

Rev. Derek Fairman

All Saints' Day

This November I will speak about saints whose feast days are in August. The first saint whose feast day is in August is St. Eusebius of Vercelli. St. Eusebius was born in Sardinia around March 3, 283. His father was martyred, and his mother took him to Rome. In the 340s, he was appointed bishop in Vercelli in northern Italy. He was elected bishop because of his piety rather than any local priest. Inspired by St. Athanasius' *Life of St. Anthony*, he founded a priestly community in Vercelli that resembled a monastery. This community inspired other bishops, and those who followed St. Augustine's rule for the Augustinian order.

St. Eusebius was involved in the Arian controversy. Because he stood up for St. Athanasius, St. Eusebius was exiled three times. During his time in exile, he never gave up his Catholic faith, rather than giving into the Arian heresy. Eventually, under the emperor Julian, exiled bishops such as St. Eusebius were allowed to return to their sees. He passed through Alexandria and attended a synod overseen by St. Athanasius, which confirmed the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The synod decided to deal mercifully with the formerly Arian clergy. On his way home to Vercelli, he tried to reconcile Catholic clergy and those clergy who had been Arian. Sometimes that happened, sometimes not. He finally returned to Vercelli in 363. He died in 370 or 371. With St. Hilary of Poitiers, he helped to combat the Arian heresy in the western Church. St. Eusebius' feast day is August 2.

The next saint is St. Stephen of Hungary. St. Stephen of Hungary was likely born in 975. He was the son of Geza of Hungary, who is reported to be a cruel tyrant, although Geza instituted Christianity in Hungary as the religion of the kingdom. St. Stephen's mother was Sarolt, the daughter of a Hungarian chieftain. Geza arranged St. Stephen's marriage to Gisela, daughter of Henry II of Bavaria; this was a first marriage between the Hungarians and western European rulers, and Gisela was related to the Holy Roman Emperor. This marriage was witnessed by Bishop Adalbert of Prague, who may have baptized St. Stephen.

After his father's death in 997, St. Stephen ascended to the throne. However, not everyone accepted St. Stephen's claim to the throne. There was civil conflict between St. Stephen, who was supported by the Christians, and Koppany, who was supported by pagans. St. Stephen eventually prevailed, and at first, he was grand prince, but then he was crowned as king by Pope Sylvester II on Christmas Day, with the approval of Holy Roman Emperor Otto III. St.

Stephen established the Church in Hungary as distinct from the Holy Roman Imperial Church. St. Stephen's most important work was to finish his father's work in Christianizing Hungary.

St. Stephen had a good relationship with Germany and the Holy Roman Empire, and the Byzantine Empire. Because of these alliances, St. Stephen assisted the Holy Roman Empire against Polish forces, and he assisted the Byzantines against the Bulgarians. In time, though, the Holy Roman Empire was at odds with St. Stephen and sent troops to Hungary, which St. Stephen managed to hold back.

St. Stephen showed hospitality by allowing trade routes to be erected between western Europe and the Byzantine Empire. St. Stephen accumulated several relics and allowed western European pilgrims to the Holy Land to travel through Hungary, and established hostels for the pilgrims. He also established several monasteries in Hungary. His sons died, and his cousin succeeded him. This time was filled with uncertainty, but eventually peace reigned, and his successors continued his program of Christianizing Hungary.

He was canonized on August 20, 1083, along with Bishop Gerard of Csanad, and his own son, who died in childhood, St. Emeric. He is the patron of Hungary, kings, bricklayers, stonecutters, and protection against childhood death. St. Stephen's feast day is August 16.

The next saint is St. John Eudes. St. John Eudes was born on November 14, 1601, in France, the son of Isaac Eudes, a surgeon, and Martha Corbin. At his First Communion in May 1613, he vowed to remain chaste. He joined the Oratorians on March 25, 1623. His spiritual mentor was Cardinal Pierre de Berulle, the founder of the French school of spirituality, whose spirituality influenced many saints. St. John Eudes was ordained to the priesthood on December 20, 1625, and celebrated his first Mass at Christmas. Immediately, he became ill, and after he recovered, he devoted himself to the care of the sick.

Afterwards, St. John Eudes preached various missions, in his own part of France and later in Paris and Versailles. He realized that seminaries, founded less than one hundred years before by the Council of Trent, needed improvement in France. He founded the Order of Our Lady of Charity of the Refuge for prostitutes who wanted to escape that life. In Caen, on March 25, 1643, he established the Eudist Order, for the education of priests and preaching parish missions. Cardinal Berulle's devotion to the Incarnate Word influenced St. John Eudes, and He spread the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. He died at Caen on August 29, 1680. St. John Eudes' feast day is August 19. He is the patron of missionaries.