

Daily Homily

St. Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church

Twenty-Sixth Week in Ordinary Time, Thursday

30 September 2021

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The memorial we celebrate today is for St. Jerome. His life and work are significant for the Church.

Jerome, as many of the saints, lived a rather rambunctious life in his youth. He was born in a wealthy family and was extremely talented. His special gift was with languages, speaking, and words in general. He studied in Rome. He was bent on becoming a lawyer. However, God had other plans. In the course of studying law, he also stumbled upon the study of theology. He felt a strong inclination to change his course of studies.

He was ordained a priest and went to live in the desert as a hermit. Many stories come up from his time there. One story is that he removed a thorn from a lion's paw and the lion remained at his side for the rest of its life. That's why in religious artwork you often see St. Jerome with a lion at his side. Within the course of being in solitude, the Church employed him to do a special task, to translate all of Scripture to Latin, a more common language of the day. In doing so, everyone would have access to Sacred Scripture. This work became known as the Vulgate, it was finished in the last 300s, and it is still used today. This is also why St. Jerome, in religious art is shown with a dove whispering in his ear to depict that he was taking dictation from the Holy Spirit as he translated the Scriptures into Latin.

St. Jerome is known as a Doctor of the Church. There are 36 saints who have this special title. It means that they have contributed something special to the life of the Church in the areas of theology or doctrine, as a remedy or as medicine, to help further deepen our faith and our relationship with the Lord. St. Jerome gave us the Latin text of the Sacred Scripture, the next step is what we have now, Scripture in every language and in the hands of everyone.

So I end this homily the way that my Scripture teacher ended every class in the seminary. When it came time, he would close his notebook... stand up ... we would follow suit... and he would say... "St. Jerome." We would respond... "Pray for us." So may St. Jerome pray for us this day.