

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Luigi Scrosoppi

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: April 3

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IN BRIEF

Saint Luigi Scrosoppi

Oratorian priest of Udine, founder of the Sisters of Providence of Saint Cajetan and apostle of orphan girls.

Feast day	April 3
Born	August 4, 1804, Udine, Italy
Died	April 3, 1884, Udine, Italy
Canonized	June 10, 2001, by Pope John Paul II
Era	19th century
Patron saint of	people with HIV and AIDS, soccer players, orphans

In this booklet

Life

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Novena to Saint Luigi Scrosoppi

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Luigi Scrosoppi

Saint Luigi Scrosoppi (Louis Scrosoppi in some English and French sources) was an Italian priest of the nineteenth century, born and buried in Udine, in the Friuli region of northeastern Italy (1804-1884). An Oratorian and a spiritual son of Saint Philip Neri, he gave his whole life to orphaned and poor girls and founded the Sisters of Providence of Saint Cajetan of Thiene. Pope John Paul II canonized him in 2001, and his feast day is April 3. He is invoked for people living with HIV and AIDS and, since 2010, as a patron saint of soccer players.

Who was Saint Luigi Scrosoppi?

Luigi Scrosoppi was a quiet priest. He left no famous writings and preached no celebrated sermons. His whole life can be summed up in the word he kept repeating until his last breath: "Charity!"

In a provincial town struck by poverty, he spent more than half a century welcoming, educating and protecting abandoned girls, relying on Providence more than on his own resources. In his canonization homily, Pope John Paul II presented him as a model of unity between communion with God and service to one's brothers and sisters.

Key dates in the life of Luigi Scrosoppi

- **August 4, 1804**: Born in Udine into a devout family of goldsmiths.
- **1814-1816**: Famine and epidemics in Friuli; the boy sees the misery of orphaned children.
- **Around 1816**: Enters the seminary of Udine.
- **1827**: Ordained a priest.

- **1830s**: Joins his older brother, also a priest, in his work for abandoned girls, the "House of the Abandoned".
- **February 1, 1837**: Birth of the community of the Sisters of Providence, under the patronage of Saint Cajetan.
- **1846**: Enters the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri.
- **April 3, 1884**: Dies in Udine, whispering "Charity, charity!"
- **October 4, 1981**: Beatified by Pope John Paul II.
- **June 10, 2001**: Canonized in Rome by Pope John Paul II.

A child of Udine marked by poverty

Luigi was born on August 4, 1804, in Udine, then part of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy. His father, Domenico, was a goldsmith, and his mother came from a well-to-do family. It was a prayerful household, and two other sons would also become priests.

Between 1814 and 1816, Friuli went through terrible years: bad weather, failed harvests, food shortages and epidemics. Many children were left alone, wandering the streets. The young Luigi was deeply affected by what he saw. He entered the seminary at about the age of twelve and was ordained a priest in 1827.

Providence for the abandoned

His older brother had begun taking in abandoned girls in a house in Udine. Luigi joined him and gave himself completely to this work. He did the humblest tasks, begged in the streets to feed and teach the children, and spent his entire inheritance on them. He drew in priests, teachers and benefactors.

His aim was not only to feed the girls. He wanted to give them an education, a trade and the dignity of an honest life.

To make the work last, a few young women consecrated themselves to this service with him. On February 1, 1837, the congregation of the Sisters of Providence was born, placed under the protection of Saint Cajetan of Thiene, the Italian saint of trust in Providence. The motto of the house expresses his whole spirituality: to rely on the tender Providence of God, who never abandons those who trust in him.



Udine, the city where Saint Luigi Scrosoppi lived and served all his life.

A son of Saint Philip Neri

Drawn to the joyful poverty of Saint Francis of Assisi, Luigi finally chose in 1846 the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri, which had a house in Udine. There he found a life of prayer, simplicity and work among the young that suited him perfectly.

He continued to guide the sisters, train young teachers and open new houses. He also cared for poor seminarians, supported other works of the diocese and took part in founding an institute for deaf children.

The last decades of his life were darkened by the laws suppressing religious communities in the young Kingdom of Italy. Luigi defended his works and his sisters with great tenacity. Suffering from a serious skin disease, he died on April 3, 1884. His last words are remembered to this day: "Charity, charity!" The people of Udine began praying to him as a saint at once.

Why is Saint Luigi Scrosoppi the patron saint of people with AIDS and of soccer players?

