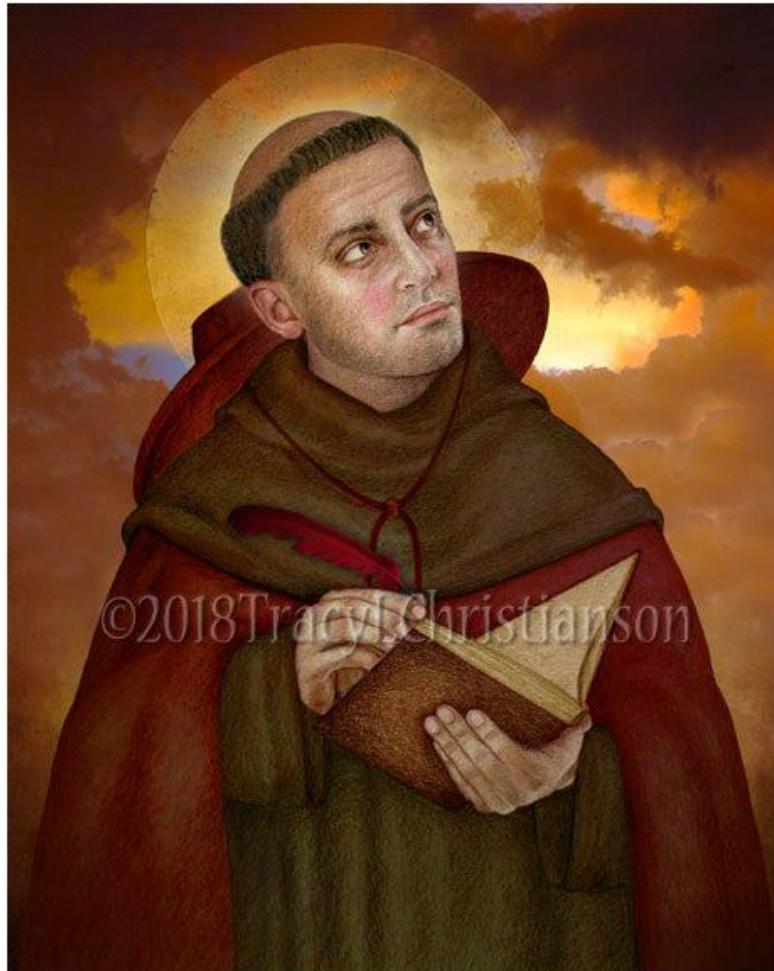


**REGIONAL FORMATION: SUMMER STUDY ON FRANCISCAN
SAINTS**

ST. BONAVENTURE



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ST. BONAVENTURE

I am Connie Shanks OFS. I am the minister of the Joyful servants fraternity in Jefferson City MO. I have been a Franciscan almost eight years. I chose Saint Bonaventure as my Saint to report on.

Saint Bonaventure was born in 1221 in Bagnoregio a small town in central Italy. He was born John but received the name Bonaventure when his mother was pleading in prayer to St. Francis of Assisi for John's recovery from a dangerous illness. For seeing the future of little John in a vision, she cried out "O Buona Ventura" meaning "Oh Good Fortune". From that day forward John was called Bonaventure. He became a Franciscan at age 22 and Minister General of the order in 1256. He steered the Franciscans on a moderate and intellectual course that made them the most prominent order in the Catholic Church. He served as superior of the Friars Minor for 17 years. His impact was so great that he is sometimes referred to as the second founder of the Franciscans. He compiled a biography of St. Francis that was adopted as his official biography by the General Chapter of the Friars Minor in 1263.

St. Bonaventure had a Franciscan love for Jesus and the Church. Jesus was the center of everything in his life, his teaching, his administration, his writing and his entire being. His writing "The Tree of Life" is a meditation on the life of Christ based on gospel accounts of Jesus's birth, public ministry, passion, death, resurrection and glorification. Christ's virtues are seen as models for the Christian to meditate upon and imitate. Bonaventure was very contemplative and pious and untiring in his administrative duties in the Franciscan Order. His virtues of humility and compassion were his guiding forces.

Bonaventure's virtues of humility and service influence me to seek ways to assist others as often as possible. I find great joy in helping others in every way that I can even if it is just smiling at them and acknowledging their presence. Being of service to others is exactly as I have always heard and that is that you receive more than the person you are helping. This is especially true if the giving is done with humility and no expectation of thanks or a returned favor.

I read that when Saint Bonaventure received his Cardinals Mitre he was washing dishes. He had them put the Mitre in a nearby tree until he finished washing the dishes. He proudly wore his Franciscan plain brown habit under his red Cardinals cape. We should be guided to follow his example in living out the Gospel daily in service to our God, church and each other with a spirit of true kindness and humility. We can be an inspiration for the entire world that is so much in need of these virtues.