

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Leonard Murialdo

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: March 30

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IN BRIEF

Saint Leonard Murialdo

Priest of Turin, educator of poor boys and apostle of the working world, founder of the Congregation of Saint Joseph.

Feast day	March 30, May 18 (Congregation of Saint Joseph)
Born	October 6, 1828, Turin, Italy
Died	March 30, 1900, Turin, Italy
Canonized	May 3, 1970, by Pope Paul VI
Era	19th century
Patron saint of	Congregation of Saint Joseph (Josephites of Murialdo)

In this booklet

Life

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Novena to Saint Leonard Murialdo

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Leonard Murialdo

Saint Leonard Murialdo was a priest of Turin, a contemporary and friend of Don Bosco, who gave his life to poor boys and to the workers of nineteenth-century industrial Italy. As director of the Artigianelli college, where abandoned boys learned a trade, he founded the Congregation of Saint Joseph in 1873 and supported many Catholic social works. He died in 1900, was canonized by Pope Paul VI in 1970, and is celebrated on March 30.

Who was Saint Leonard Murialdo?

Leonardo Murialdo was born in Turin on October 6, 1828, into a well-off family; his father was a stockbroker. He lost his father when he was five. Sent to the college of the Piarist Fathers in Savona, he went through a crisis of faith as a teenager. After returning to Turin in 1845, he decided to become a priest. He was ordained on September 20, 1851.

Turin was then the capital of a kingdom in full transformation, which would soon unite Italy. Industry was drawing thousands of young people from the countryside, many of them left to fend for themselves. In this same city and at the same time lived several great saints of charity: Saint John Bosco, Saint Joseph Benedict Cottolengo and Saint Joseph Cafasso. Murialdo belongs to this remarkable generation.

Key dates

- **October 6, 1828**: Born in Turin.
- **1836-1845**: Studies at the college in Savona.
- **September 20, 1851**: Ordained a priest.
- **1857**: Don Bosco entrusts him with the Oratory of Saint Aloysius in Turin.

- **1865-1866**: Studies at the seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris, with a short stay in London.
- **1866**: Becomes director of the Artigianelli college.
- **March 19, 1873**: Founds the Congregation of Saint Joseph.
- **1876**: Founds the Association of the Good Press.
- **March 30, 1900**: Dies of pneumonia in Turin.
- **May 3, 1970**: Canonized by Pope Paul VI.

Alongside Don Bosco

From his first years as a priest, Murialdo cared for boys from the streets. In 1857, Don Bosco gave him charge of the Oratory of Saint Aloysius, one of the youth centers he had opened in the working-class neighborhoods of Turin. There the boys prayed, played, learned the catechism and sometimes learned to read. Murialdo discovered there a way of educating built on trust and joy.

In 1865, wishing to deepen his training, he went to study theology at the seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris. He discovered the French Catholic social works, especially the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, and spent a short time in London. He returned to Turin in 1866 full of new ideas.

The Artigianelli college

On his return, he was asked to direct the Artigianelli college, an institution that took in poor and orphaned boys to teach them a trade. The house was buried in debt. Murialdo gave himself to it completely, even putting his personal fortune into the work. "Poor and abandoned: these are the two conditions for a young person to be one of ours," he used to say. He wanted to form skilled, honest and Christian workers. The college still exists and remains a reference for vocational training in Turin.

The Congregation of Saint Joseph

To secure the future of the work, he founded the Congregation of Saint Joseph on March 19, 1873, the feast of Saint Joseph. Its members, known as the Josephites of Murialdo, devote themselves to the education of poor, orphaned or troubled young people, through faith and through cultural and technical training.

An apostle of the working world

Murialdo understood that young workers needed not only schools but also social protection. He set up a Catholic employment office for the unemployed and a union of Catholic workers to defend their rights. In 1876 he founded the Association of the Good Press. He was behind a weekly paper, *La Voce dell'Operaio* ("The Worker's Voice"), which later became *La Voce del Popolo*. In 1885 he defended the eight-hour working day, a very bold demand at the time.

