



Hieromartyr Pancratius the Bishop of Taormina in Sicily

Commemorated on July 9

The Hieromartyr Pancratius, Bishop of Taormina, was born when our Lord Jesus Christ yet lived upon the earth.

The parents of Pancratius were natives of Antioch. Hearing the good news of Jesus Christ, Pancratius' father took his young son with him and went to Jerusalem in order to see the great Teacher for himself. The miracles astonished him, and when he heard the divine teaching, he then believed in Christ as the Son of God. He became close with the disciples of the Lord, especially with the holy Apostle Peter. It was during this period that young Pancratius got to know the holy Apostle Peter.

After the Ascension of the Savior, one of the Apostles came to Antioch and baptized the parents of Pancratius together with all their household. When the parents of Pancratius died, he left behind his inherited possessions and went to Pontus and began to live in a cave, spending his days in prayer and deep spiritual contemplation. The holy Apostle Peter, while passing through those parts, visited Pancratius at Pontus. He took him along to Antioch, and then to Sicily, where the holy Apostle Paul then was. There the holy Apostles Peter and Paul made Saint Pancratius Bishop of Taormina in Sicily.

Saint Pancratius toiled zealously for the Christian enlightenment of the people. In a single month he built a church where he celebrated divine services. The number of believers quickly grew, and soon almost all the people of Taormina and the surrounding cities accepted the Christian Faith.

Saint Pancratius governed his flock peacefully for many years. However, pagans plotted against the saint, and seizing an appropriate moment, they fell upon him and stoned him. Thus, Saint Pancratius ended his life as a martyr. The saint's relics are in the church named for him in Rome. He is also commemorated on February 9.

Bless my Enemies Con't

They, rather than I, have confessed my sins before the world. They have punished me, whenever I have hesitated to punish myself. They have tormented me, whenever I have tried to flee torments. They have scolded me, whenever I have flattered myself. They have spat upon me, whenever I have filled myself with arrogance. Bless my enemies, O Lord, Even I bless them and do not curse them. Whenever I have made myself wise, they have called me foolish. Whenever I have made myself mighty, they have mocked me as though I were a dwarf. Whenever I have wanted to lead people, they have shoved me into the background. Whenever I have rushed to enrich myself, they have prevented me with an iron hand. Whenever I thought that I would sleep peacefully, they have wakened me from sleep. Whenever I have tried to build a home for a long and tranquil life, they have demolished it and driven me out. Truly, enemies have cut me loose from the world and have stretched out my hands to the hem of your garment. Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them. Bless them and multiply them; multiply them and make them even more bitterly against me: so that my fleeing to You may have no return; so that all hope in men may be scattered like cobwebs; so that absolute serenity may begin to reign in my soul; so that my heart may become the grave of my two evil twins, arrogance and anger; so that I might amass all my treasure in heaven; ah, so that I may for once be freed from self-deception, which has entangled me in the dreadful web of illusory life. Enemies have taught me to know what hardly anyone knows, that a person has no enemies in the world except himself. One hates his enemies only when he fails to realize that they are not enemies, but cruel friends. It is truly difficult for me to say who has done me more good and who has done me more evil in the world: friends or enemies. Therefore bless, O Lord, both my friends and enemies. A slave curses enemies, for he does not understand. But a son blesses them, for he understands. For a son knows that his enemies cannot touch his life. Therefore he freely steps among them and prays to God for them.

Romans 10:1-10 (Epistle)

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

THE BEST MARRIAGE ADVICE EVER

by Dave Willis

(If you'll apply these twenty-five principles below to your relationship, it could make a life-changing difference in your marriage!)

1. Choose to love each other even in those moments when you struggle to like each other. Love is a commitment, not a feeling.

2. Always answer the phone when your husband/wife is calling and when possible, try to keep your phone off when you're together with your spouse.

3. Make time together a priority. Budget for a consistent date night. Time is the "currency of relationships" so consistently invest time into your marriage.

4. Surround yourself with friends who will strengthen your marriage and remove yourself from people who may tempt you to compromise your character.

5. Make laughter the soundtrack of your marriage. Share moments of joy, and even in the hard times, find reasons to laugh.

6. In every argument, remember that there won't be a "winner" and a "loser." You are partners in everything so you'll either win together or lose together. Work together to find a solution.

7. Remember that a strong marriage rarely has two strong people at the same time. It's usually a husband and wife taking turns being strong for each other in the moments when the other feels weak.

8. Prioritize what happens in the bedroom. It takes more than sex to build a strong marriage, but it's nearly impossible to build a strong marriage without it!

9. Remember that marriage isn't 50-50, divorce is 50-50. Marriage has to be 100-100. It's not splitting everything in half, but both partners giving everything they've got!

10. Give your best to each other, not your leftovers after you've given your best to everyone else.

11. Learn from other people, but don't feel the need to compare your life or your marriage to anyone else's. God's plan for your life is masterfully unique!

12. Don't put your marriage on hold while you're raising your kids or else you'll end up with an empty nest and an empty marriage.

13. Never keep secrets from each other. Secrecy is the enemy of intimacy.

14. Never lie to each other. Lies break trust and trust is the foundation of a strong marriage.

15. When you've made a mistake, admit it and humbly seek forgiveness. You should be quick to say, "I was wrong. I'm sorry. Please forgive me."

16. When your husband/wife breaks your trust, give them your forgiveness instantly which will promote healing and create the opportunity for trust to be rebuilt. You should be quick to say, "I love you. I forgive you. Let's move forward."

17. Be patient with each other. Your spouse is always more important than your schedule.

18. Model the kind of marriage that will make your sons want to grow up to be good husbands and your daughters want to grow up to be good wives.

19. Be your spouse's biggest encourager, not his/her biggest critic. Be the one who wipes away their tears, not the one who causes them.

20. Never talk badly about your spouse to other people or vent about them online. Protect your spouse at all times and in all places.

21. Always wear your wedding ring. It will remind you that you're always connected to your spouse and it will remind the rest of the world that you're off limits!

22. Connect into a community of faith. A good church can make a world of difference in your marriage and family.

23. Pray together. Every marriage is stronger with God in the middle of it.

24. When you have to choose between saying nothing or saying something mean to your spouse, say nothing every time!

25. Never consider divorce as an option. Remember that a "perfect marriage" is just two imperfect people who refuse to give up on each other!

GOB BLESS ALL OF YOU!

FATHER AWAY

Fr. Andrew will be away Tuesday, July 11 returning July 12. Call his cell for emergency: 570-212-8747.