

March 23, 2023

Good Morning!

1. Today's Readings: [Thursday of the Fourth Week of Lent | USCCB](#)

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: Who is St. Turibius and what does he have to teach us today? "Follow God's will with the talents he gave you. Don't waste time. Be zealous for the Lord. And don't underestimate the power of your Confirmation." St. Turibius is known for celebrating over 80,000 Confirmations in his archdiocese of Lima, Peru. This was not an easy accomplishment due to the terrain and roads. After reading his biography today, let us be thankful for this great sacrament that God has given us.

3. Quotes of the Day:

~"Christ said 'I am the truth', he did not say 'I am the custom'". *St. Turibius*

~"He walked in the processions, bathed in tears, with his eyes always fixed on a Crucifix, and offering himself to God for his flock; fasted, watched, and prayed for them without intermission." *From the biography of St. Turibius - Franciscan Foundation For the Hold Land*

St. Turibius, Pray for Us!

St. Joseph, Pray for Us!

--

Linda McCormick
St. Joseph Catholic Church & School
1200 Cornelia Road
Anderson, SC 29621

Phone: (864) 225-5341, ext. 102

Fax: (864) 225-6432

The Little-Known St. Turibius Has Much to Teach Us

Follow God's will with the talents he gave you. Don't waste time. Be zealous for the Lord. And don't underestimate the power of your Confirmation.



Sebastiano Conca, "The Miracle of St. Turibius," 1723 (photo: Public Domain)

The middle of March has some very popular and well-known saints: St. Patrick (March 17) and St. Joseph (March 19) immediately spring to mind. And then there's St. Turibius of Mongrovejo.

Actually, he *should* be better known and admired, especially among Latino Catholics, for he was instrumental in establishing the faith in South America. Bishop of Lima, the local Church he shepherded in 16th-century Peru was a cradle of saints. Apart from himself, his companions in sanctity included St. Rose of Lima, St. Martín de Porres and St. John Macias. That's a great achievement for a local church in its first generations of existence.

St. Turibius is perhaps in something of contemporary eclipse because of the tendency to consider the Christianization of the Americas as an evil. The same bias in this country denigrates St. Junípero Serra and his work in the California missions. Granted, there were abuses and the motives of the Spanish were often not pure. That said, Christianity received its mandate to “go and teach all nations” (Matthew 28:20) from the Son of God Himself and has no reason to apologize for bringing his Good News to all peoples.

St. Turibius is also a relevant model for today’s Christian because following God’s will was the guiding principle of his life. Before he was an indefatigable bishop, he was a distinguished academic and lawyer. But he always let God’s will and not human prestige, honors or comfort shape his life.

He was born in 1538 in the Kingdom of León in northwest Spain to a noble family. From childhood, he showed religious inclinations, particularly an aversion to sin as offending God. He was also intelligent, eventually starting his university studies at Valladolid and completing them at the famous University of Salamanca.

He caught the attention of the Spanish court, and King Philip II made him a judge of the Inquisition in Granada, at the other end of the country in southeastern Spain.

His distinction led to the King proposing him to the pope to be Archbishop of Lima. That was unusual in two respects: Lima was the most important diocese in Spanish Latin America, and Turibius was a layman. Pope Gregory XIII agreed and, though he felt scruples of conscience about his worthiness, Turibius submitted to God’s will and was ordained deacon, priest and bishop. His episcopal consecration took place in 1580. He arrived in “the city of the Kings” — Lima — on May 24, 1581. He would lead the Church of Lima for almost 25 years, until his death in 1606.

Two characteristics of his episcopate are particularly compelling. One was his organization of the local church. Thanks to Turibius, multiple synods and provincial councils put the regional church on a firm footing (including implementing the reforms of the Council of Trent locally). He founded a seminary and encouraged learning of local languages to inculturate the faith. He defended the local people against Spanish political rulers.

The other distinguishing characteristic of his episcopate was his pastoral zeal. He covered the whole territory of his archdiocese twice times on foot (and died on his third circuit), no mean task considering there were few roads and much of it was in the Andes and, as one of the original dioceses, encompassed a good part of South America. (It's like the Archdiocese of Baltimore, today part of the State of Maryland but, when erected in 1789, coterminous with the United States.)

He was particularly dedicated to conferring the sacrament of Confirmation, celebrating it at least 80,000 times. Having finished Confirmations in one village only to learn one sick Indian had been absent, he celebrated the entire rite just for him with full solemnity, remarking thereafter, "Blessed be God, who did not let that Indian die without this sacrament." It seemed there weren't enough hours in the day to do God's work: "We must start working early in the morning, because time is not ours. We must give a strict account of it." (Think of St. Turibius the next time you realize how much time you've spent on social media).

He died on a pastoral visitation in 1606. He was canonized in 1726.

Sebastiano Conca (1680-1764), a Baroque painter from Naples in Italy who held a papal commission from Pope Clement XI, depicted a miracle attributed to St. Turibius. (see photo above)

Macate is a region of Peru northwest of Lima. It's said the people of the region were crying out that they would have to migrate because the local river had dried up. St. Turibius walked into the riverbed, blessed and struck the rock and, in front of both Spanish and indigenous witnesses, water began gushing out in the form of a cross. Conca, noted for his bright color palette, depicts the scene. Turibius bends over the river, crozier in hand. The umbrella over his head has two meanings: once upon a time, the noble and the sacred (i.e., the Blessed Sacrament and consecrated bishops) were covered by a parasol. (The *umbralucum* is a sign of a basilica and the symbol used between the death of one pope and the election of another during the *sede vacante*.) It also emphasizes the heat of the place that had dried up the river. The witnesses are a blend of European Spaniards and local peoples. Above (and to the left of) the parasol is a cross, the sign of evangelization of the Americas. St. James anticipated Abraham Maslow's theory of the "hierarchy of needs" by about two millennia when he observed that telling a brother to "stay warm and well-fed" (2:16) while giving him neither food nor clothes was useless. So, on a most

fundamental level, water being necessary to life, St. Turibius addressed a basic human need.

(Based on the climactic map of Peru I am not sure where Macate is and, therefore, whether Conca's somewhat arid landscape — even though he includes a palm tree — is his imagination or based on more details of the miracle than I know. Macate seems to lie on the border between two climate zones: the desert-like coastal plane and the *sierra* of the Andes, which could be dry or could be lush. If Conca painted this work early in the 1700s, it probably coincided with St. Turibius' canonization, when knowledge of his life would have been more commonplace.)

The religious analogy, however, is evident. Just as Moses refreshed the people and their livestock in the desert with water from the rock (Numbers 20), so Turibius refreshed his flock with a new spring of water. (For those parishes that used the Scrutiny Readings last Sunday for the Third Sunday of Lent, the Gospel of Jesus at the Well of Jacob with the Samaritan Woman also applies: John 4:1-42.) Jesus is the "water springing up to eternal life," the water Turibius brought the people of Peru, especially through Baptism.

So, for somebody most people haven't heard much about today, St. Turibius has a lot to tell us: about following God's will while being the best with the talents he gave you; about not wasting time; about zeal for the Lord; about the importance of Confirmation.

Source: ncregister.com by John Grondelski