

Did you know . . .

Blessed Among Us: St. Bruno

Bruno was born in Cologne, Germany around 1030, a member of the prominent Hartenfaust family. Little is known of his younger years except that he achieved early success as a scholar.

He studied at the Cathedral School at Rheims and on his return to Cologne around 1055, he was ordained and became a Canon at St. Cunibert's. He returned to Rheims in 1056 as professor of theology, became head of the school and in 1074 was appointed chancellor of the Diocese of Rheims by Archbishop Manasses. He and several other priests denounced Manasses in 1076 as unfit for the office of Papal Legate and Bruno was forced to flee Rheims and return to Cologne. When Manasses was deposed in 1080, Bruno returned to Rheims. The people wanted him to be Archbishop, but he felt called to a new life of prayer, poverty, and withdrawal from the world.

He and several of his companions applied to one of his former students, St. Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble, for permission to settle in St. Hugh's Diocese. There, in a remote valley, La Chartreuse, they built an oratory and some cells that became the motherhouse, La Grande Chartreuse, forming a new religious order known as the Carthusians. They roughly followed the rule of St. Benedict, embracing a life of poverty, manual work and prayer. They lived alone in their cells, supporting themselves mainly by copying books and gathering for Mass only on Sundays and feast days.

In 1090, Bruno was summoned to Rome by another of his former students, now Pope Urban II, to serve as Papal Adviser in reformation of the clergy. During his time there, he wrote several commentaries on the psalms and the epistles of St. Paul. Bruno, with a few companions, also established a monastery in Calabria, southern Italy, at St. Mary of La Torre in 1091. He died on Oct. 6, 1101. He was never formally canonized because the Carthusian Order maintains a strict observance of humility.

In 1623, Pope Gregory XV included him in the General Roman Calendar with a feast day of Oct. 6.

"Here we strive for that vision by whose clear gaze the bridegroom is wounded with love, and by whose cleanness and purity God s discerned." –St. Bruno

Judy Pearson

