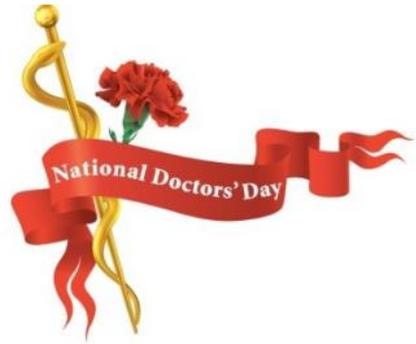


Did you know . . .

Physician Saints of the Catholic Church

March 30th marks the annual observance of National Doctors Day established to recognize physicians, their work and their contributions to society and the community. On National Doctors day we say “thank you” to our physicians for all that they do for us and our loved ones. The red carnation is the symbolic flower for National Doctors day.



There are also several physician saints who have achieved recognition for their extraordinary sanctity. Note these are not those we call “Doctors of the Church”; they are the *theological doctors*, like St. Thomas Aquinas. Here we are highlighting those whose profession was that of physician. Here is a brief look at a few of the more notable physicians who were saints.

Of course first and foremost is **Christ the Divine Physician & Healer**, called *Christus Medicus*. Throughout the Gospels, there are numerous examples of His healings and care for people.

● **St. Raphael**, Archangel & Patron of Physicians. Raphael’s name means “God Heals Us”. Raphael taught Tobiah how to cure his father’s blindness (Tobit 2:10). He also moved the waters of healing to the sheep-pool (Jn 5:1-4). He is the patron of the blind, happy meetings, travelers, nurses, physicians.

● **Sts. Cosmos & Damian**, Twin Doctors. Known as the “moneyless ones” in the east, they practiced medicine on the coast of Cilicia and never charged a fee. During a persecution against Christians, they were arrested, tortured and beheaded. They are considered patrons of physicians, surgeons and pharmacists. They, along with St. Luke, are the three physician saints cited in the Canon of the Mass.

● **St. Luke**, Pro-Life Physician and Evangelist. A Greek doctor, he was called “Our Beloved Luke, the Physician by the peripatetic St. Paul of Tarsus. Luke uses the same Greek word for “baby” whether writing about a baby in the womb or about the baby in the manger. And he refers to John the Baptist and Jesus as unborn but very much alive in the wombs or their mothers. It is in Luke that we hear the phrase, “Physician, heal thyself.” (Lk 4:23).

● **St. Panteleon**, Physician Wonder-Worker. He is one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers who are venerated in France and German. His name in Greek means “the all-compassionate one.” He was a doctor of such skill that Emperor Maximian, a persecutor of Christians, employed Panteleon as his court physician. Serving in this self-indulgent lifestyle, he lost his faith, but was restored by a fellow Christian. He then served the poor, giving away the wealth he had earned previously. Together with St. Raphael, Sts. Cosmas and Damian and St. Luke, St. Panteleon is a patron of the medical profession. He is invoked against tuberculosis and other lung diseases, as well as a patron of bachelors and victims of torture.

“Every Christian is called to renounce violence and to serve gently and selflessly, as a life-affirming ‘*alter Christus*’ – to represent Christ, reaching out through each of us to those in greatest need. All the more then, should not those of us who are, as Christian physicians, entrusted with this unique profession of healing, be challenged, in a special way, to model our lives after Our Lord, *Christus Medicus* – the Divine Physician?” [Richard A. Watson, M.D., Past President of the Catholic Medical Association (USA)]

Judy Pearson