He also believed in the mission of lay people. "The lay person, of any social class, can today be an apostle no less than a priest," he said.

A spirituality of merciful love

At the heart of his inner life was the conviction that God loved him personally, in spite of his weakness. From it came a way of educating marked by gentleness and kindness. He recommended adding to virtue "kindness, gentleness, patience, a spirit of friendship, naturalness, ease and joy." And he liked to repeat that "the man who prays is the most powerful in the world." In 2010, Pope Benedict XVI devoted one of his general audience catecheses to him, presenting him as a model for priests.

Why is Saint Leonard Murialdo a patron of young workers?

Saint Leonard Murialdo is the patron and founder of the Congregation of Saint Joseph, the Josephites of Murialdo. Because he united prayer, education and social justice, he is also a natural intercessor for educators, troubled youth, apprentices, the unemployed and all who defend workers. He did not only console poor boys: he gave them a trade, rights and dignity.

Symbols and how to recognize Saint Leonard Murialdo in art

As a saint of the photographic age, Leonard Murialdo is usually shown from his portraits: an elderly priest in a black cassock, with a gentle face. Devotional images often place him among young apprentices or boys, recalling his life's work at the Artigianelli college.

Where to pray to Saint Leonard Murialdo

- **Turin**: the Shrine of Our Lady of Health (Nostra Signora della Salute), in the Borgo Vittoria district, where his body has been venerated since 1971.
- **Turin**: the Artigianelli college, his main work.
- **Around the world**: the houses of the Josephites of Murialdo, present in Europe, the Americas and Africa.

To pray with him, see the prayer to Saint Leonard Murialdo and the novena to Saint Leonard Murialdo.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Leonard Murialdo for Young People and Workers

Saint Leonard Murialdo left many spiritual writings and sayings that his religious family, the Josephites of Murialdo, still quote today. This page offers a few of these sayings, as his biographers report them, followed by an original prayer inspired by his life in the service of poor boys and the workers of Turin.

Words to meditate on

> *"The man who prays is the most powerful in the world."*

> *"Add to virtue kindness, gentleness, patience, a spirit of friendship, naturalness, ease and joy."*

Source: sayings of Saint Leonard Murialdo reported by his biographers and by the Josephites of Murialdo, in common translation.

Prayer to Saint Leonard Murialdo for Young People and Workers

Saint Leonard Murialdo,
you discovered that God loved you with a merciful love.
Teach me to believe in this love,
for myself and for every person I meet.

You welcomed poor and abandoned boys:
watch over children without families, young people on the streets,
apprentices and all who are looking for their place in society.

You defended workers and found jobs for the unemployed:
support those who have lost their work,
those who work in hard conditions,
and all who strive for justice.

Bless teachers, trainers and parents:
give them your kindness, your patience and your joy.
I also entrust to you my intention: (name it in silence).

Through your intercession, may I pray with trust
and love with deeds. Amen.

This prayer is an original text by Saintspedia, free to use for personal and community prayer.

When to pray this prayer

- On March 30, the feast of Saint Leonard Murialdo and the day of his death; his religious family also celebrates him on May 18.
- When starting an apprenticeship, a vocational course or a first job.
- During a job search, or for someone who has been laid off.

- For a young person who is struggling, in a group home or far from his or her family.
- For teachers, youth ministers, coaches and all who educate.

To learn more, read the life of Saint Leonard Murialdo or pray the novena to Saint Leonard Murialdo, from March 22 to March 30.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Leonard Murialdo

This novena to Saint Leonard Murialdo is an original composition by Saintspedia. Over nine days, it follows the priest of Turin who welcomed abandoned boys, taught them a trade, defended workers and lived in the certainty of God's merciful love. To end on March 30, his feast day, begin it on March 22. Members and friends of the Josephites of Murialdo may also pray it from May 10 to May 18. It is a good novena for a young person in difficulty, for someone looking for work, or for anyone who educates.

