BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Joseph Marello

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: May 30

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IN BRIEF

Saint Joseph Marello

Piedmontese priest, founder of the Oblates of Saint Joseph and bishop of Acqui (1844-1895).

Feast day	May 30
Born	December 26, 1844, Turin (Italy)
Died	May 30, 1895, Savona (Italy)
Canonized	November 25, 2001, by John Paul II (beatified September 26, 1993)
Era	19th century
Patron saint of	Oblates of Saint Joseph, diocese of Acqui

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Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Joseph Marello

Saint Joseph Marello (Giuseppe Marello in Italian) was an Italian priest and bishop of the 19th century. Born in Turin in 1844 and trained in Asti, he founded the congregation of the Oblates of Saint Joseph in 1878, then became bishop of Acqui, in Piedmont. He died in Savona on May 30, 1895. Beatified in 1993 and canonized in 2001 by John Paul II, his feast day is May 30.

Who was Saint Joseph Marello?

Joseph Marello belongs to the generation of Piedmontese priests who, in the 19th century, gave the Church great saints of charity and education, such as Don Bosco or Joseph Benedict Cottolengo, from whom he drew inspiration. He was not a man of brilliance. Secretary to a bishop, chancellor of a diocesan curia, confessor, then founder of a small congregation and bishop of a rural diocese, he led a life of discreet service. He took as his model Saint Joseph, the silent guardian of Jesus, and he wanted his religious to resemble him: "hermits within and apostles without." John Paul II presented him as a model bishop.

Key dates in the life of Joseph Marello

- **December 26, 1844**: Born in Turin; he spends his childhood at San Martino Alfieri, in the countryside of Asti.
- **1850s**: He enters the seminary of Asti.
- **September 19, 1868**: Ordained a priest.
- **1869-1870**: As secretary to the bishop of Asti, he accompanies him to the First Vatican Council.
- **March 14, 1878**: He founds the congregation of the Oblates of Saint Joseph in Asti.

- **February 11, 1889**: Leo XIII appoints him bishop of Acqui; he is consecrated on February 17.
- **May 30, 1895**: He dies in Savona, where he had come for the third centenary of the death of Saint Philip Neri.
- **September 26, 1993**: John Paul II beatifies him in Asti.
- **November 25, 2001**: John Paul II canonizes him in Rome.

A priest at the service of his diocese

Born in Turin, Joseph grew up at San Martino Alfieri, a village in Piedmont. Very early he showed real piety and a great love for the Virgin Mary, and he entered the seminary of Asti. Ordained a priest in 1868, he lived his ministry with zeal. His bishop took him as secretary and brought him to Rome for the First Vatican Council. The young priest's qualities were noticed there, notably by Cardinal Pecci, the future Pope Leo XIII.

Back in Asti, he became chancellor and directed the work of the diocesan curia. This was not an office job that kept him away from the faithful: he heard many confessions, taught catechism and accompanied many people in their spiritual life. He also cared for the elderly poor, for whom he opened a house so that they could end their lives in dignity. At a time when the end of the Papal States troubled Italian Catholics, he encouraged lay people to remain faithful to the pope.

For a while, he thought of withdrawing to the Carthusians, for a life of silence and prayer. His bishop dissuaded him: he believed God expected something else of him. Marello accepted, and it was out of this obedience that his work was born.

The founder of the Oblates of Saint Joseph

On March 14, 1878, Joseph Marello gathered his first companions in Asti: this was the birth of the congregation of the Oblates of Saint Joseph. It is a community of priests and brothers, intended to help bishops and clergy where the needs are greatest, especially among young people. He gave them Saint Joseph as patron and model: a man who served Jesus and Mary without seeking to be seen, in daily work and faithfulness.

His motto sums up this spirit: to look after the interests of Jesus, as Joseph did at Nazareth. He asked his religious to be hermits within and apostles without: a deep inner life, nourished by prayer, and at the same time generous service. The congregation still exists and works today in several countries.

Bishop of Acqui

In 1889, Leo XIII appointed him bishop of Acqui. He was consecrated on February 17. For six years, he gave himself entirely to his diocese: he visited every parish, encouraged catechism and the Christian education of the young, organized parish missions and worked to unite the clergy and the faithful. His health quickly wore out.

In May 1895, already very weak, he went to Savona for the celebrations of the third centenary of the death of Saint Philip Neri. There he died, on May 30, 1895, at the age of fifty. His body now rests in Asti, in the shrine dedicated to him at the motherhouse of the Oblates of Saint Joseph.