The miracle of his canonization

The miracle accepted for his canonization concerns a young man from Zambia, Peter Chungu Shitima, who was studying with the Oratorian Fathers in Oudtshoorn, South Africa. He had AIDS in its final stage and had been sent home to his family to die. He prayed, with his relatives and the community, for the intercession of Father Scrosoppi.

He recovered, and the doctors could not explain his healing. After examination, the Church recognized it as miraculous, and Peter himself attended the canonization on June 10, 2001. Since then, Saint Luigi Scrosoppi has been invoked as a protector of people living with HIV and AIDS.

A patron for soccer players

In 2010, at the initiative of Catholics in Carinthia, Austria, the Bishop of Gurk proclaimed him patron of soccer players (footballers) during a celebration attended by the Archbishop of Udine. The choice may seem surprising. It rests on this priest's care for young people and on the values he lived: perseverance, commitment and self-giving.

He is also remembered as a patron of orphans. The Sisters of Providence continue his work today in Italy, Romania, Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Symbols and how to recognize Saint Luigi Scrosoppi in art

Saint Luigi Scrosoppi is a saint of the photographic age, so his images are mostly based on portraits: an elderly priest in a black cassock, with a gentle and serious face. Devotional pictures often show him surrounded by children or young girls, a reminder of the orphans he sheltered. In Carinthia, a statue blessed in 2010 recalls his patronage of soccer players.

What can we learn from Saint Luigi Scrosoppi?

Luigi Scrosoppi reminds us that holiness is often lived in quiet faithfulness to a work of charity, day after day, for decades. He gave everything: his possessions, his time, his health. For the rest, he trusted Providence.

We can pray to him for abandoned children and those in foster care, for teachers and educators, for people living with HIV and AIDS and those who care for them, for young athletes, and for everyone who lacks what they need. To pray with him, see the prayer to Saint Luigi Scrosoppi and the novena to Saint Luigi Scrosoppi.

Where to pray to Saint Luigi Scrosoppi

- **Udine** (Italy): the motherhouse of the Sisters of Providence, on the street now named after Luigi Scrosoppi, where he is venerated.
- **Udine**: the church of the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri, his religious family.
- **Pörtschach am Wörthersee** (Austria): the parish where he was proclaimed patron of soccer players in 2010.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Luigi Scrosoppi, Apostle of Charity

Saint Luigi Scrosoppi lived entirely from trust in Providence and from charity toward abandoned children. Below you will find an original prayer by Saintspedia, followed by a short prayer for the sick, especially people living with HIV and AIDS.

Prayer to Saint Luigi Scrosoppi

Saint Luigi Scrosoppi, priest with a father's heart, you saw in the abandoned girls of the streets of Udine the very face of Christ. Open my eyes to those who are alone, poor or forgotten around me.

You gave all your possessions and all your strength for the abandoned: teach me a generosity that does not count the cost, and the patience of works that last.

You entrusted yourself to the tender Providence of God, who never abandons those who hope in him: heal me of anxiety. When the means run short, remind me that God takes care of his children.

You followed Saint Philip Neri in joy and simplicity: give me a humble and cheerful heart in service.

Watch over children without families, over teachers and educators, over young people and those who coach them. May your last words become mine: charity, charity. I entrust to you my intention (name it in silence). Amen.

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

Prayer for people living with AIDS

> *Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Saint Luigi Scrosoppi, whom you glorified by healing a young man dying of AIDS, we entrust to you all who live with this illness and all who are gravely ill. Give them strength, peace and the presence of caring loved ones. Bless doctors, nurses, caregivers and researchers. And grant healing, if it is your will, to those for whom we pray. Amen.*

This prayer is an original text by Saintspedia.

When to pray this prayer

Saint Luigi Scrosoppi's feast day is April 3, the anniversary of his death in Udine in 1884. You can pray to him:

- for orphans and children in foster care or in children's homes;
- for struggling families;
- for people living with HIV and AIDS, and for those who care for them;
- for teachers, educators, coaches and young athletes;
- whenever you lack what you need and want to learn to trust Providence.

You can also pray the novena to Saint Luigi Scrosoppi or read the life of Saint Luigi Scrosoppi.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Luigi Scrosoppi

This novena to Saint Luigi Scrosoppi is an original composition by Saintspedia. For nine days, it follows the life of the priest of Udine who gave everything for abandoned girls and trusted the tender Providence of God. To end on his feast day, April 3, begin on March 26. You can also pray it at any time of the year, for a child in difficulty, for a sick person or for a need you place in God's hands.