How to pray this novena

Each day, set aside a few calm minutes. Begin with the Sign of the Cross, read the meditation, then say the prayer of the day, followed by an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. Finish with the small act suggested for the day. If you miss a day, just continue the next: what matters is the trust you place in God.

Day 1: A child who lost his father

Leonardo Murialdo was born in Turin in 1828 and lost his father at the age of five. From his own childhood he knew what it means to grow up with a wound. Later he would recognize this wound in the orphans he welcomed.

Prayer: Saint Leonard, pray for children who have lost a parent. May they find adults who love them and a home where they can grow. Amen.

Today: Pray for a child you know who is going through a loss or a family difficulty.

Day 2: Through a crisis of faith

As a teenager at boarding school in Savona, Leonardo went through a crisis of faith. He did not stay there: back in Turin, he found the Lord again and chose the priesthood.

Prayer: Saint Leonard, accompany young people who doubt. Help them find in the Church people who listen and who show them the face of Christ. Amen.

Today: Pray for a young person who has drifted from the faith, and be patient with his or her questions.

Day 3: The merciful love of God

At the heart of his life was one conviction: God loved him personally, in spite of his weakness. This certainty gave him peace and made him gentle with others.

Prayer: Saint Leonard, help me to believe that God loves me as I am, and to look at others with the same mercy. Amen.

Today: Take five minutes to thank God for one sign of his love in your life.

Day 4: With Don Bosco's boys

In 1857, Don Bosco entrusted him with the Oratory of Saint Aloysius. There the boys prayed, played and learned. Murialdo discovered an education built on trust and joy.

Prayer: Saint Leonard, bless parishes, youth groups and schools. May young people find there a place of joy and faith. Amen.

Today: Encourage someone who works with young people: a teacher, a coach, a youth minister.

Day 5: Poor and abandoned

"Poor and abandoned: these are the two conditions for a young person to be one of ours." At the Artigianelli college, Murialdo gave everything, even his own fortune, so that poor boys could learn a trade.

Prayer: Saint Leonard, open my heart to young people no one wants. Show me what I can give, of my time or my means, to help them. Amen.

Today: Make a gift, however small, to a work that cares for children or young people in need.

Day 6: Under the protection of Saint Joseph

On March 19, 1873, Murialdo founded the Congregation of Saint Joseph. He placed his work under the care of the worker of Nazareth, the guardian of the Holy Family.

Prayer: Saint Leonard, with Saint Joseph, protect families, workers and all who raise children. May they work with dignity and love. Amen.

Today: Pray a short prayer to Saint Joseph for your family and your work.

Day 7: Justice for workers

Murialdo set up an employment office for the unemployed, a union of Catholic workers and a newspaper for working people. In 1885 he defended the eight-hour working day.

Prayer: Saint Leonard, pray for those who are unemployed, underpaid or overworked. Inspire employers and leaders to seek justice. Amen.

Today: Thank a worker you usually overlook: a cleaner, a driver, a cashier.

Day 8: Every Christian an apostle

"The lay person, of any social class, can today be an apostle no less than a priest," Murialdo said. He trusted lay people with the mission of the Church in the world.

Prayer: Saint Leonard, help me to live my baptism as a mission, in my family, my work and my neighborhood. Amen.

Today: Speak a word of faith or hope to someone, simply and kindly.

Day 9: The power of prayer

"The man who prays is the most powerful in the world." Murialdo died in Turin on March 30, 1900, after a life of action rooted in prayer. The Church proclaimed him a saint in 1970.

Prayer: Saint Leonard, present to God all the intentions of this novena. Teach me to pray with trust and to love with deeds. Amen.

Today: Choose a fixed time each day for prayer, and keep it this week.

Closing prayer

Lord God, Father of mercy,
you gave Saint Leonard Murialdo a heart full of kindness
for poor and abandoned young people.
Through his intercession, protect the young who struggle,
give work to those who seek it,
and make educators patient and joyful.
Grant us the graces we ask in this novena,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

To learn more, read the life of Saint Leonard Murialdo or pray the prayer to Saint Leonard Murialdo.

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