Beatification, canonization and devotion

John Paul II beatified him in Asti on September 26, 1993. Eight years later, after the recognition of a miracle, the healing of two children in Peru, he canonized him in Rome on November 25, 2001, the day after a synod of bishops. In his homily, the pope stressed his love for the Virgin Mary and his

attachment to Saint Joseph, and summed up his spirituality this way: to love the Mother of the Redeemer and to imitate her guardian. On the same day, Paula Montal Fornés, Léonie Aviat and Maria Crescentia Hoss were canonized.

Saint Joseph Marello is celebrated on May 30, the day of his death. He is honored above all in Piedmont, in Asti and Acqui, and wherever the Oblates of Saint Joseph work. He is shown as a bishop, often holding a book or at prayer.

What can we learn from Saint Joseph Marello?

Joseph Marello shows that one can become a saint in the ordinary tasks of a diocese: a curia office, a confessional, parish visits. He gave up the charterhouse that attracted him in order to obey, and he found in Saint Joseph the model of a hidden life at the service of Jesus. You can pray to him for priests and bishops, for educators, for the elderly, and for all who serve without being seen.

To pray with him, see the prayer to Saint Joseph Marello and the novena to Saint Joseph Marello.

Where to pray to Saint Joseph Marello

- **Asti** (Piedmont): the shrine of Saint Joseph Marello, at the motherhouse of the Oblates of Saint Joseph, where his body rests.
- **Acqui Terme** (Piedmont): the cathedral of the diocese he led from 1889 to 1895.
- **San Martino Alfieri** (Piedmont): the village of his childhood.
- The houses and parishes of the Oblates of Saint Joseph, in Italy and around the world.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Joseph Marello for Priests and Those Who Serve Quietly

Saint Joseph Marello, bishop of Acqui and founder of the Oblates of Saint Joseph, chose Saint Joseph as the model of a hidden life at the service of Jesus. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him priests, educators, young people and all who serve in the background.

Prayer to Saint Joseph Marello

Saint Joseph Marello,
priest and shepherd with a simple heart,
you loved the Virgin Mary from childhood
and took Saint Joseph as your model.
Teach me to serve Jesus quietly,
in the tasks of each day.

You longed for the silence of the charterhouse,
and you obeyed to serve your diocese.
Help me to welcome God's will
even when it goes against my plans.
Grant me to be a hermit within
and an apostle without.

Watch over priests and bishops,
over the Oblates of Saint Joseph,
over young people looking for their way
and over elderly people who are alone.
Keep our families faithful to Christ
and united in the Church.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Joseph Marello

- On his feast day, May 30, and during the month of Mary.
- On March 19, the feast of Saint Joseph, whom he loved so much.
- For priests, bishops and vocations.
- For educators, catechists and young people.
- When you must give up a personal plan in order to obey.

A short invocation

> *Saint Joseph Marello, you who looked after the interests of Jesus,*
> *teach me to serve him faithfully. Pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Joseph Marello from May 22 to 30, and discover the life of Saint Joseph Marello.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Joseph Marello

This novena spends nine days with Saint Joseph Marello, a Piedmontese priest, founder of the Oblates of Saint Joseph and bishop of Acqui. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. To finish it on his feast day, May 30, begin it on May 22. You can also pray it at any other time, especially before the feast of Saint Joseph on March 19.

How to pray this novena

Each day, begin with the Sign of the Cross and entrust your intention to God. Read the meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. End with: "Saint Joseph Marello, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena in a concrete way.

Day 1: A child of the Piedmont countryside

Born in Turin, Joseph grew up at San Martino Alfieri, among the hills of Piedmont. There, in a simple life, faith took root in him.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the places and people who passed the faith on to me. Bless the families who raise their children in your love.

Act of the day: Pray for your parents, living or departed, and for those who taught you to pray.

Day 2: The love of Mary

From childhood, Joseph Marello had a great devotion to the Virgin Mary. John Paul II saw in this love the source of the grace that filled his life.

Prayer: Virgin Mary, take me by the hand as you led Joseph Marello. Lead me to your Son.

Act of the day: Pray a decade of the rosary, or the whole rosary if you can.

Day 3: The gift of the priesthood

Ordained a priest in 1868, Joseph lived his ministry with zeal. He gave himself to the confessional, to catechism and to the guidance of souls.

Prayer: Lord, bless the priests of my diocese. Give them the joy of their vocation and call new laborers into your harvest.

Act of the day: Thank a priest, with a word or a prayer, for his ministry.