How to pray this novena

Each day, find a quiet moment. Make the Sign of the Cross, read the meditation of the day slowly, then say the prayer. Add an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. Finish with the small act suggested for the day: Father Scrosoppi's holiness was made of very concrete gestures. If you miss a day, simply continue the next day.

Day 1: A heart opened by poverty

As a boy, Luigi saw the famine and epidemics of 1814-1816 leave children alone in the streets of Udine. He never forgot those faces. God often calls us through what we see of others' suffering, if we do not look away.

Prayer: Saint Luigi Scrosoppi, you let the misery of the children of Udine touch your heart. Help me not to look away from the suffering near me. Amen.

Today: Notice one person in need you usually pass by, and pray for them by name.

Day 2: A priest for others

Ordained in 1827, Luigi did not seek a brilliant career. He understood his priesthood as service. Every vocation, whether to marriage, religious life or the priesthood, is a way of giving one's life.

Prayer: Saint Luigi, faithful priest, pray for priests and for all who are discerning their vocation. Help me to live my own state of life as a gift. Amen.

Today: Pray for a priest who has helped you, and if possible thank him with a word or a note.

Day 3: Giving everything

Luigi joined his older brother's house for abandoned girls and spent his whole inheritance on it. He begged in the streets so the children could eat and learn. He did not give from his surplus; he gave himself.

Prayer: Saint Luigi, you held nothing back. Free me from attachment to what I own, and teach me a generosity that does not count the cost. Amen.

Today: Give something that costs you a little: money, time or an object you value, to someone who needs it.

Day 4: Dignity through education

For Father Scrosoppi, feeding the girls was not enough. He wanted them to learn to read, to learn a trade and to build an honest life. True charity respects the dignity of the person and opens a future.

Prayer: Saint Luigi, friend of children, bless teachers, educators and all who help young people grow. May every child find someone who believes in them. Amen.

Today: Encourage a young person in their studies or work, or support a school or educational charity.

Day 5: Trusting Providence

The Sisters of Providence were founded on February 1, 1837, under the protection of Saint Cajetan. Their spirit is trust in the tender Providence that never abandons those who hope in it. Luigi often did not know how he would pay the next bill, yet he did not lose his peace.

Prayer: Saint Luigi, you trusted God when the means ran short. Heal me of anxiety about tomorrow and teach me to place my needs in the Father's hands. Amen.

Today: Write down one worry and offer it to God in prayer, then leave it with him.

Day 6: Joy in simplicity

In 1846 Luigi entered the Oratory of Saint Philip Neri. He found there a life of prayer, simplicity and cheerful service. Holiness is not gloomy: it is the joy of a heart that belongs to God.

Prayer: Saint Luigi, son of Saint Philip Neri, give me a humble and joyful heart. May my service of others never become heavy or proud. Amen.

Today: Do a service for someone with a smile, without mentioning it to anyone.

Day 7: Faithful in trials

In his last years, laws suppressing religious communities threatened his works, and a painful skin disease wore down his body. Luigi defended his sisters with tenacity and accepted suffering with patience.

Prayer: Saint Luigi, you remained faithful in difficulty and illness. Give strength to all who are tested, and teach me perseverance when my efforts seem to fail. Amen.

Today: Persevere in a task you have been tempted to abandon.

Day 8: Hope for the sick

Through his intercession, a young Zambian dying of AIDS, Peter Chungu Shitima, was healed, and he attended the canonization in 2001. Saint Luigi is now invoked for people living with HIV and AIDS and for all the gravely ill.

Prayer: Saint Luigi, intercede for the sick, especially those living with HIV and AIDS. Bless those who care for them, and grant healing to those for whom we pray, if it is God's will. Amen.

Today: Visit, call or write to a sick person, or support an organization that cares for the sick.

Day 9: Charity, charity

Luigi Scrosoppi died on April 3, 1884, murmuring "Charity, charity!" These two words summed up his life. They can also become the program of ours, in our families, workplaces, parishes and even on the sports field, where he is honored as patron of soccer players.

Prayer: Saint Luigi Scrosoppi, may your last words become mine. Help me to love in deeds and in truth until the end of my life. Amen.

Today: Choose one concrete act of charity that you will continue regularly after this novena.

Closing prayer

Lord God, you raised up Saint Luigi Scrosoppi to be a father to abandoned girls and a witness of your Providence. Through his intercession, grant us a heart that is generous, trusting and joyful. Protect orphans and families in difficulty, comfort the sick, bless educators and young people, and hear the intention I have carried during these nine days (name it in silence). Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

To continue, you can pray the prayer to Saint Luigi Scrosoppi or read his life.

CREDITS

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