

St. Robert Bellarmine
(1542-1621)

Patron of Canon Lawyers, Canonists, Catechists, & Catechumens

Feast Day: September 17

Canonized: 1930

Declared Doctor of the Church: 1931

Early Years:

Born in Montepulciano (Tuscany, Italy)

Third of ten children

His mother, Cinzia Cervini, was the sister or niece of Pope Marcellus II

As a boy he knew Virgil by heart and composed a number of poems in Italian and Latin. One of his hymns, on Mary Magdalene, is included in the Breviary.

Faith Formation and Development:

Entered the newly formed Society of Jesus in 1560 and ordained a priest in 1570

Became professor of controversial theology at the newly founded 'Collegium Romanum'

Created cardinal in 1599

Served as Archbishop of Capua from 1602 to 1605

Later years spent in composition of works on spirituality

Influence on Others:

Spiritual father of St. Aloysius Gonzaga

Helped St. Francis de Sales obtain formal approval of the Visitation Order

Opposed severe action in the case of Galileo

Engaged in debate with Protestant King James I of England

Notable Contributions:

One of the most important figures in the Counter-Reformation

Spent 11 years teaching and writing his monumental *Disputations on the Controversies*, a three-volume defense of the Catholic faith against the arguments of the Protestant reformers

Revised the Latin Vulgate Bible that had been commissioned by the Council of Trent

Other notable books: *The Seven Words on the Cross*, *The Mind's Ascent to God* and *The Art of Dying Well*

Final Resting Place

His remains, in a cardinal's red robes, are displayed behind glass under a side altar in the Church of Saint Ignatius, the chapel of the Roman College, next to the body of his student, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, as he himself had wished

Prayer to St. Robert Bellarmine

God our Father, you gave Robert Bellarmine wisdom and goodness to defend the faith of your Church. By his prayers may we always rejoice in the profession of our faith. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.