Day 4: To obey rather than to choose

Joseph Marello dreamed of the silent life of the Carthusians. His bishop dissuaded him, and he obeyed. His work would be born from this sacrifice.

Prayer: Lord, when my plans are not yours, give me the peace to obey and the trust that you know better than I do.

Act of the day: Accept a setback or a change of plans with good grace.

Day 5: Saint Joseph as a model

In 1878, he founded the Oblates of Saint Joseph and gave them as their model the husband of Mary, guardian of Jesus, a man of work and silence.

Prayer: Saint Joseph, guardian of Jesus, teach me to take care of what God entrusts to me, without seeking to be seen.

Act of the day: Do a discreet service, without telling anyone.

Day 6: Hermit within, apostle without

Joseph Marello asked his religious to unite a deep inner life with generous service. Prayer and action are not opposed: each nourishes the other.

Prayer: Lord, give me a recollected heart in the midst of my occupations, and hands ready to serve my brothers and sisters.

Act of the day: Take ten minutes of silence before God before an important task.

Day 7: Caring for the most fragile

As a priest in Asti, he opened a house so that elderly poor people could end their lives with dignity. For him, charity meant concrete actions.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to the elderly and lonely people around me. Make me a sign of your tenderness.

Act of the day: Visit or call an elderly or isolated person.

Day 8: A shepherd for his people

As bishop of Acqui, Joseph Marello visited all his parishes, encouraged catechism and sought to unite the clergy and the faithful. He wore himself out in the service of his diocese.

Prayer: Lord, bless our bishop and our parish. Make unity and fraternal charity grow among us.

Act of the day: Pray for your bishop and offer your help to your parish.

Day 9: A life given to the end

Exhausted, he went to Savona to honor Saint Philip Neri. He died there on May 30, 1895, at the age of fifty, after a whole life spent looking after the interests of Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, grant me to live for you to the end. Through the intercession of Saint Joseph Marello, grant me the grace I ask of you in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass if possible, and entrust the end of your life to God.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Joseph Marello,*
> *friend of Mary and disciple of Saint Joseph,*
> *you served Jesus in simplicity*
> *and gave your life for your people.*
> *Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.*
> *Keep me faithful in little things,*
> *and teach me to love without fuss.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

You can also pray the prayer to Saint Joseph Marello at any time, and discover the life of Saint Joseph Marello.

PILGRIMAGE

Shrine of Saint Joseph Marello, Asti

The shrine of Saint Joseph Marello stands in Asti, in Piedmont, at the motherhouse of the congregation of the Oblates of Saint Joseph. This is where the body of Saint Joseph Marello rests, founder of the congregation and bishop of Acqui, who died in 1895. It is the main place where people come to pray to him.

Asti, cradle of the Oblates of Saint Joseph

Asti holds a central place in the life of Joseph Marello. It was at the seminary of this city that he was trained, it was his bishop who took him as secretary and brought him to the First Vatican Council, and it was at the curia of Asti that he worked as chancellor, confessor and spiritual director. It was also in Asti that, on March 14, 1878, he gathered the first Oblates of Saint Joseph, a community of priests and brothers placed under the protection of the husband of Mary.

He died in Savona on May 30, 1895, while bishop of Acqui, and he now rests in Asti, near the religious he founded. It was also in Asti that John Paul II came to beatify him, on September 26, 1993, before canonizing him in Rome in 2001.

What you can see

The shrine is first of all a place of prayer linked to the motherhouse of the Oblates. The faithful come to pray near the saint's tomb, to entrust their intentions to him and to pray to Saint Joseph, to whom the congregation is dedicated. The presence of the religious who continue his work gives the place its character: it is not a museum, but the home of a spiritual family that is still alive.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Joseph Marello. Near his tomb, entrust to him priests, young people, educators and the elderly, then say the prayer to Saint Joseph Marello. Following his example, you can also ask for the grace of a hidden and faithful life at the service of Jesus, like that of Saint Joseph. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Other places of Saint Joseph Marello

- **Turin**: the city of his birth, on December 26, 1844.
- **San Martino Alfieri** (province of Asti): the village of his childhood.
- **Acqui Terme** (province of Alessandria): the diocese he led as bishop from 1889 to 1895.
- **Savona** (Liguria): the city where he died on May 30, 1895.

Practical information

Asti is well served by train and road, between Turin and Alessandria. The shrine is a place of prayer: appropriate dress and silence are requested. Opening times and Mass times may vary: check with the Oblates of Saint Joseph or the Asti tourist office before your visit, especially if you plan to come on May 30, his feast day.

Credits and sources

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