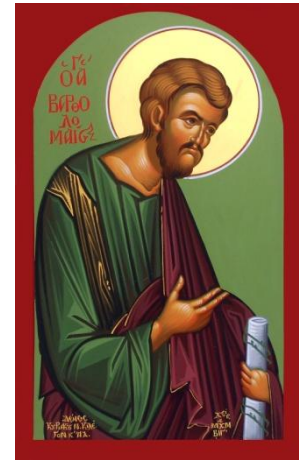


Festivals and Saints' Days (w/c 23rd August)

24th August

Saint Bartholomew - *Apostle, martyr*

Very little is known about Saint Bartholomew. In the Synoptic Gospels, his name merely appears in lists (Matthew 10: 3; Mark 3: 18; Luke 6: 14); and likewise in the Book of the Acts (1: 13). He is traditionally associated with Nathanael, who appears in Saint John's Gospel (1: 45 - 49; 21: 2) where the name Bartholomew does not (as the name Nathanael in this connexion does not appear in the Synoptic Gospels. If this identification is correct, Bartholomew came from Cana of Galilee (John 21: 2). Tradition suggests that he undertook missions to India, Armenia and Azerbaijan. According to Tradition, he endured a macabre end.



27th August



Saint Monica - *saint*

Saint Monica is mainly remembered for being the mother of Saint Augustine of Hippo and a significant influence in bring him to the Christian Faith. She was probably born in Thagaste (in Northern Africa) around AD322. She married Patricius, a man from a patrician family, but by that time one of faded fortunes. He might have been something of a brute. Three children survived infancy. She was a Christian (whereas Patricius was not). When Augustine moved to Milan to pursue his career in imperial service, she followed him. When Augustine returned to Africa, she accompanied him again. She died en route, possibly at Ostia, in AD387.

28th August

Saint Augustine of Hippo - *doctor of the Church, bishop*

Augustine was born on 13th November AD354. His mother was Saint Monica and his father Patricius. He was an intelligent young man with promise and he was destined for a career in the imperial civil service. He is famous for praying, "Make me chaste, but not yet;" though, as with many young men the reality was probably less racy than the rhetoric. All the same, he lived for many years with an un-named concubine with whom he had a son, Adeodatus. When it looked as if his career was to take off, Monica prevailed upon her son to send away the concubine to make room for a more suitable consort. Adeodatus, however, remained with his father.

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Shortly after his arrival in Milan, Augustine came under the influence of Saint Ambrose, who was bishop at the time. His preaching led to Augustine's embrace of the Christian Faith and he was baptized at the Easter Vigil AD387. Augustine subsequently formed a quasi monastic community where he could devote himself to theological study. His son died here at the age of seventeen. In AD395 he was elected coadjutor bishop of Hippo in North Africa and shortly thereafter became the diocesan. His legacy to the Church through his writings is huge and still influential to this day. The monastic order, which bears his name, is only indirectly linked to the small community he founded. He died on 28th August AD430.



29th August

Beheading of Saint John the Baptist

This feast commemorates events narrated in the Gospels:

Herod had sent and seized John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Hero'di-as, his brother Philip's wife; because he had married her. For John said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Hero'di-as had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed; and yet he heard him gladly. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and the leading men of Galilee. For when Hero'di-as' daughter came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will grant it." And he vowed to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." And she went out, and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the baptizer." And she came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." And the king was exceedingly sorry; but because of his oaths and his guests he did not want to break his word to her. And immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard and gave orders to bring his head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

(The Gospel according to Saint Mark, chapter 6, verses 17 - 29)

There is another version in Matthew 14: 3 - 12;