo, with his wife and children, joined the Dominican missionaries on what he thought was a missionary work to Macao, China.
- But not wanting to endanger his family, they stayed behind and he boarded the ship.
- On board the ship were three Dominican priests, Antonio Gonzalez, Guillermo Courtet, Miguel de Aozaraza, as well as a Japanese priest, Vicente Shiwozuka de la Cruz.
- They were about to sail to Japan in spite of a violent persecution there.
- Lorenzo did not know this until after the ship departed.
- They arrived in Nagasaki and a fierce persecution of Christians was underway by the Tokugawa Shogunate.
- About 50,000 Christians were in Japan at the time.
- The Japanese authorities who were Shinto and Buddhist saw Christianity as a threat to Japanese culture.
- They ordered the missionaries to reject their faith in front a large group of Japanese Christians and then ordered them to leave the island.
- They refused and were subjected to days of intense torture including the “bamboo treatment” which were thin needles of bamboo shoved under fingernails, water torture characterized by water being poured continuously into their mouths, ears, nose, and eyes, and the worse of all, “the pit”.
- This last torture had people hung upside down from their feet above a pit with their foreheads slashed so that they bled to death slowly.
- A couple of the priests finally gave in after many hours of the “bamboo treatment” but Lorenzo and some other companion Christians continued to resist.
- They encouraged the priests to not despair and Lorenzo was then picked out to endure “the pit”.
- Despite a whole day of the torture, Lorenzo did not give in indeed recited prayers including the Rosary from his upside down position and continued to encourage his companions as well as pray for his captives.
- He finally uttered his famous last words and in anger, a samurai cut threw him with a katana.
- Quotes:
 - “I am a Catholic and wholeheartedly do accept death for God. Had I a thousand lives, all these to Him I would offer. Do with me as you please.”

St. Joan of Arc (The Maid of Orleans)



Summary of Life:

Joan was born to a poor peasant family in the small village of Domremy in Western France in the midst of an extremely destructive war: the Hundred Years War between England and France. England had nearly taken over France by this point in the war including Paris. At age 13, she began to receive visions from St. Michael, St. Catherine, and St. Margaret. The visions instructed her that she needed to save her country from destruction and told her to go see the King of France, Charles VII. She was illiterate and had no formal education yet the visions persisted and at the age of 16 she made her way to the local French fort to see if she could get an escort to the king. She was rebuked harshly by the commander of the fort who thought she was crazy, whipped, and sent back to her parents. She returned again and this time convinced the commander by sharing information with him that she had no way of knowing including outcomes of battles and personal information about

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the commander. He took her with an armed escort to see the king. She cut her hair to blend in among the soldiers. When the king heard she was coming he decided to test her. He would disguise himself as a lesser member of his court and place an advisor on the throne. When she entered the court she walked right past the fake king and directly over to the real king and bowed down.

She instructed him that she needed an army and that she would relieve the siege of Orleans against the English. The king agreed and she was given armor and an army. Through her leadership, she was able to get the English army to retreat without bloodshed! She went on over the next three years to rack up victory after victory against the English and completely reverse the fortunes of the war. IT CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED HOW AMAZING IT IS THAT AN ILLITERATE, TEENAGE PEASANT GIRL WAS LEADING ARMIES IN BATTLE TO VICTORY! She was eventually lured into a trap by the Burgundian allies of the English and tried falsely as a heretic and sorceress. Despite, no evidence to support such charges, she was burned at the stake on May 30, 1431. Her final words were, "Hold the cross up high so I can see if through the flames." Her death inspired the French even more and eventually led to the defeat of the English. St. Joan of Arc is single-handedly responsible from saving French from conquest by the English. She was later exonerated of the false charges by a papal investigation and canonized as a saint. She is the patron saint of France.

Outline of Life:

- Born on January 6th in Domremy, France and died on May 30th, 1431.
- Feast Day: May 30th.
- Notable Information:
 - Born to a poor peasant family in the midst of an extremely destructive war: the Hundred Years War between England and France.
 - England had nearly taken over France by this point in the war including Paris.
 - At age 13, she began to receive visions from St. Michael, St. Catherine, and St. Margaret.
 - The visions instructed her that she needed to save her country from destruction and told her to go see the King of France, Charles VII.
 - She was illiterate and had no formal education yet the visions persisted and at the age of 16 she made her way to the local French fort to see if she could get an escort to the king.
 - She was rebuked harshly by the commander of the fort who thought she was crazy, whipped, and sent back to her parents.
 - She returned again and this time convinced the commander by sharing information with him that she had no way of knowing including outcomes of battles and personal information about the commander.
 - He took her with an armed escort to see the king.
 - She cut her hair to blend in among the soldiers.
 - When the king heard she was coming he decided to test her.
 - He would disguise himself as a lesser member of his court and place an advisor on the throne.
 - When she entered the court she walked right past the fake king and directly over to the real king and bowed down.

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- She instructed him that she needed an army and that she would relieve the siege of Orleans against the English.
- The king agreed and she was given armor and an army.
- Through her leadership, she was able to get the English army to retreat without bloodshed!
- She went on over the next three years to rack up victory after victory against the English and completely reverse the fortunes of the war.
- IT CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED HOW AMAZING IT IS THAT AN ILLITERATE, TEENAGE PEASANT GIRL WAS LEADING ARMIES IN BATTLE TO VICTORY!
- She was eventually lured into a trap by the Burgundian allies of the English and tried falsely as a heretic and sorceress.
- Despite, no evidence to support such charges, she was burned at the stake on May 30, 1431.
- Her death inspired the French even more and eventually led to the defeat of the English.
- She was later exonerated of the false charges by a papal investigation and canonized as a saint.
- Quotes:
 - “I am not afraid... I was born to do this.”
 - “I would rather die than do something which I know to be a sin, or to be against God's will.”
 - “One life is all we have and we live it as we believe in living it. But to sacrifice what you are and to live without belief, that is a fate more terrible than dying.”
 - “Hold the cross up high so I can see it through the flames.”
 - “Act, and God will act.”
 - “If I am not, “may God put me there; and if I am, may God so keep me. “
 - Since God had commanded it, it was necessary that I do it. Since God commanded it, even if I had a hundred fathers and mothers, even if I had been a King's daughter, I would have gone nevertheless. “
 - “About Jesus Christ and the Church, I simply know they're just one thing.”